

## Tehillim / Psalms | ספר תהילים

### Introduction

The writings of the Apostles in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) say:

#### **Romans 15:4**

15:4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (NASB)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:11**

10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (NASB)

Rav Shaul (the Apostle Paul) reminded Timothy on the importance of the scriptures from the Tanach that he had learned as a child.

#### **2 Timothy 3:14-17**

3:14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them 3:15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (NASB)

These things are especially true for sefer *Tehillim / Psalms*. The Scriptures tell us in *Ephesians 5:19* <sup>19</sup>λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ, *5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; (NASB)* and in *Colossians 3:16* <sup>16</sup>ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικεῖτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ψαλμοῖς, ὕμνοις, ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν [τῇ] χάριτι ᾄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ: *3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (NASB)* and *James 5:13* states <sup>13</sup>Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν; προσευχέσθω: εὐθυμεῖ τις; ψαλλέτω. *5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing psalms. (NASB)* The Psalms were an important part of the life and relationship with the Lord in the first century believer. Within the book of *Tehillim / Psalms* is the eager yearning and longing for God's presence, there are prayers and songs of joy expressing trust and praise in the Lord. We find every form of emotion expressed in the Psalms for example, joy, anger, praise, repentance, trust, and doubt. The Psalms we are told are to be for us a hymnal of praise to God, a prayer book for learning how to approach and pray to the Lord, we find scripture for building our faith in Yeshua the Messiah, and we find a guide for learning to live a holy and righteous life before God even in the midst of our troubles.

## The Purpose of this Study

The study of Sefer Tehillim (Book of Psalms) will be made using a two-pronged approach towards exegesis. First and foremost, we will be concerned with understanding the psalmists' words, ideas, and motivation for writing the song/poem. How did the Torah affect the psalmists' understanding of God, of his relationship with God, and the struggle he was going through in life? What was the goal set out by David and others in conveying their feelings toward the Creator God and portraying them through the breadth of their emotions? When King David calls out to God in distress, what is the nature of his call? What would be our application of his fervent expressions towards our own often distressful situations in life? I also want to look at the various messianic expectations found within the Psalms and draw in the Torah and NT scriptures while examining them. A second, equally important, goal (for the biblical exegete) is to ask not the objective question of what is the meaning of this verse, but a more subjective one of what does this phrase, or idea, mean to me? In other words, while the primary goal is to comprehend the word of God as it relates to Avraham, Moshe, David and Solomon, we want to think about our understanding of who God is; our understanding of God today is it consistent with how they understood God and His promises according to the Scriptures? In addition to this, we want to study how some of the scriptures come to be interpreted as a messianic expectation of the Messiah. How does the word of God and the actions of our forefathers relate to us? How does what we learn about Scripture affect our everyday lives? We will approach this study in the following way, (i) we will examine the original Hebrew (Masoretic Text), Aramaic (Targum Pseudo Jonathan), and Greek (Septuagint, LXX) texts of sefer Tehillim, (ii) we will look at classical Christian commentary, and (iii) we will examine the Rabbinic commentary from Midrash Tehillim.

## Overview of Tehillim

Sefer Tehillim (Book of Psalms) is derived from the Hebrew word Tehillim meaning “Praises” and is the first book of the third section of the Hebrew Bible known as the Ketuvim or Sacred Writings, and is comprised of 150 psalms. A large number of the psalms contain superscriptions that describe their contents, their author, and, it is generally assumed, in some cases, the melodies to which they were sung during the services in the Beit HaMikdash (Temple in Jerusalem). In Jewish tradition, in the transmission of the Hebrew bible, these superscriptions are considered separate verses. Therefore when studying the verses of Tehillim and comparing to the English translations (i.e. the KJV) the verse numbers are offset as a result of the superscriptions becoming verses in our Hebrew Bible. These superscriptions are not considered verses in the English translations. The KJV and other English translations of Tehillim do not consider these superscriptions as separate verses so the numbering scheme throughout the English translation of the Psalms are off with respect to the Hebrew Bible. This is an odd translational feature of the English versions of the Scriptures so one needs to keep this in mind while referencing the Masoretic text. Sefer HaTehillim consists of prayers and songs that have inspired people throughout history. According to the Masoretic text Sefer HaTehillim consists of several collections or groupings of Psalms. Scholars believe the first Psalm (תהילים א) to be an introduction to the book as a whole, and Psalm 150 (תהילים קנ) to be an epilogue. There are also concluding notes at the end of the Psalms 41, 72, 89, and 106 which corroborates the layout of the book as being written or grouped into five separate sections. The rabbinic midrash (*rabbinic interpretation from the period of the rabbis of the Mishnah and the Talmud*) to Psalms states that David composed the Psalms in five books, just as Moses wrote the five books of the Torah (Pentateuch). The midrash suggests that there may be a parallel, on the grouping of the Psalms into five books, with the Torah being given to us consisting of the five books of Moshe. In our studies David will be assumed to be the author of

