

PSALMS OF GRATITUDE

OVERVIEW

Thanksgiving (*todah*) is related to praise (*yadah* – the verb meaning, ‘to praise’) linguistically and conceptually.

Psalms of gratitude focus on what God has done.

Psalms of praise focus attention upon who God is.

- General format:
 - Announcement of the intention to express gratitude (116:1)
 - Delineation of the nature of God’s deliverance (116:3-11)
 - Conclusion (116:12-19)
- Types of gratitude psalms include:
 - Community
 - Individual
 - Historical reflections
 - Expressions of trust
 - Others?
- Some psalms have elements of more than one genre.

- The importance of being grateful
 - It’s reasonable (1Tim.4:3-4; Heb.12:28; 13:15; Col.1:12; 2Cor.2:14)

 - It’s commanded (Ps.95:2; 107:1; 1Chron.16:8; 1Thes.5:18; Col.3:15; Heb.12:28)

 - It’s critical for spiritual health
 - Gratitude protects us from self-inflicted blindness (Romans 1)

 - Gratitude draws us into relational intimacy with God

 - Gratitude testifies to others. (Ps.22:22-end; 111:1ff)
Calling them to repentance

Calling them to fidelity

CORPORATE GRATITUDE

- Examples include: 65, 67, 75, 107, 124, 136
- Psalm 75

Situation of the psalmist

- Written by Asaph¹
- Expresses gratitude for God's actions toward the arrogant

Structure of the psalm

- It is similar to Hannah's song (1Sam.2:1-10)
- Format
 - Gratitude for God's awesome deeds v.1
 - The mighty God will destroy the arrogant vv. 2-8
 - Gratitude for the justice of God vv. 9-10
- Scholars hold that the form: thanksgiving, oracle, prophetic reflection and thanksgiving indicates that it was a community thanksgiving song.

Analysis of the psalm

<p>75:1 We give thanks¹ to you, O God,* we give thanks,¹ For your name is near;² Men declare your wondrous works.³</p>	<p>We thank you God, and in so doing, are aware of your presence. * <i>Elohim</i> ¹ <i>hodinu</i> – “we give thanks,” is repeated for emphasis ² <i>qarob s^emeka</i> – could mean, ‘they who worship you tell of your wonderful deeds’ (closer to LXX) OR ‘your name is brought very near to us in the story of your wonderful deeds’ (closer to MT); when we ponder and praise God we become more alert to his immanence. ³ <i>nip^e’oteyka</i> – wonderful deeds; see the comments on this under the <i>GRATITUDE FOR GOD’S HISTORICAL ACTIONS</i>; this is how the godly respond to God.</p>
<p>2 "When I select an appointed time, It is I who judge with equity.</p>	<p>I WILL JUDGE JUSTLY. 9:8-20; 58:11; 98:9; Amos</p>
<p>3 "The earth and all who dwell in it melt; It is I who have firmly set its pillars. Selah.</p>	<p>WHEN ALL IS LOST, I HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL.</p>
<p>4 "I said to the boastful,¹ 'Do not boast,' And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn'²</p>	<p>DON'T INDULGE IN ARROGANT AUTONOMY OR SELF-PROMOTION. ¹ <i>hol^elim</i> – those who ignore God & his ways (52:1: 73:3), are disrespectful (31:18; 94:4). ² a metaphor for strength and thus, they exalt their personal power over God himself 4-5 are chiasmic (4a to 5b and 4b to 5a).</p>
<p>5 Do not lift up your horn on high, Do not speak with insolent pride."¹</p>	<p>¹ <i>ataq</i> – with insolence or arrogantly</p>
<p>6 For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert comes exaltation;</p>	<p>People don't exalt others. This prophetic meditation on the earlier revelation begins with <i>ki</i> – ‘indeed’, which marks it off from what preceded it. Thus, in this section the prophet is reflecting upon the Word of God.</p>

¹ Anderson suggests that this is, "...a chief among the singers appointed under David (1 Chr 15:16ff.; 16:4-7,37; 25:1ff.) (cf. 1 Chr 25:1-2). He appears to have been an important author of psalms (cf. 2 Chr 29:30)."

