

SCHOOL OF THE WORD

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The Psalms**Psalm 19****Sequence**

- Finding the Psalms
- Numbering the Psalms
- Patterns in the Psalter
- Enjoying a Psalm
- Making links: OT and NT
- Back to the Psalm
- Use in the lectionary

Finding the Psalms

- In the Bible, between Job and Proverbs
- There are 150 Psalms, in five "collections"
- Each collection has a conventional closure / ending
- Psalm 1 - a great opening
- Psalm 150 - a resounding conclusion

Numbering the Psalms*Hebrew Numbering**Greek and Latin Numbering*

1-8	1-8
9-10	9
11-113	10-112
114-115	113
116	114-115
117-146	116-145
147	146-147
148-150	148-150

Most Bibles**Liturgical Numbering****Patterns in the Psalter**

- The Davidic Psalms (3-41, 51-71)
- The Asaph Psalms (50, 73-83)
- The Psalms of the Sons of Korah (42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88)
- The Psalms of Ascents (120-134)
- The Hallel Psalms (113-118, 146-150)
- The 'YHWH is King' Psalms (47, 93, 96-99)
- Currently, five "books", each ending with a doxology
- Pss 1-41 (41:13); 42-72 (72:18-19); 73-89 (89:52); 90-106 (106:48); 107-150 (150)

Ps 41:13 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.
Amen and Amen.

Ps 72:18 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
19 Blessed be his glorious name forever;

may his glory fill the whole earth.
Amen and Amen.

Ps 89:52 Blessed be the Lord forever.
Amen and Amen.

Ps 106:48 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.
And let all the people say, "Amen."
Praise the Lord!

Ps 150:1 Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary!
Praise him in the sky, which testifies to his strength!

2 Praise him for his mighty acts!
Praise him for his surpassing greatness!

3 Praise him with the blast of the horn!
Praise him with the lyre and the harp!

4 Praise him with the tambourine and with dancing!
Praise him with stringed instruments and the flute!

5 Praise him with loud cymbals!
Praise him with clanging cymbals!

6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Book 1	1 2	3—41: David					
Book 2		42—49: Korah	50 Asaph	51—72: David			
Book 3		73—83: Asaph		84—89: Korah and others			
Book 4	90 91 92	93—100: Kingship	101: David 102 103: David	104—106: Hallel			
Book 5	107 108—110: David 111	112—118: Hallel	119	120—134: Ascents	135 136 137	138—145: David	146—150: Hallel

Enjoying a Psalm

- Images and metaphors
- Parallelism (two lines together)
- Recognising the types of psalm
- Old Testament background
- New Testament "links"

Ps 19:0 For the music director; a psalm of David.

- 1** The heavens declare the glory of God;
the sky displays his handiwork.
- 2** Day after day it speaks out;
night after night it reveals his greatness.
- 3** There is no actual speech or word,
nor is its voice literally heard.
- 4** Yet its voice echoes throughout the earth;
its words carry to the distant horizon.
In the sky he has pitched a tent for the sun.
- 5** Like a bridegroom it emerges from its chamber;
like a strong man it enjoys running its course.
- 6** It emerges from the distant horizon,
and goes from one end of the sky to the other;
nothing can escape its heat.
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my sheltering rock and my redeemer.
- 7** The law of the Lord is perfect
and preserves one's life.
The rules set down by the Lord are reliable
and impart wisdom to the inexperienced.
- 8** The Lord's precepts are fair
and make one joyful.
The Lord's commands are pure
and give insight for life.
- 9** The commands to fear the Lord are right
and endure forever.
The judgments given by the Lord are trustworthy
and absolutely just.
- 10** They are of greater value than gold,
than even a great amount of pure gold;
they bring greater delight than honey,
than even the sweetest honey from a honeycomb.
- 11** Yes, your servant finds moral guidance there;
those who obey them receive a rich reward.
- 12** Who can know all his errors?
Please do not punish me for sins I am unaware of.
- 13** Moreover, keep me from committing flagrant sins;
do not allow such sins to control me.
Then I will be blameless,
and innocent of blatant rebellion.
- 14** May my words and my thoughts
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my sheltering rock and my redeemer.

Noticing things...

- First of all: the parallelism - take out the pen...
- Then: the images used - let's make a list
- Other observations...
- Any questions?

