

The Soundtrack of Salvation (pt. 2): David's Royal Family

Psalms 42–72 | 07.16.2017 | The Psalms

I have a business venture for anyone musically inclined . . . and willing to exploit our selfie world.

Call it . . . **soundtrack-ography**.

Just like we have photographers and videographers who put together montages from weddings and other events . . . I think our self-obsessed world would go for **soundtrack-ography**.

Combining the photo album with lifetime of iPod playlists . . . you make an epic soundtrack for a person or family.

These soundtracks might include cheery marches to highlight graduations, or songs of lament to mark losses. New songs with personalized lyrics could be recorded to fit a person's life.

Soundtrack-ography. It's not a profession for me . . . but maybe for you.

Similarly, there's a band who's already done something like this.

Starting in 2011 . . . Ben Cooper started a multi-album venture called The Family Tree.

In these albums, he tells the story of one family from the 1800s to the present. It's something like Hillbilly Elegy put to music.

Through more than 3 dozen songs, it traces the highs and lows of a family genealogy.

It's quite impressive . . . but for our purposes . . . it's not his musical ingenuity that stands out.

Rather . . . it is the way his musical genealogy gives us a lens to see what the Psalms ARE – **A soundtrack of David's Royal Family**.

Indeed, this is what the Psalms are

Books 1 – 2 tell the story of David's rise to royalty and his later suffering because of sin.

Book 2 ends with David's son on the throne . . . only to see **Book 3** further detail the way David's family suffered because of sin.

These first 3 books are all historical – they play the music that follows Israel from David to Zechariah—the last king of Judah who is on the throne when Babylon invades.

Books 4 and 5 look toward the future, . . . they promise weary exiles how God will re-establish an heir of David on the throne and bring salvation from Israel to the world.

In short . . . the Psalms are a soundtrack for salvation.

But more specifically . . . they are a soundtrack for David's royal family.

Just as Matthew's Gospel begins by identifying Jesus as David's heir,
. . . so the Psalms do the same.

Only instead of looking back to David from the Incarnation . . . The Psalms look forward to the rise of a New David . . . who kingship will bring salvation to the world.

In the **Old Testament**, the Psalms fit the overarching story . . . God was going to bring salvation to Israel and the world through a king from David's family.

In fact . . . it's not too much to say that every part of the OT—the **Law** of Moses, the **Prophets** from Samuel to Zechariah, and the **Writings** all center on David.

Judges, Ruth, and 1-2 Samuel all prepare the way for David.

1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah all look back to David.

And even the promises of the New Covenant build on God's promise to David – what we read in 2 Samuel 7.

So I say all that . . . to stress how central David is to the Psalms . . . and how necessary it is to know the history of David to understand the Psalms.

This is true for the **New Testament** as well.

Dozens of passages in the NT . . . apply the Psalms of David directly to Jesus.

And they do that . . . b/c the Psalms give hope to a people looking for David's Son.

Historically, when the Psalms were arranged after Israel's return from exile . . . God' house had been rebuilt in Jerusalem . . . BUT David's house was not rebuilt.

Zerubbabel, a son of Solomon (1 Chr 3:19), is called a governor (Hag 1:1) but not KING.

When Israel returned from exile . . . there is no re-establishment of David's Kingdom.

That's what the Psalms tell . . . how God will restore a son of David to the throne.

So . . . that's the big picture . . . one we are trying to keep in mind as we study the Psalms.

And today . . . we look at Book 2 . . . **Pss 42–72** . . . where we'll see God's faithfulness to David and to David's son . . . Solomon

If you have the infographic . . . I invite you to use it as a guide in following our journey though Book 2.

Like last week, we will trace the movements of the Psalms . . .

From the heights of Psalms 45 and 46

Through the valleys of David in Psalms 51–64

To the greater height of Solomon's throne in Psalm 72

Unlike last week, tho . . . we will utilize a visual aid to help see how the Psalms all fit together.

In fact, if you follow the arrow through Book 2 you can see how it starts high in the songs of Zion composed by the priestly sons of Korah . . .