the book of Psalms but we will also take into consideration that the Psalms were written over a broader span of history contributed by various authors. In the *Talmud Bavli Bava Batra 14b*, the rabbis state that the authorship of the Psalms was David even though some Psalms preceded his writings. For example, the superscription to Psalm 90 says “*A prayer of Moses, the man of God.*” Scholars attribute seventy two of the psalms to David where Tehillim 90 is attributed to Moshe because it is explicitly stated according to the written text. Other Psalms are not attributed to a particular author and are therefore called the “*orphan psalms.*” Therefore, according to the Masoretic text itself it would be incorrect to say that David is the author of all the psalms in sefer Tehillim. Nevertheless, rabbinic tradition sees David as the final author of the book, although he is said to have included the works of others in his final composition. In 2 Samuel 23:1 א וְאֵלֶּה דְבָרֵי דָוִד הָאֲחֻרָיִם נָאֵם דָּוִד בֶּן-יִשַׁי וְנָאֵם הַגִּבּוֹר הַקָּדֵם עַל מִשִּׁיחַ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וְנֹעֲדִים זְמֵרוֹת יִשְׁרָאֵל. *Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel (NASB)*, David is described in 2 Samuel 23:1 as “*the sweet singer in Israel.*” The view of the Davidic authorship of all of Tehillim was not left unquestioned in the Middle Ages and is rejected by all modern biblical scholars as anachronistic (out dated). The reason being for example, *Psalm 137* speaks of the period hundreds of years following David’s death, when the Temple was destroyed and the Israel was in exile in Babylon. The book of Psalms is now seen as a collection of poetry, hymns, and songs compiled at different periods in history. There is no real reason to doubt that some of them go back to David himself, with psalms or groups of psalms added later to the collection.

**The Psalms consist of 5 books**

- Book 1 / ספר ראשון: Tehilim / Psalms 1-41
- Book 2 / ספר שני: Tehilim / Psalms 42-72
- Book 3 / ספר שלישי: Tehilim / Psalms 73-89
- Book 4 / ספר רביעי: Tehilim / Psalms 90-106
- Book 5 / ספר חמישי: Tehilim / Psalms 107-150

**Davidic Psalms:**

Tehilim / Psalms 3-41, 51-65, 68-71, 108-110, 138-145

**Sons of Korah:**

Tehillim / Psalms 42/43-49, 84-85, 87-88

**Asaph:**

Tehillim / Psalms 73-83

**Psalms grouped together in a particular genre**

1. Tehillim / Psalms of ascents 120-134
2. Enthronement Tehillim / Psalms 93, 96-99
3. Hallelujah Tehillim / Psalms 146-150

# תהלים

## ספר ראשון

א	אֲשֶׁר־י הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר   לֹא הִלֵּךְ בְּעֵצַת רִשְׁעִים וּבְדַרְךְ הַטְּמָאִים לֹא עָמַד וּבְמוֹשֶׁב לְצִדִּים לֹא יָשָׁב: כִּי אִם-בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חָפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵלָה: וְהוּזָה בְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל-פְּלִי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פָּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעֵלְיוֹ לֹא-יִבּוֹל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ: לֹא-יָבִן הַרְשָׁעִים כִּי אִם-יִפְמָז אֲשֶׁר-תִּדְבְּנוּ רוּחַ: עַל-יָבִן   לֹא-יִקְמוּ רִשְׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְהַטְּמָאִים בְּעֵדַת צְדִיקִים: כִּי-יִדְעַע יְהוָה הַרְךְ צְדִיקִים וְהַרְךְ רִשְׁעִים תִּאֲבָד: לְמַה רָגְשׁוּ גוֹיִם וְלְאֲמִים יִהְיוּ-דִּיק:
ב	יְתִיצְבוּ

**Reference Materials**

For the layperson performing a word study in the Hebrew and Greek bibles, one will minimally need the following resources. (i) The Masoretic

א. 1. כן ברוב ספרים כ"י ונמסר עליו לגרמיה וכן ד"ב, ד"ג, ד"ו, ד"ט וד"ט"ו, ס"א אשר בלא לגרמיה וכן ד"י"ב וד"י"ד. 2. כן ב"א, ב"ג א"ם בלא געיא. 2. v. כן ב"א, ב"ג בתורתו בתורת" במקף ובלא נגינה, כס"א בתורת ונמסר עליו געיא. 2. v. כן ב"א, ב"ג ונתורתו געיא. 3. כן ברוב ספרים כ"י וד"ט"ו, ס"א ועלהו לא וכן ד"ב וד"ו, וס"א ועלהו לא וכן ד"ג, ד"ט, ד"י"ב וד"י"ד. 4. v. כן בספרים כ"י ונמסר עליו געיא. ב. 1. כן ברוב ספרים כ"י כזמור א' וזמור ב' תריהון חרמא פורשתא.

