

Lecture 7 – The Psalms, I

*Commit to the Lord whatever you do,
And your plans will succeed. Proverbs 16:3*

Key Terms

Luther, Calvin, Weiser, Childs, praises or Psalter, the five books, laments, thanksgiving

Lecture Objectives

- *Identify and describe the various perspectives people have taken on the psalms.
- *Identify the major classification systems, including key psalms in each of the various categories.

Preliminary Questions

- *How have the psalms functioned as a means of God's grace in your Christian life?
- *Is it ever right to complain to God? Are there principles regarding complaining that should be kept in mind? What are they?

The Psalms, I

I. The Psalms

A. Introduction

1. Comments and quotations

See handout: What Reviewers Have Said About the Psalms (Appendix 3)

- a. Luther
- b. Calvin
- c. Weiser
- d. Childs
2. Title of the book
 - a. Hebrew title - Praises
 - b. English titles - Psalter or Psalms
3. Date(s)
 - a. 19th-early 20th century view
 - b. Now/current view

B. Classification schemes

See handout: The Psalms: Classification Schemes (Appendix 4)

1. Introductory comments
2. Classification by book division or superscription
 - a. The five books
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)
 - 5)
 - b. Superscriptions

Why is the dating of the psalms important to our reading and application process? How can psalms which are written to particular situations still be used today in our churches?

3. Classification by theme, content or referent
 - a. Pre-Gunkel
 - b. Post-Gunkel
4. Classification by form (excursus on meaning of critical/criticism)
 - a. Gunkel's form-critical approach:
 - 3 emphases:
 - 1) Type
 - 2) Setting in life (*Sitz im Leben*)
 - 3) Evolution of form
 - b. Gunkel's form-critical categories:
 - 1) Laments (communal and individual very similar):
 - A
 - C
 - T
 - P
 - V
 - 2) Songs of thanksgiving:
 - A
 - R
 - C

Evaluate Gunkel's form-critical approach. Do you find it to be a useful tool?