7 But God* is the Judge; He puts down one, and exalts another.	God casts down and lifts up. * <i>Elohim</i>
8 For a cup is in the hand of the LORD,* and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain <i>and</i> drink down its dregs.	God will judge the wicked. * <i>YHWH</i> This metaphor is used frequently by the prophets to refer to the judgment of God that produces, confusion, staggering, wounds and loss of control (See Isa.29:9-12; 51:17-23; 63:1-6; Jer.13:12-14) - God slipping them a Mickey Finn.
9 But as for me, I will declare ¹ <i>it</i> forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.	I will tell of God and praise God because he will take down the evil ones and raise up the godly. LXX renders this <i>agil</i> – rejoice, instead of <i>aggid</i> - declare
10 And all the horns of the wicked He will cut off, ¹ <i>But</i> the horns of the righteous will be lifted up. ²	¹ Many versions take this as 3 rd person since it is YHWH who will destroy the so-called strength of the wicked v.7 Ps.1:6 ² the wicked elevate themselves, the righteous are elevated by God

PERSONAL GRATITUDE

- Examples include: 18, 21, 30, 32, 34, 40, 66, 92, 108, 116, 118, 138
- Psalm 30

Situation of the psalmist

- Title
 - The title indicates a *mizmor* (i.e. musical accompaniment)...a *zamar* (i.e. to sing)² for the dedication (1Ki.8:63; Ezra 6:16) of the temple.
 - The title of the Psalm doesn't seem to fit the content.
- The author appears to have recovered from sort of trial, maybe an illness.

Structure of the psalm

- Gratitude for God's help (vv.1-4)
- Reflection on the relationship between God and man (vv.5-8)
- Gratitude for God's help (vv.9-12)

Analysis of the psalm³

30:1 I will extol You, O LORD,* for You have lifted me up, ¹ And have not let my enemies ² rejoice over me.	I will praise you b/c you saved me. * <i>YHWH</i> ¹ <i>dalah</i> – lift a bucket up from a well; a metaphor used by the author to evoke an image of rescue from a hopeless situation. ² enemies are glad when we fail “I will extol you, O YHWH,” here and “I will give you thanks forever.” of the last verse forms an <i>inclusio</i> for the psalm.
2 O LORD* my God, I cried to You for help, and You healed me.	• I asked for help & you healed me. * <i>YHWH</i>

² And thus a song to musical accompaniment...it is important to remember, however, that the precise meanings of these terms are unclear.

³ Much of this material is drawn from VanGemenen's excellent analysis.