text or an interlinear English-Hebrew text. If you know very little Hebrew you may also use an English translation with words that are keyed to the Strong numbers such as the AMG Hebrew Word Study Bible. (ii) A Hebrew Lexicon for definitions and studying the etymology of selected words. (iii) A concordance in order to study the frequency and range of usage for selected words in the Hebrew and Greek Bibles. (iv) Other bible research tools such as software resources for searching the Hebrew and Greek texts. I used the following resources while studying the Hebrew and Greek texts, definitions, and performing word searches, etymology, frequency and range studies contained in this book. Throughout the studies in the Psalms the words and definitions, etc., should be assumed to be taken from the following list of reference materials.

**Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB).** The BDB is considered the finest and most comprehensive Hebrew lexicon available to the English speaking student and is based upon the classic work of Wilhelm Gesenius. This is available in hard copy or pdf format.

**The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament** coded with Strong's concordance numbers by George V. Wigram. This book is good for Hebrew word searches through the Tanach and provides the various occurrences as each word is used according to their verbal stems. It is important to understand that the context and sentence syntax must be taken into consideration while attempting to translate and understand a given word within the Hebrew Scriptures.

**Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament** coded with Strong's concordance numbers by Joseph H. Thayer. Thayer's Greek-English lexicon is one of the best Greek New Testament lexicons available. Based upon the acclaimed German lexicon by C. L. W. Grimm, Thayer's first appeared in 1885.

**The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament** coded with Strong's concordance numbers by George V. Wigram. This book is a must have for Greek word searches through the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings, New Testament).

**Hatch and Redpath Concordance to the Septuagint**, second edition, Baker Academic publishers (HP-CLXX), by Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath. This book is a must have for word searches being conducted in the Greek language in the Septuagint and other Greek versions of the Old Testament including the Apocryphal Books.

**ספר מליים (Sefer Milim) Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Yerushalmi, and Midrashic literature** by Marcus Jastrow. This lexicon is available for free download online in pdf format. This lexicon is a must have for serious students of the Hebrew and Aramaic texts. The literature in this lexicon covers a period of one thousand years and contains Hebrew and Aramaic elements in about equal proportions.

**סדור קול יעקב (Siddur kol Yaakov) Rabbinical Council of America Edition of the Artscroll Siddur** by Rabbi Nosson Scherman and Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz. This Siddur was used for study of the rabbinical liturgy and contains both Hebrew and English parallel texts with commentary, Torah and instructions, layout and typography and Hebrew grammar. This has become a standard in rabbinic Judaism liturgy for Shabbat and festivals services.

**New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (5 Vol Set)** by Willem A VanGemeren. Available in book form or on CD ROM. This work is based upon the NIV and is becoming a standard lexicon for Hebrew Word studies.

**Theological Word book of the Old Testament** by Harris, Archer, and Waltke. Includes discussions on every Hebrew word of theological significance in the Tanach, plus brief definitions of the words found in Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon. Keyed to Strong's Concordance.

**Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament** by William Lee Holladay. Based on a larger and more exhaustive Halot lexicon, the concise Halot contains almost every word in the Hebrew Tanach without long, drawn out definitions.

**Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of Tannaim, Vol. 1 & 2** by George Foot Moore, Hendrickson Publishers. These books were used to help understand the history of the Jewish people from the time of the exile of the Jews from Yisrael until the first century community during the second temple period. The aim of these volumes is to represent Judaism in the centuries in which it is assumed definitive form as it presents itself in the tradition which it has been regarded as authentic. This work cites primary sources and texts from the Talmud, Midrashic literature, the Tanach and the Ketuvei Shelachim.

**Sapirstein Edition Rashi: The Torah with Rashi's Commentary Translated, Annotated and Elucidated, Vols. 1-5: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy** by Rabbi Yisrael Herczeg. Rashi's commentary, English translation is taken from the Sapirstein Edition and the Hebrew text quotations of Rashi's was taken from the Judaic Classics Digital Library.

**Everyman's Talmud: The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages** by Abraham Cohen. This is a comprehensive introduction to the teachings of the Talmud that summarizes the wisdom of the rabbinic sages on the dominant themes of Judaism: the doctrine of God, God and the universe, the soul and its destiny; prophesy and revelation; physical life; moral life and social living; law, ethics, and jurisprudence, legends and folk traditions, the Messiah, and the world to come. This book may be used as a quick reference on the teachings found in rabbinic Judaism.