It then falls after David's sin with Bathsheba is mentioned in Psalm 51 . . .

Pss 51–65 recount the struggles of David's later life, before God intervenes in Psalm 65.

And finally, David's son is established on the throne in Psalm 72, where the nations come and find refuge.

So . . . there's a lot here.

And I trust this infographic will be helpful as we go along . . .

But . . . it is the text of Scripture itself that must direct our course.

So . . . let's go there.

And from the Psalms we will see . . .

Two Assumptions from Book 1 that will help us read Book 2.

Ten New Observations about Book 2.

Five Movements in Book 2 . . . the story of David's Royal Family . . . which is your story, if you are in Christ

Two Assumptions Based on Book 1

If we read the Psalms from the beginning as one unified Book . . .

We must read Book 1 before we get to Book 2

But more than directing our reading . . . the first book informs our understanding.

And from Book 1 . . . we need to see 2 ideas that become important background for Book 2.

1. David is the key figure in the Psalms.

Therefore, we should expect and can assume that Book 2 will be also be about him.

And it is . . . Psalms 51–71 are all David Psalms. However, there are 3 other names mentioned in Book 2 . . . the sons of Korah, Asaph (50), and Solomon (72)

So . . . we will have to consider how these other names impact the story of David.

2. The Psalms have groups of Psalms that rise and fall.

In Book 1, we saw four groups of Psalms that formed three hills and one valley.

You can look at the Book 1 Infographic to see these groups.

In Book 2, there are also groups of Psalms . . . and it would be appropriate to assume that they too rise and fall. **And indeed . . . they do.**

Ps 42–49 are psalms from the sons of Korah.

Pss 51–71 are David psalms and may be subdivided into 2 groups of 3 and 2 groups of 7

Psalms 54–60 and 61–67 are two groups of psalms dealing with enemies.

One group has a great number of historical references, the other does not.

Then on both sides of these groups, there are two smaller groups of David Psalms

Psalms 51–53 outline three kinds of sinners.

Psalms 68, 69, 70 remembers God's faithfulness.

Psalms 71 is clearly about David, but does not have a Davidic superscript.

Finally, there are two individual psalms that bookend, David's psalms – on from Asaph and one for Solomon.

Altogether, these groups are important for understanding the message of Book 2.

**** Now at this point . . . let me throw something out there.**

These groups are based upon the text. They are not arbitrary.

But that doesn't mean they are inerrant or ultimately authoritative.

They are like the headings inserted above each Psalm by modern translators.

A few months ago I was talking to one of the translators for the ESV . . . He just happened to be the scholar who put the titles on each Psalm. And he said, looking back, that he likes most of them but not all . . . **He would change a couple if he could.**

Indeed, this is how we read the Bible . . . we make interpretations and later we adjust some of those interpretations as we better understand God's Word.

If you study the Psalms for yourself . . . and you should study the Pss for yourself . . . you might make other decisions **from the text . . . but the key is that you make decisions FROM THE TEXT.**

Friends . . . this difference in understanding God's Word . . . is not something to fear or fight . . .
. . . It is something to expect and embrace as you read the Bible in community.

Scripture was not given to individuals . . . but to the church . . . to be read in community
It's a little odd . . . that we have Study Bibles with individual's names on them – **Is that right?**

No one man – certainly not this one – has all the right interpretations.

Scripture is our authority . . . and as we steward God's word . . . we must seek its message as
humble pilgrims . . . ever-ready to submit afresh to the Word of God.

So . . . I give you this arrangement as a faithful representation of the Psalter, but not the final rep.

My aim is to help you read + pray + love the Psalms better . . . so that you might love God more

AND I pray that your insights into the text and your questions might come back to me and help
me think more carefully about this Word . . . so that I might know and love God more.

That's what Christians fellowship is all about . . . meditating on the Word of God TOGETHER . . .
helping one another TO SEE God's beauty in Scripture. . . and TO REFLECT God's beauty in life.