<p>3 O LORD,* You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit.¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You kept me from death. <p>* YHWH ¹ NIV follows the <i>Qere</i> (<i>miyordi</i> – from my going down) rather than the <i>Kethiv</i> (MT) (<i>miyor^edebor</i> – from the ones going down into the pit).</p>
<p>4 Sing praise to the LORD,* you His godly ones,¹ And give thanks to His holy name.²</p>	<p>Praise & thank God <i>hasidim</i></p> <p>* YHWH ¹ <i>hasidim</i> – saints or godly ones; related to <i>hesed</i> which refers to covenant lovingkindness; thus, “Sing praise to YHWH you who are in a covenant relationship with him.” 4-7 show many contrasts btw. anger/grace; transitory/permanent; sadness/joy; night/day; secure/dismayed and yet the thrust of the contrasts is to show the grace of God. ² <i>zeker</i> – this involves proclamation of the history of YHWH’s salvation (111:2-4; 122:4; 145); this is the appropriate response to YHWH’s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgiveness – v.6 walking by sight, autonomous from God (Ps.10:4-6) • Restoration – while forgiveness isn’t mentioned here it’s implicit in the restoration experienced by the author; he could not restore himself
<p>5 For His anger is but for a moment, His favor¹ is for a lifetime;² Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • b/c his disfavor is transient • b/c his favor is permanent <p>¹ <i>rason</i> – recovery of blessing (69:13; 106:4; Isa.49:8; 60:10; 61:2); c.f. v.7 ² <i>rega</i> – moment; death; “For in his anger is death, but in his favor is life” is a translation preferred by some, in order to produce a balanced parallelism.</p>
<p>6 Now as for me,¹ I said in my prosperity,² “I will never be moved.”</p>	<p>When things were going well, I thought it would never end.</p> <p>¹ <i>wa^ani</i> – the use of a disjunctive, <i>waw</i> consecutive establishes a contrast; the psalmist felt secure b/c of his prosperity neither trusting God nor acknowledging that the prosperity was God’s provision. ² <i>salwi</i> – my ease, my prosperity; a state of well-being (122:7-9) due to God’s provision (Deut.8:7-10).</p>
<p>7 O LORD,* by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong; You hid Your face, I was dismayed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You’re the one who caused things to go well. <p>* YHWH I was troubled when you took away your favor.</p>
<p>8 To You, O LORD,* I called, And to the Lord I made supplication:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I keep calling on you to rescue <p>* YHWH 8 & 10 form an inclusio around v. 9; this is suggested by the repetition of the root, <i>h-n-n</i> – merciful. The imperfect tense of the Hebrew verbs are better translated, “I keep calling...I keep crying for mercy”</p>
<p>9 “What profit is there in my blood,¹ if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You?² Will it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘my death doesn’t serve your interests’ <p>¹ <i>d-m-m</i> may be <i>dammi</i> – ‘my blood’ OR <i>dommi</i> – ‘my weeping’ and hence, “What profit is there in my weeping?” ² see v.12 and the handout on death, <i>Sheol, Grave and Death in the Psalms</i>.</p>

declare Your faithfulness?	Is the psalmist scheming or has his repentance produced concern for God's honor?
10 "Hear, O LORD,* and be gracious to me; O LORD,* be my helper."	* YHWH • I ask you to rescue
11 You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness,	You turned everything around for the good.
12 That <i>my</i> soul may sing praise to You and not be silent. ¹ O LORD* my God, I will give thanks to You forever. ²	* YHWH So I will praise and thank you forever. ¹ <i>d-m-m</i> – some translate this as weep and so, ‘That my soul may sing praise to You and not weep’ ² Either this is hyperbole or the author has some notion of life-after-death.

GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S HISTORICAL ACTIONS

- Examples include: 8, 105-106, 135, 136
- Psalm 136

Situation of the psalmist

This is called the Great Hallel psalms (according to some rabbis, the only Great Hallel).

Structure of the psalm

Introductory Praise vv.1-3

Creation Praise vv. 4-9

Redemption Praise vv.10-24

Sustenance Praise v.25

Closing Praise v.26

Analysis of the psalm

Submission & Praise in the Face of an Awesome God

- The mighty acts of Yahweh⁴
 - These are not regarded as dry historical details by the psalmist but as unforgettable achievements of the God of Israel.
 - All children were schooled in these actions (71:15-19; 78:4),
 - These were tacit evidence of YHWH's love (107:8,15,21,31; 136:4)), grace (111:4-5) & loyalty (89:5) toward all (96:2-4; 86:10) but for Israel especially.
 - Since YHWH is inclined to come to the aid of his children when they turn to him, his mighty actions in history are important subjects of meditation in times of need (77:11-12) and add to the weight of evidence at times of deliverance (26:7)
- Awe and zeal should follow
 - *y-r-'* (*yir'ah*- fear), *nora'* (awe) are the natural outcomes of YHWH's rule on earth (47:2; 65:5-8; 68:35; 76:7,12)
 - *p-h-d* (*pahad*) – dread, tremble with fear; the natural result of rebellion (53:5; 14:5)
 - The godly fear (*y-r-'* & *p-h-d*) the Lord (Ps.119:120, 161) and yet have nothing to fear (27:1,5; 3:6)

⁴ Including creation (Ps.8, 19, 33, 104, 136:5-9; 145), exodus (78:11-12; 136:10-16), conquest (136:17-22); It is a significant theme that God is continually referred to as the creator & redeemer (Ruth 4:14, see also Lev.25:47).