**Judaic Classics Digital Library CD ROM, Judaic Classics Torah Resources CD ROM (JCD)**, by David Jantrowitz, Version 3.0.8 © 1991-2004 Institute for Computers in Jewish Life, Davka Corporation, and/or Judaica Press Inc. Brooklyn NY, [www.davka.com](http://www.davka.com) This

software was the source for the Hebrew and Aramaic text shown in this book including the word searches. This software contains a large collection of resources, the Tanach, the Torah commentary, Parashah insights from Rashi and others, Talmud Bavil and Yerushalmi, Tzuras Ha-Daf, Kabbalah, Midrashim, and more. The resources found on this DVD collection are in Hebrew and Aramaic only.

#### **Haggadah**

Haggadah (Aramaic חַגְגָּה meaning tales, lore. Plural form Aggadot or (Ashkenazi) Aggados. Also known as Aggadah.) Refers to the homiletic and non-legalistic exegetical texts in the classical rabbinic literature of Judaism, particularly as recorded in the Talmud and Midrash. In general, Aggadah is a compendium of rabbinic homilies that incorporates folklore, historical anecdotes, moral exhortations, and practical advice.

**Judaic Scholar Digital Reference Library™ (JSDRL)**, 2008, [www.publishersrow.com](http://www.publishersrow.com), Whether your field of interest is Jewish Studies, Hebrew Bible, early Christianity, or Comparative Religion, this is an online subscription library that includes resources such as the following collections, The War against Israel, JPS Digital Torah Library, Judaic Scholar Digital Reference Library, Rabbinic Bookshelf, S.R. Driver - U. Cassuto Collection, Sepharad: The Essential Library, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Tanakh. This collection has 434 books available for use as reference materials and is a subscription use access that may be rented on a year to year basis and accessed from almost any computer with an Internet connection.

**The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments**, Samuel Rolles Driver, Alfred Plummer, 2005, Varda Books, 1906, T & T Clark, Edinburgh. This commentary was originally published in 1906. The introductory chapters contain information on the division of the Psalms, the Hebrew MSS and the Massorah, the traditions of the church, and information on the interpretation of the Psalms from the Roman Catholic Church. This commentary will help to offer background information on interpretation of the Psalms from a traditional Christian perspective. This will be valuable with respect to our analysis of the rabbinic commentary on the Psalms.

**Learning to read Midrash**, by Simi Peters, Urim Publications, Jerusalem, 2004. This book was used to help understand the mashal (parable) and the nimshal (the text narrative that follows the mashal and seeks to clarify the link between the mashal and the biblical text) that is found within the Midrash on Tehillim. These writings and interpretations are open to debate and criticism since the rabbis often have a didactic agenda in telling their stories and the way the midrash is weaved together.

## Rabbinic Commentary

Studying the rabbinic commentary from Midrash Tehillim we will following Simi Peters method of analysis to analyze the midrash by (i) dividing the paragraph into its constituent parts, (ii) examining the mashal (parable) as a story in its own right, (iii) isolating the important elements of the mashal, (iv) matching the elements of the mashal and the nimshal, (v) drawing conclusions, and (vi) re-reading the biblical text in light of the midrash. The midrash will be read where each mashal is considered an individual work authored by the rabbi to whom it is attributed. The sowing together of the disjointed sayings of the rabbis will be discussed to try and understand the role of the chronology and sequence of references found throughout the midrash.

Midrash Tehillim (מדרש תהלים) is a haggadic midrash known to exist from the 11th century and is quoted by Rashi (*Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak (1040-1105), who is the author of influential rabbinic Biblical and Talmudic commentaries*) in his commentary on *1 Samuel 17:49*, and in many other passages. Midrash Tehillim (מדרש תהלים, Midrash Psalms), a Haggadic Midrash on the Psalms is also called Aggadat Tehillim. Rashi on *Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:7* uses this phrase “*Aggadat Tehillim*” and in many other passages.

## The Mashal (Midrashic Parable)

The mashal is generally made up of two parts (i) the parable itself and (ii) the nimshal or explanation of the midrash. The mashal is introduced by the Hebrew phrase למה הדבר דומה (le-ma hadavar domeh, “*this may be compared to*”). The nimshal is introduced by the Hebrew word כך (kakh, “*thus*”). The question for ourselves is למה לי? (lama li?) why do I need this word, verse, statement, or phrase? What does the mashal add to our understanding of the text? What would be missing if we read the text without the aid of the mashal? The mashal is like a metaphor, it is thought provoking because it compares two things revealing differences between them. The parallels drawn out by the mashal are only partial or superficial.

