



THE WICKED
WE VETO
BY THE
MINE STONE
THAT
THEY
DID NOT
THUS FOR
THE WICKED
WE VETO
BY THE
MINE STONE
THAT
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THUS FOR

WINNERS
TO THE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
UNITED STATES
AND
THE
DECLARATION
OF INDEPENDENCE
AND
THE
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THE PSALMS: TIMELESS PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

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Session 5

Tues., 16 Feb. 2010 / Sat., 20 Feb. 2010

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- Vengeance – Compassion – Intensity in/of the Psalms
- Psalms in the Canon / New Testament / Early Christianity
- Psalms in Worship and Prayer
- Spiritual reflection / Prayer

The Book of Psalms in the Canon

* 5-fold division of 'final product'

a '*Davidic Pentateuch*' (a la the Mosaic Pentateuch)

(each ends with appended doxology, e.g. 41:13)

I

1-41

3-41

1st book w/o prefatory Pss 1-2

II

42-72

42-83

Elohistic section ('elohim)

III

73-89

IV

90-106

93-99 (x94)

common topic = God's kingship

(+ 100 – thanksgiving conclusion)

V

107-150

146-150 = extended doxology

concludes Bk V

& entire psalter

120-134 ('songs of ascent')

pilgrimage songs > Jerusalem

- * Book put under 'patronage' of David (cf. session 2)
 - *the* king in the imagination of Israel

- * Movement – from/through lament > to praise (as in lament pss)
 - crescendo through to 'climax' in Pss 146-150
 - also possibly – narrative movement
 - > time of David > Solomon > destruction of kingdoms > exile in Babylon > return / rebuilding of temple / life in post-exilic period

- * Pss 1-2 = Preface to Book (wisdom-torah / royal hope)

New Testament / Early Christian Usage

- * Dead Sea Scroll Community (Qumran)
 - * 39 scrolls of Pss
 - * 126 represented
 - * use = *pesharim* (interpret Pss as book of prophecy)
- * New Testament
 - * early Xian community knew & used pss
 - * also composed own hymns (canticles)
 - * used Pss as book of prophecy (like Qumran)

 - * most frequently used book of Hebrew SS
 - * primarily used LXX (Greek) translation
 - * over 400 'references' from 60 pss/~35 cited expressly

- * Catholic stance = not 'literal' predictions / fulfillment
 - * acc. to 2001 doc. of Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and Their Scriptures in the Christian Bible* > should not be thought of as literal fulfillment
 - * "It would be wrong to consider the prophecies of the Old Testament as some kind of photographic anticipations of future events"
 - * Xians read these texts 'retrospectively', i.e. through their faith in the resurrected Christ

Early Christianity

- * > ca. 200 CE > Pss are ABOUT Christ
- * ca. 200-400 CE > Pss addressed TO Christ
(“the Lord” = Christ, e.g. Phil 2:11; 1 Cor 12:3)
- * ca. 400 – Middle Ages > Pss spoken BY Christ
(“the Lord” = the Father; the pray-er is Christ)

The Psalms in Worship & Prayer

- * Liturgical worship in Israel > a book of prophecy > liturgical worship of Christians (Caution!: let them speak to us from their proper 'place')
- * For Israel:
 - * worship/cultic acts // temple/ritual acts // musical instruments & singing // call on other to praise-lament
 - * worship & the individual occasions
 - * worship & communal occasions
- * Catholic worship today:
 - * Eucharist – antiphons / responsorial psalms
 - * Liturgy of the Hours

* Individual Prayer:

* prayer of the *whole* person

* the range of real experience

- praise – ‘wow!’

- lament – ‘ouch!’

- cycle of prayer

- orientation – hymns / declarative praise

- disorientation – laments

- reorientation – thanksgivings / narrative praise

* meditate on the ‘Torah’ day and night

VENGEANCE < > COMPASSION IN THE PSALMS

- * Cry for retaliation can surprise & offend us
- * Pss – both present to us & call for
> robustness in languaging rather than stance
of cowardice or propriety
- * Yearning for vengeance
does exist in us and is presented in the Pss
- * John Calvin > the Pss = “An Anatomy of all Parts
of the Soul”

* These words can so easily be 'softened'/ 'watered down' in our minds and hearts (e.g. Ps 139:21-22)

> Serious speech addressed to real God about important concerns

* Notion of '*God's* vengeance'

> often problematic for us

* no single or even clear, consistent 'vision' of God in SS

* nor any clear, linear development of notions of God there

* images - filtered through human imagination

* danger > pick & choose ones comfortable to us

- * As presented in Pss (& Scripture in gen.)
 - > God is working God's will / justice
 - > work of moral coherence / moral order

- * GOD takes on vengeance
and it's transformed into COMPASSION

God's commitment < > our need

- * In NT: there is no less vengeance than here
 - > but God takes it on, makes it his own
 - in God's 'person'

- * We: invited to 'take it on' (own it / express it)
THEN can yield to grace

Brueggemann:

The Bible (*all* of it)

- * is an act of faithful imagination
- * invites *our* faithful imagination
- * not package of certitudes
- * makes it possible for us to live faithfully

- * rooted in memory
 - but presses toward new possibility
 - that is always in front of us



Psalm 1

Happy are those
 who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
 or take the path that sinners tread,
 or sit in the seat of scoffers;
 but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and on his law they meditate day and night.
 They are like trees
 planted by streams of water,
 which yield their fruit in its season,
 and their leaves do not wither;
 in all that they do, they prosper.

The wicked are not so,
 but are like chaff that the wind drives away;
 therefore the wicked will not stand
 in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the congregation
 of the righteous,
 for the Lord watches over the way
 of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish.

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Psalm 2

Who do the nations conspire,
 and the peoples plot in vain?
 The kings of the earth set themselves,
 and the rulers take council together
 against the Lord and his anointed, saying,
 "Let us break their bonds asunder,
 and cast their cords from us."

Fly who sits in the heavens laughs,
 the Lord has them in derision.
 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
 and terrify them in his fierce anger.
 "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill."

"I will tell of the decree of the Lord:
 He said to me, 'You are my son,
 today I have begotten you;
 Ask of me, and I will make the nations
 your heritance,
 and the ends of the earth your possession.'
 'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
 and dash them in pieces like
 a potter's vessel.'"

Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
 be warned, O rulers of the earth.
 Serve the Lord with fear,
 with trembling, kiss his feet,
 or he will be angry, and you will perish
 in the way—
 for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Happy are all who take refuge in him.

Psalm 3

A Psalm of David,
 when he fled from his son Absalom.

O Lord, how many are my foes!
 Many are rising against me;
 many are saying to me,
 "There is no help for us in God."

But you, O Lord, are a shield around me,
 my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.
 I cry aloud to the Lord,
 and he answers me from his holy hill.

I lie down and sleep,
 I wake again, for the Lord sustains me;
 I am not afraid of ten thousands of people.