- One of the Psalms associated with David.
- The core is an ancient nature poem (vv. 4b-6).
- Then, it was take up into Israelite devotion (vv. 1-4a).
- A second later wisdom prayer was created (vv. 7-14).
- These were eventually joined with a purpose.
- V. 14 gathers in the overall message, a kind of antiphon

Layout**Title:** a psalm of David (v. 0)**First canticle: a hymn to the Creator (1-6)**

(a) The song of the heavens (1-4b) – the proclamation of creation

(b) The song to the sun (4c-6) – the cosmic proclamation to the sun

Second canticle: a hymn to the Torah (7-13)

(a) The litany of the Torah (7-10) – six descriptions of its splendour

(b) The servant of the Torah (11-13) – love and fault

Closing coda: v. 14.**Making links: OT***Hymn to creation (vv. 1-6)*

Genesis 1

Psalm 8

Psalm 104

Job 38

Sirach 43 – making an excellent link with the Wisdom tradition

- Sir 43:1** The pride of the higher realms is the clear vault of the sky,
as glorious to behold as the sight of the heavens.
- 2** The sun, when it appears, proclaims as it rises
what a marvellous instrument it is, the work of the Most High.
- 3** At noon it parches the land,
and who can withstand its burning heat?
- 4** A man tending a furnace works in burning heat,
but three times as hot is the sun scorching the mountains;
it breathes out fiery vapours,
and its bright rays blind the eyes.
- 5** Great is the Lord who made it;
at his orders it hurries on its course.
- 27** **We could say more but could never say enough;
let the final word be: "He is the all."**
- 28** Where can we find the strength to praise him?
For he is greater than all his works.
- 29** Awesome is the Lord and very great,
and marvellous is his power.
- 30** Glorify the Lord and exalt him as much as you can,
for he surpasses even that.
When you exalt him, summon all your strength,
and do not grow weary, for you cannot praise him enough.
- 31** Who has seen him and can describe him?
Or who can extol him as he is?
- 32** Many things greater than these lie hidden,
for I have seen but few of his works.
- 33** For the Lord has made all things,
and to the godly he has given wisdom.

Hymn to the Torah (7-14)

Deuteronomy 6:4-6

Psalm 1

Psalm 119...we might not look at all of it!

Sirach 24

- Ps 119:97** (*Mem*)
O how I love your **law**!
All day long I meditate on it.

- 98** Your **commandments** make me **wiser** than my enemies,
for I am always aware of them.
- 99** I have more **insight** than all my teachers,
for I meditate on your **rules**.
- 100** I am more discerning than those older than I,
for I observe your **precepts**.
- 101** I stay away from the evil **path**,
so that I might keep your **instructions**.
- 102** I do not turn aside from your **regulations**,
for you **teach** me.
- 103** Your **words** are sweeter
in my mouth than honey!
- 104** Your **precepts** give me **discernment**.
Therefore I hate all deceitful actions.

Making links: NT

Psalm 19 as a whole

Matthew 5-7
2 Corinthians 4:6
John 1:1-18
Ephesians 1:1-12
Colossians 1:15-20

Back to the Psalm

Vv. 1-6	Vv. 7-14
Sun = God's gift	Torah - God's gift
Sun gives light	Torah gives light
The sun is "universal"	Torah is also "universal"
Physical world illuminated	Moral world illuminated
The sun is stable	Torah is more stable

Psalm praising God's revelation / disclosure

First of all, in **creation**: vv. 1-6
Then, in God's gift of the **Torah**: vv. 7-10
Finally, in the life of the **person** praying: vv. 11-14

First of all, "**God**"
Then, the "**Lord**" = **YHWH**
Finally, "**my rock, my redeemer**"

A harvest of quirkiness

Gracious God,
how can creation sing your praises,
except with the red wings of blackbirds
flashing across blue sky,
and the croak and splash of frogs
playing hide-and-seek in the ponds?

How can the firmament proclaim your handiwork,
except in the wagging tail of a puppy,
and the focussed attention of a toddler
smoking in the wonder of it all?

How can the heavens proclaim your glory,
 except through a morning sun rising upon gold-green grass
 lighting up the face of lovers as earth spins them
 once more into a new day?

Your beauty and goodness, O Immanent One
 requires Earth's diversity
 and our own wildness,
 breaking down – and out of –
 the monotony of prescribed patterns,
 choosing rather to take our place
 in the dancing procession
 of differentness,
 the variegated life of Christ finding expressing
 in this body of the church
 and the bodies of our kin-creatures

Make a harvest, O Holy One
 of our quiriness
 that we might be your radiant presence
 Amen.

Back to Psalm 19

Use in the Lectionary

Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11	29-B	3rd Sunday of Lent
Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11	41-ABC	Easter Vigil (resp. 6)
Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11	105-C	15th Sunday in Ordinary Time (opt. 2)
Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15	69-C	3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Ps 19:8, 10, 12-13, 14	137-B	26th Sunday in Ordinary Time