The mashal may introduce an interpretive problem and then provide its resolution. Studying the mashal we might miss its meaning, therefore to ensure we methodically examine the midrash thoroughly. I will try to follow this six step procedure.

1. Divide the paragraph into its constituent parts.
  2. Examine the mashal part of the midrash as a story in its own right to look for inconsistencies.

3. Isolate important elements of the mashal part of the midrash.
4. Match elements of the mashal and nimshal.
5. Draw conclusions.
6. Read the biblical text in light of the midrash to see how the mashal has helped interpret the text.

Due to the length of each midrashim it will not be possible to address all of the midrashic commentary. Take for example in *Tehillim / Psalms 1* there are 22 parts, 15 pages of text. Therefore, we will look at selected portions of the midrash and the rest will be left for personal study.

Reading the midrashim it is important to watch for the absence of straight forward statements, sometimes the midrash will clearly state the problem and at other times a clear statement will be missing. The nimshal is an expansion of the midrashic story that expands upon the biblical story beyond what is actually written in the text. We must keep these things in mind, metaphor is being used to help understand the text and to dig a little deeper, the midrash is not attempting to rewrite the biblical narrative.

### Translation of Midrash Tehillim

In these studies we will be looking at the Hebrew/Aramaic midrashic literature on Psalms. I will also be translating the midrash into English. There are difficulties in translation and trying to translate the Hebrew and Aramaic text of the midrash. Translation issues arise for several reason, one of the greatest difficulties is that word meanings may have changed or been lost to us over time. The loss of meaning becomes obvious when the translation becomes awkward and we find ourselves unable to translate words. The differing meaning of words through time (history) also cause us to mistakenly assume we have understood something correctly. The difficult task then will be to determine the meaning of the words within their context found in the midrash and in the holy Scriptures. The English translation will definitely affect our understanding and interpretation of the text, therefore these things must be kept in mind while reading the English translation.

The midrash generally has the following structure:

1. The dibur hamat'hil (line 1, the beginning word)
2. The petihta (line 2), homiletic introduction to the section including a verse from the Scriptures.
3. The mashal (parable)
4. The nimshal (expansion of parable)
5. The concluding verses with commentary

### Christian Commentary

The Psalms, similar to other wisdom literature of the Tanakh (*i.e. Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes*) is written in Hebrew by an ancient people. Unlike English poetry which emphasizes rhyme and meter, the Hebrew poet emphasized other characteristics such as parallelisms and figures of speech. Looking at recent research, commentary, and publications interestingly the discovery of Ugarit and the Ugaritic texts have had a profound impact upon the modern scholars understanding of Tehillim / Psalms. The following journals will be surveyed (searched) using key words pertaining to each particular Psalm throughout this study. The purpose is to examine the most recent literature researchers have been publishing on the Psalms.

**Bible Research Journals** (<http://www.sagepub.com>)

- Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture

- Currents in Biblical Research
- Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology
- Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
- Journal for the Study of the New Testament
- Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
- The Expository Times
- Theology
- Biblical Theology Bulletin

In the scholarly work it is important to note that many references are made to the “profane” literature that was left behind by the people of Canaan at the archaeological site of Ugarit. Ugarit was the political, religious, and economic center of Canaan in the 12th century BCE. Scholars tell us that the ancient Canaanite city and state of Ugarit is very important for those who study the Tanakh. The archaeological findings of the Ugaritic texts help us to understand the meaning of various Biblical passages as well as helping to decipher difficult Hebrew words.

Researchers conclude that the following reasons are why these texts are important for us to know, have, and study. Due to reproductions of some Psalms or fragment Psalms, researchers conclude that some of the Psalms were simply adapted from Ugaritic pagan sources. The Ugaritic literature also contains a story of the global flood that is a duplication of the biblical account. The language and structure of the Ugarit helps to understand the language of the Bible. *Psalms I (The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries)* by Mitchell Dahood discusses at length the language of the Ugarit and its use for understanding the Psalms. Mitchell Dahood is considered an authority on the Ugaritic texts and other commentaries such as the *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 20, Psalms 51-100 (tate), 608pp* by Marvin Tate reference Dahood’s work. Ugarit and the Ugaritic texts were discovered in 1928 by a group of French archaeologists. The style of writing discovered at Ugarit is known as alphabetic cuneiform. It is interesting that the literature found at Ugarit is a blending of two styles of writing, a unique alphabetic script (like Hebrew) and cuneiform (like Akkadian). Examining some of the clay tablets of these texts it appears that the cuneiform lines and dashes are organized (shaped) to form letter-like symbols in the clay tablets. The Ugaritic literature is passing through a cuneiform style and it is at this time that alphabetic scripts were making their way into the culture, therefore the Ugaritic texts provide for us a bridge from one style of writing literature to another in history. The Ugaritic texts provide information regarding the meaning of archaic words, for example, over time words change and their meanings change. Looking at the context and usage of words in the Ugaritic texts provide information on archaic words found within the Hebrew Bible.