SONGS OF TRUST

- Examples include: 11, 16, 23, 27, 62, 63, 91, 121, 125, 131
- Psalm 131

Situation of the psalmist

- A psalm ascribed to David
- Whatever its original intent, this is one of the songs of ascent (Pss. 120-134) that are thought to have been songs sung on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁵

Structure of the psalm

This is an individual psalm of confidence (trust).

Analysis of the psalm

<p>131:1 O LORD* my heart is not proud nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters Or in things too difficult for me.</p>	<p>I'm no big deal. I don't worry about the things beyond my capacity. * YHWH Pride – overvalue self; this kind of person constantly compares, competes & schemes; to Baruch he says do not seek greatness (Jer.45). Haughtiness – under value others Mt.19:13; 1Pet.5:5-7; Prov.16:5; 18:12; Micah 6:8 Deu 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law. 1 Cor 4:7 For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? By servitude (Phil.2) and directing our goal oriented behavior toward God's goals (Phil.3/1Cor.2) we effectively repel these tendencies.</p>
<p>2 Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned¹ child rests against his mother My soul is like a weaned child within me.</p>	<p>I just relax next to you God. ¹ A weaned child isn't with its mother for food but for comfort; <i>gamul</i> could also be translated contented...but whether weaned or sated, it's the attitude of comfort and contentment. Isa.49:15-16 Can a mother forget...I will not forget It is pride and presumptuousness that lead to anxiety and alienation from God and servitude with humility that provide peace and comfort.</p>
<p>3 O Israel hope in the LORD From this time forth and forever.</p>	<p>Israel, you should also hope in Yahweh. John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work. Confidence in God is antagonistic to confidence in self and vice versa.</p>

THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

- What does ingratitude reveal?
 - ...that you've rejected God.
Romans 1:21, however, the first sign of rebellion – failure to glorify (praise) God for who he is or thank (gratitude) him for what he's done.

Ingratitude is a hallmark of the last days 2 Timothy 3:1-5

Complainers feel powerless in and of themselves but haven't made the transition to trusting God (Isa.57:10-15; Jer.2:13).

- ...that you are unloving
 - Moving on vs. Responding (Luke 17:11-19)

⁵ Some suggest these represented each of the 15 steps up to the temple but the other use is more likely (c.f. Exodus 23:14-17; Deut.16:16)

- Duty vs. Passion (Rev.3:14-20; Luke 10:38-42; Jn.12:1-8)
- Restraint vs. Exuberance (2 Samuel 6:13-23)
- How can I cultivate gratitude?
 - In myself
 - Remember & meditate upon God's awesome deeds (in history or in your own life)
Sit down sometime and reflect on what God has done in your life...name every event and then ponder where your life would be if God had not intervened.
Read through the entire book of Acts in one sitting.
Read through a gospel account in one sitting.
Read an account of a Christian man/woman who trusted God in difficult times.
Notice how God continually delivered them.
Prayerfully & humbly think about the good qualities and status before God of every person in your small group or home church (Rom.14:1-4; 1Cor.4:7; 13:4-7; 2Cor.5:16-17; Phil.4:8)
 - Spend time praising God (Ps.50:23)
Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done....Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles and the judgments he pronounced...
1Chron.16:8,11,12
 - Root out the lies that you like to live by
 - Autonomy – I am on my own – having nothing but my own capacities and opportunities to lean upon.
 - Perfectionism – I'll be grateful when I'm completely, unequivocally happy and unburdened.
 - Consumerism – I must have _____ to be grateful.
- In others
 - Give without expectations - Luke 6:35-36
 - Praise God around them – model it without self-conscious restraint.
 - Open their eyes to how God is at work in their life, especially during times of trial.
 - Call on them to praise God personally and amongst believers.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

- Read psalms 1, 19, 37, 73 & 119⁶
- Review the notes on Wisdom Psalms from the first week of class.

Prepare responses to the following for homework submission

- What is wisdom?
- What is the relationship of the Law to wisdom?
- Write a wisdom psalm in a Hebrew style. Annotate the psalm to explain the poetical devices used.

⁶ As you read them pay attention to the poetic devices used.