

Seeing the Psalms

INSTRUCTOR:

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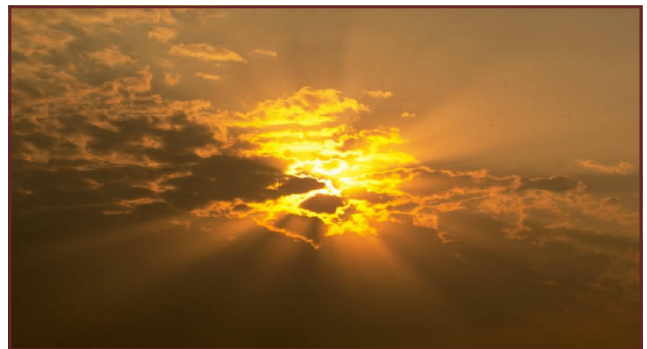
SEEING THE PSALMS:

- Images of Deity
- Images of Humanity
- Images of the World

“Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.”
(Colossians 3:16)

What’s the Big Picture

Part of the power of the Book of Psalms lies in the **word-pictures** the psalmists use. This course aims at recapturing the **imaginative and emotive power** of the psalms, particularly the power of imagery in the psalms.



FOR THE LORD GOD IS SUN
Psalm 84:11 (TNK)

We will study **how imagery works** and how the psalmists employed imagery, including that from the surrounding cultures, **to teach truth about God, people, and the world in which we live.**

What You Can Expect to Learn

UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS COURSE YOU WILL:

- ✓ Know how to **analyze** imagery in Book of Psalms.
- ✓ Know how to **use** the Psalms in your own life and ministry.
- ✓ **Understand** better the purpose and message of Psalms 8, 23, 24, 29, 93, 104, 121, and 131.
- ✓ **Appreciate** more deeply the beauty of God, yourself, and the world in which you live.

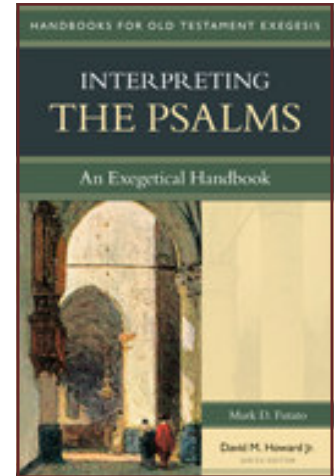
“We are all in process. We are all becoming more of what God created us to be. May the Spirit of the risen Lord transform us through Seeing the Psalms.”

What You Need to Do

READING

- ✓ Brown, William P. *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002.
- ✓ Futato, Mark David. *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2007.

Note: It would be good to read these books before class begins.



PSALM PREPARATION

- ✓ Before each class you need to prepare the psalm or psalms that will be studied that day. Psalm 1:3 and Psalm 84:11 are excluded from this assignment.
- ✓ Preparation includes: 1) Reading at least one commentary and 2) Writing a 250 word essay on each psalm, articulating your understanding of the structure and message of each psalm.
- ✓ The essays will be turned in at the beginning of class:

REFLECTION PAPER

- ✓ You will write a reflection paper on Psalm 92.
- ✓ The paper may be up to and not more than 3 pages in length, double spaced, with 1 inch margins all around.
- ✓ This is not an exegetical paper but is more like an extended journal entry that focuses on what the meaning of the psalm, especially the images, for your life.

FINAL EXAM

- ✓ There will be a final exam. The exam will be objective and will be based on the lectures.

I have been accustomed to call this book... "An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul;" for there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. (John Calvin)



How You Will Be Graded

READING

- ✓ You will earn up to 10 points by completing the reading assignments in the two textbooks . You will send an e-mail to me, stating the percentage of the reading you have completed.
- ✓ You will earn up to 30 points by writing book reviews of each of the assigned textbooks — 15 points for each review. (See instructions on IQWeb.)

PSALM PREPARATION

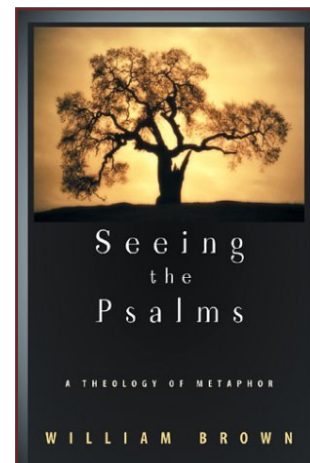
- ✓ You will earn up to 40 points by preparing the psalms.
- ✓ Each psalm preparation is worth 5 points.

REFLECTION PAPER

- ✓ You will earn up to 40 points by completing the reflection paper .
- ✓ You will be graded on clarity of thought and how you relate the imagery in the psalm to your life.

FINAL EXAM

- ✓ You will earn up to 40 points by completing the final exam.
- ✓ Note: The final exam will be taken on Blackboard. (See Orientation Module on IQWeb.)



What We Will Cover

DAY 1

Psalm 1:3, An Introduction to Imagery, Psalm 23

DAY 2

An Introduction to Mythopoeic Imagery, Psalm 24

DAY 3

Psalm 29, Psalm 93, Psalm 104,

DAY 4

Psalm 8, Psalm 121, Psalm 131, and Psalm 84:11

בִּי שֶׁמֶשׁ וְיָמִין יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים

“For the LORD God is sun and shield”
(Psalm 84:11)

“Life is a journey over uneven terrain, through changing seasons. Whether we encounter highs or lows, the biblical Psalms stand ready to engage our emotions and clarify our thoughts.”

What You Can Study in the Future

IMAGERY

- ✓ Keel, Othmar. *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997.
- ✓ Ryken, Leland, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III, eds. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- ✓ Smick, Elmer B. "Mythopoeic Language in the Psalms," *WTJ* 44 (1982): 88-98.
- ✓ Smick, Elmer B. "The Mythological Elements in the Book of Job," *WTJ* 40 (1977-1978): 213-28.

POETRY

- ✓ Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1985.
- ✓ Longman, Tremper III. "Biblical Poetry," *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*. Ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993, 80-91.
- ✓ Petersen, D. and Richards, K. *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992.

PSALMS

- ✓ Allender, Dan B. and Tremper Longman III. *Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994.
- ✓ Brueggemann, W. *The Message of the Psalms*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1984.
- ✓ Bullock, C. Hassell. *Encountering the Psalms*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.
- ✓ Futato, Mark D. *Joy Comes in the Morning: Psalms for All Seasons*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004.
- ✓ Futato, Mark D. *Transformed by Praise: The Purpose and Message of the Psalms*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002.
- ✓ McCann, J. Clinton. *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms As Torah*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993.
- ✓ Waltke, Bruce K. "Psalms: Theology of," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997, 5.1100-15.

"The book of Psalms provides us the most reliable theological, pastoral, and liturgical resource given in the biblical tradition."