In addition to this, it is interesting that the Ugaritic texts provides for us a picture of the style of worship of the Canaanite gods (the fertility gods of the land of Canaan). Studying the Tanakh, the prophets speak greatly against Baal, Asherah, and various other fertility gods on quite nearly every page of the Neviim (Prophets). The reason being that the people of Israel worshiped these pagan gods along with and sometimes instead of the Lord God Almighty. Scholars say that the Scriptural denunciation of these Canaanite gods receives a fresh face when the Ugaritic texts were discovered since these pagan gods were the gods of the land of Canaan. According to the Ugaritic texts, El was the chief deity of Canaan. In the Psalms El is also the name of God that is used in many of the Psalms of the Lord God Almighty. Scholars today say that studying the Psalms and the Ugaritic texts one can see the very attributes for which the Lord is acclaimed in the Bible are the same for which El is acclaimed in the Ugarit. These scholars also conclude that the discovery of fragment Psalms in the Ugaritic literature indicates that the Hebrew people took a portion of their form of worship originally from Ugaritic or Canaanite hymns to El (simply adopted by Israel).

According to the Ugaritic texts other deities were worshiped by the names El Shaddai, El Elyon, and El Berit. Scholars claim that since these are applied to the Lord God Almighty in the



Tanakh the Hebrew people simply adopted the titles of the Canaanite gods and attributed them to YHVH in an effort to eliminate them. Scholars use the example saying if YHVH is all of these things there is no need for the Canaanite gods to exist. This is known as the process of assimilation. According to the Ugarit there is one text that indicate the inhabitants of Ugarit viewed YHVH as simply one of the sons of El where the other gods worshiped included Dagon, Tirosh, Horon, Nahar, Rasheph, Kotar Hosis, Shachar, and Shalem. All of these were known as lesser gods to El. In addition to this, Ugarit was plagued by a host of demons according to the texts. The people at Ugarit saw the desert as the place which was inhabited by demons (see *KTU 1.102:15-28 is a list of these demons*). In many Ugaritic texts El was described as a bull. This seems to bring an interesting perspective upon the people of Israel who made the golden calf in Parashat Ki Tisa (*Shemot / Exodus 32-34*) and the reason behind their desire to make the image of God in the image of a golden calf (a bull).

From a scholarly perspective the discovery of the Ugaritic texts and the parallels that are found within the Bible are fascinating and interesting. From a theological perspective, it is difficult to accept that the Psalmists and the authors of the Bible were taking from the pagan culture and people of Canaan and applying the attributes of the false gods to their God YHVH (the Lord God Almighty). Therefore it is very important while reading commentary to pay careful attention to what is being said and written. The process of assimilation is a dangerous thing, we find that this happened to the ancient people of Yisrael and it is happening to us even today in the various aspects of our culture that influence us. We know that HaSatan desires to be worshiped like the Lord God Almighty, therefore it should not be surprising that within the pagan nations there seem to be parallels to that of the Holy Scriptures. The discovery of the Ugaritic texts has helped the study of the Tanakh being able to clarify difficult words and phrases throughout the Tanakh. It is dangerous however to believe Israel adapted attributes from the Canaanite religious culture and applied them to the Lord God Almighty. In our study of the Psalms, we will not be investigating the Ugaritic writings. We will be looking at the biblical text itself and the influence the Torah of God had upon the authors of the Psalms. In addition to this, it is the opinion of this author that the corpus of Scriptures (Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim) the Tanakh is inspired by the Lord God Almighty through His Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit). The scriptures are not an agglomeration of works from pagan sources.

## Tehillim / Psalms

The Hebrew psalter utilizes parallelism and figures of speech for emphasis. Where English verses manipulates sounds, the Hebrew writer arranges modes of thought. The following list outlines these modes of thought where the first three are the most basic.

1. **Synonymous** — the same thought of the first line is repeated using different words in the second line (see *Tehillim / Psalms 2:4, 3:1, and 7:17*).
2. **Antithetical** — the thought of the first line is emphasized by a contrasting thought in the second line most often identified by the word “but” (see *Tehillim / Psalms 1:6 and 34:10*).
3. **Synthetic** — the second line of text explains or further develops the idea of the first line (see *Tehillim / Psalms 1:3 and 95:3*).
4. **Climactic** — The second line repeats word for word with the exception of the last few terms (see *Tehillim / Psalms 29:1*).
5. **Emblematic** — One line conveys the main point, the second line illuminates

it by an image (see *Tehillim / Psalms 42:1 and 23:1*).