So . . . with that footnote aside . . . let's move into Book 2 itself.

And let me make 10 quick observations to frame the book.

Ten Observations on Book 2

1. David is not the only author . . .

And immediately in book 2 . . . we find psalms from another set of psalmists – **the sons of Korah**.

2. The Sons of Korah are the authors of seven psalms (42 with 43 plus 44–49)

Korah, you may remember, was the priestly figure who tried assert himself above Moses in Num 16.

His plans failed. The earth opened up and swallowed him and all who belonged to him. Yet, by the grace of God . . . some of his offspring were spared.

In time . . . the Sons of Korah . . . became temple gatekeepers in the time of David. You can read about them in 1 Chronicles 6 and 26.

Their presence in God's temple is a testimony to God's grace . . . it reminds us that children are not defined by their parents . . . but by their God. And these sons of God . . . served faithfully as priests.

3. Asaph is the third author.

Like the sons of Korah, his name will come again in Bk 3, where Psalms 73–83 are attributed to him. 1 Chronicles reports that he too is a priest . . . and one David chose to lead praise in the temple.

Therefore . . .

4. Book 2 has a priestly theme to it . . . not just kingly.

Indeed, this makes great sense . . . because even though David never built the temple . . . he did organize the priestly leaders in the temple.

In fact, David is shown wearing a priestly ephod in 2 Samuel 6 as the ark of the covenant entered J. And 1 Chronicles 23–26 recounts his efforts to prepare the priests for the temple.

This priestly element explains something of focus in Psalms 42–49 . . .
. . . But it also explains the changed focus to the Gentile nations.

5. The enemies are invited to find salvation in Zion.

In Book 1 . . . there is a single posture towards the nations – David prays for their destruction and his victory over them.

But in Book 2 . . . we also see invitations for the Gentiles to come and find salvation in Zion.

From the beginning . . . Israel was to be a priestly people to the nations . . . and in Book 2, we begin to this at work. ***This . . . I believe explains something of the language change in Book 2.***

6. *Elohim* [the Hebrew for God] overtakes Yahweh [the covenant name of God] as the chief designation of David's God.

By numbers alone, we find in Book 1 . . . Yahweh is used 278x; Elohim 48x.
But in Book 2 Yahweh drops down to 32x; Elohim rises to 198x.

So clearly there is an intentional shift . . . and this is most evident in Psalm 53.

Psalm 53 is the same as Psalm 14, except that in v. 2, 4, 6 of Psalm 53 Elohim replaces Yahweh.

Why? . . . There are different explanations, but I think O Palmer Robertson is most correct to say that in Book 2 . . . Yahweh is overtaken by Elohim, b/c Elohim is associated with creation & universal rule

The Covenant Lord of Israel is the God of the nations . . . and in Book 2 . . . we see that Elohim is making a place for the nations to come and worship to God of David – e.g., **listen to Psalm 67.**

7. The First Psalm of David is about Bathsheba.

Going back to David's Psalms, it's worth noting how the first David Psalm identifies his greatest sin—
-- his adulterous, murderous relationship with Bathsheba.

The significance of this observation is twofold.

(1) This event invited God's sword into David's house (2 Sam 12:10) . . . which explains why the Psalms 52–60 return to the theme of enemies.

(2) The placement of this Psalm helps mark out a general chronology in Books 1 and 2.

8. Psalm 42–49 are associated with God's Covenant with David . . . and Psalms 54–60 mark historical events in David's life.

Before Psalm 51, the psalms of Korah's Sons identify the marriage of a king (Psalm 45).

While not explicitly talking about God's covenant with David, this marriage psalm is suggestive.
It comes after Book 1, which identifies David as king . . . *AND* before David's sin with Bathsheba.

In 2 Samuel, the event which stands between the coming of God's ark to David's royal city . . . and his adultery is God's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7 – **what we read earlier in service.**

Therefore, it seems that Psalm 51 serves as an historical marker in Book 2 . . . one that is followed by two sets of enemies Psalms.

The first set containing a plethora of historical enemies of David.

