

Lecture 8 – The Psalms, II

*The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold;
But a man is tested by the praise he receives. Proverbs 27:21*

Key Terms

Laments, thanksgiving, hymns, royal psalm, wisdom, didactic

Lecture Objectives

*Identify and describe the various classification schemes including key psalms in the various categories.

Preliminary Questions

*It is not likely that the psalmists themselves thought in the categories being discussed. However, in what ways is it helpful for careful interpretation to use these categories? In what ways might it be a hindrance?

The Psalms, II

I. The Psalms

A. Introduction

B. Classification schemes

1. Introductory comments
2. Classification by book division or superscription
3. Classification by theme, content or referent
4. Classification by form
 - a. Gunkel's form-critical approach
 - b. Gunkel's form-critical categories (cont.)
 - 1) Laments (communal and individual very similar):
 - 2) Songs of thanksgiving:
 - *3) Hymns
 - C
 - P
 - R
 - 4) Royal Psalms
 - a) You will know it when you see it!
 - 5) Wisdom Psalms
 - a) Formal structure
 - Types of:
 - b) Didactic intent
 - c) Wisdom motifs
 - 6) Other didactic psalms
 - a) Historical
 - b) Prophetic Exhortation
- c. Strengths and weaknesses of form-critical approach
- d. Biblical precedent for a form-critical approach?

How should a psalm be evaluated if it does not 'fit' a form or it is missing components of an expected form? Why might it be dangerous to force a form onto a psalm?

Read Psalms 30, 54, 56 and 113. Decide what kind of psalm each is, and label the components and elements.