The Hebrew poetry uses vivid images, similes, and metaphors to communicate thoughts and feelings which is an inherent feature of the Hebrew language and Hebrew thought process. The Ancient writers of the Hebrew bible did not use visual markers for identification of units within the text like we do today. Visual graphics to mark the beginning of units such as indentations at the beginning of a paragraph were not used, these are latter typesetting techniques developed with the modernization of writing, the printing press, etc. The ancient authors used verbal techniques to indicate the beginning of units for a listening audience. There were three verbal ways to indicate a literary unit to (i) mark the beginning, (ii) mark the end, and (iii) shape the unit as a whole to indicate all of the parts that are bound together. The Hebrew writer used the beginning verbal markers more than any other method to indicate the beginning of the respective unit. The book *“The Literary Structure of the Old Testament, A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi”* by David A. Dorsey, Baker Academic, 1999 lists the various markers that are used in the Psalms, there are 18 beginning literary markers, 9 literary ending markers, and 14 methods of shaping the units as a whole that occur throughout the Hebrew bible. Studies on the length and number of units found in the Hebrew bible turns out to be approximately 15-20 pages of Hebrew text from the BHS, and would have taken approximately 30 minutes to read to an audience. For more information on units and arrangements of units in the Hebrew bible see the book by David A Dorsey. In this study we will not be analyzing the literature structures within the Psalms, there are many books that cover that type of textual criticism very well.

### **Tehillim in Judaism**

There are two ways Orthodox Judaism reads sefer Tehillim. One way is to read through the entirety of Tehillim each week. Each day of the week is assigned a portion of Tehillim to read. On Sunday one would recite Tehillim 1 through Tehillim 29, on Mondays one would recite Tehillim 30 through Tehillim 50, and so on until the entirety of Tehillim is read through the Shabbat. The process repeats with each subsequent week.

<b>Portion</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Tehillim</b>
1.	Sunday	1-29
2.	Monday	30-50
3.	Tuesday	51-72
4.	Wednesday	73-89
5.	Thursday	90-106
6.	Friday	107-119
7.	Saturday	120-150

The other method of reading sefer Tehillim is to do so on a monthly basis. Each day of the Hebrew month is assigned a smaller portion of Tehillim.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Week</b>	<b>Tehillim</b>
1.	First Week	1-9
2.	-	10-17
3.	-	18-22
4.	-	23-28
5.	-	29-34
6.	-	35-28

7.	-	39-43
8.	Second Week	44-48
9.	-	49-54
10.	-	55-59
11.	-	60-65
12.	-	66-68
13.	-	69-71
14.	-	72-76
15.	Third Week	77-78
16.	-	79-82
17.	-	83-87
18.	-	88-89
19.	-	90-96
20.	-	97-103
21.	-	104-105
22.	Fourth week	106-107
23.	-	108-112
24.	-	113-118
25.	-	119:1-96
26.	-	119:97-176
27.	-	120-124
28.	-	125-139
29.	Fifth Week	140-144
30.	-	145-150

The Hebrew calendar alternates between a short month (29 days) and a long month (30 days) therefore during a short month the 30th day is recited along with the 29th day of the month.

In the Torah, Moshe and his sister Miriam, led the children of Israel in two songs of praise, following the splitting of the Red Sea in *Shemot / Exodus 15*, and before Moshe's death in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32*. According to Jewish tradition the Tehillim / Psalms were sung in front of the Mishkhan (Tabernacle) and then later during King Solomon's time the Psalms were sung on the steps of the Temple. The singers all came from the tribe of Levi and non-Levites were not allowed to sing in the area of the Temple. Many Psalms appear in the morning services (Shacharit). The pesukei dezimra (a group of prayers cited during morning prayers) incorporates *Tehillim / Psalms 30, 100, and 145-150*. *Tehillim / Psalm 145* (Ashrei) is read three times each day, once in shacharit as part of the pesukei dezimra, once with *Tehillim / Psalms 20* part of the concluding prayers, and once at the start of the afternoon service. On Festival days and Shabbats, instead of concluding the morning service, it precedes the Mussaf service. *Tehillim / Psalms 95-99, 29, 92, and 93*, along with some later readings, comprise the introduction (Kabbalat / traditional) Shabbat to the Friday night service. Traditionally, a different "Psalm for the Day" - Shir shel yom - is read after the morning service each day of the week (starting Sunday, *Tehillim / Psalms: 24, 48, 82, 94, 81, 93, and 92*). This is described in the Mishnah in tractate Tamid. According to the Talmud, these daily Psalms were originally recited on that day of the week by the Levites in the Temple in Jerusalem. From Rosh Chodesh Elul until Hoshanah Rabbah, *Tehillim / Psalm 27* is recited twice daily following the morning and evening services. There is a Minhag (custom) to say *Tehillim / Psalm 30* each morning of Chanukkah after Shacharit.

### **Ketuvei HaShelachim**

The Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) show the use of Tehillim / Psalms in worship and remain today as an important part of worship in most Christian churches. The Apostle Paul quoted *Tehillim / Psalms 14 and 53* as the basis for the original sin in Romans 3. The following is a list of the Psalms found in the Ketuvei Shelachim.

<b>Tehillim / Psalms</b>	<b>Ketuvei Shelachim</b>
• 2:1, 2	Acts 4:25, 26
• 2:7	Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5 ; 5:5
• 2:8, 9	Revelation 2:26, 27; 12:5; 19:15
• 4:4	Ephesians 4:26
• 5:9	Romans 3:13
• 6:3	John 12:27
• 6:8	Matthew 7:23; Luke 13:27
• 8:2	Matthew 21:16
• 8:4-6	Hebrews 2:6-8
• 8:6	1 Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 1:22
• 10:7	Romans 3:14
• 14:1-3	Romans 3:10-12
• 16:8-11	Acts 2:25-28
• 16:10	Acts 13:35
• 18:2	Hebrews 2:13
• 18:49	Romans 15:9
• 19:4	Romans 10:18
• 22:1	Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34
• 22:7	Matthew 27:39; Mark 15:29; Luke 23:35
• 22:8	Matthew 27:43
• 22:18	John 19:24; Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34
• 22:22	Hebrews 2:12
• 24:1	1 Corinthians 10:26 [28]
• 31:5	Luke 23:46
• 32:1-2	Romans 4:7, 8
• 34:8	1 Peter 2:3
• 34:12-16	1 Peter 3:10-12
• 34:20	John 19:36
• 35:19	John 15:25
• 36:1	Romans 3:18
• 37:11	Matthew 5:5
<b>Tehillim / Psalms</b>	<b>Ketuvei Shelachim</b>
• 8:11	Luke 23:49
• 40:6-8	Hebrews 10:5-7
• 41:9	John 13:18
• 41:13	Luke 1:68
• 42:5	Matthew 26:38; Mark 14:34
• 44:22	Romans 8:36
• 45:6-7	Hebrews 1:8, 9
• 48:2	Matthew 5:35
• 51:4	Romans 3:4

• 53:1-3	Romans 3:10-12
• 55:22	1 Peter 5:7
• 62:12	Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6
• 68:18	Ephesians 4:8
• 69:4	John 15:25
• 69:9	John 2:17
• 69:9	Romans 15:3
• 69:21	Matthew 27:34, 48; Mark 15:36; Luke 23:36; John 19:28-29
• 69:22-23	Romans 11:9-10
• 69:25	Acts 1:20
• 72:18	Luke 1:68
• 78:2	Matthew 13:35
• 78:24	John 6:31
• 82:6	John 10:34
• 86:9	Revelation 15:4
• 88:8	Luke 23:49
• 89:10	Luke 1:51
• 89:20	Acts 13:22
• 90:4	2 Peter 3:8
• 91:11-12	Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10-11
• 91:13	Luke 10:19
• 94:11	1 Corinthians 3:20
• 94:14	Romans 11:1-2
• 95:7-11	Hebrews 3:7-11, 15, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 7
• 97:7	Hebrews 1:6
• 98:3	Luke 1:54
• 102:25-27	Hebrews 1:10-12
• 103:17	Luke 1:50
• 104:4	Hebrews 1:7
• 105:8-9	Luke 1:72, 73
• 106:10	Luke 1:71
• 106:45	Luke 1:72
• 106:48	Luke 1:68
• 107:9	Luke 1:53
• 109:8	Acts 1:20
• 109:25	Matthew 27:39
<b>Tehillim / Psalms</b>	<b>Ketuvei Shelachim</b>
• 110:1	Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42, 43; Acts 2:34, 35; Hebrews 1:13, Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Luke 22:69; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12, 13; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22
• 110:4	Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21
• 111:9	Luke 1:68
• 111:9	Luke 1:49

- 112:9 2 Corinthians 9:9
- 116:10 2 Corinthians 4:13
- 117:1 Romans 15:11
- 118:6 Hebrews 13:6
- 118:22-23 Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10, 11; Luke 20:17;  
Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:4, 7
- 118:25-26 Matthew 21:9; 23:39; Mark 11:9;  
Luke 13:35; 19:38; John 12:13
- 132:5 Acts 7:46
- 132:11 Acts 2:30
- 132:17 Luke 1:69
- 135:14 Hebrews 10:30
- 140:3 Romans 3:13
- 143:2 Romans 3:20
- 146:6 Acts 4:24; 14:15