The second recounting the movement towards salvation for the nations.

Altogether, these Psalms trace the tragic develop of David's later life -- while the historical references do not come from his later life . . . they represent a valley of affliction in David's life.

Though . . . he is the exalted king, David must again cry out for mercy and receive God's deliverance.

And where does that salvation come from in David's later life?

It comes in the form of his son, Solomon – the heir given to him by Bathsheba.

9. The Final Psalm is 'for' Solomon

While the ESV identifies Psalm 72 as "of Solomon," I believe it is better to say it is "for Solomon."

The petitions of this Psalm are for David's son to inherit the throne and bless the nations.

In comparison with 1 Kings, we know God granted this rule to Solomon.

1 Kings 4–10 describe his wisdom and his justice and his glory.

In his day . . . the nations came and offered tribute to him.

And . . . the people of Israel were prosperous and overflowing with joy.

Thus . . . our final observation is this . . .

10. The Glory of Solomon is Greater than David

Indeed, when you compare the glory of Psalm 45 to Psalm 72 . . . you find two royal psalms extolling the beauty, justice, and goodness of the king.

But whereas Psalm 45 blesses the people around Zion . . . Psalm 72 describes how the king will bless the nations.

Indeed, Solomon's glory exceeds that of David . . . and prepares the way for an even greater son to come.

But only after the throne of David descends into the pit of despair in Book 3.

From David to Solomon in Five Movements

For now tho, we pause our journey in the Psalms . . . to look at the family history of David in Book 2.

And from these 2 assumptions from Book 1 and 10 observations from Book 2 . . . we are ready to see how the story of David's family moves from glory . . . to suffering . . . to greater glory!

And we can see how this family history rises and falls and rises again . . . by looking at five movements that follow the five groups of Psalms in this book . . .

In them . . . we learn how God deals with his son David . . . we learn our family history . . . the history of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . and we are invited to make his story our story as we listen to the music.

So let's look at these five movements.

First, in Psalms 42–49 we see how God's king brings joy to Zion.

Psalms 42–44 are a mix of hope and despair. They preview the kind emotional strain we will find in Book 2 . . . but very quickly . . . they lead us to Zion where we find God establishing his king.

Look at Psalm 45:6–15 . . . READ

In reading this Psalm . . . I can't help but think of Eden in Genesis 2 where the hill of the Lord is the setting for the first marriage of a couple commissioned to subdue and rule the world.

At the same time . . . at the other end of the Bible . . . in Revelation 21 . . . we see King Jesus receiving his bride in the heavenly city of the New Jerusalem.

Clearly, this Psalm combines multiple images . . . Kingship, marriage, and the joy of the nations all run together in its poetry.

But rooted in David's history . . . I take this song to be playing when David receives his covenant promise from Yahweh.

Thus . . . these Psalms of Zion . . . sung by the sons of Korah extol the highpoint of David's life—the union of his kingdom with God's kingdom . . . an important connection we'll see again in Books 4 and 5.

So that's the first movement

The second movement begins in Psalm 50, when God speaks and calls his people to account.

Asaph says in Psalm 50:1–2 . . .

Psalm 50 then launches a series of indictments against Israel.

In response, we find three psalms of David, each with a different kind of sinner.

Psalm 51 is David's famous psalm of contrition for his sin with Bathsheba – it is psalm of a repentant sinner.

Psalm 52 reproves Doeg the Edomite, the enemy of God who ruthlessly murdered 85 priests of the Lord at Saul's request (1 Samuel 22) – it is a psalm of judgment against an unrepentant sinner

Psalm 53 speaks of the Fool who refuses to seek God

Together . . . these psalms work as an entry point into David's prayers for salvation that unfold in the next two movements.

The third movement consists of seven psalms seeking judgment against the nations.

In order these Psalms describe the Ziphites (54), a treacherous friend (55), the Philistines (56), Saul (57), unjust rulers (58), Saul's henchmen (59), and foreign enemies (60).

Along with Psalms 51–53, these 7 psalms contain a dense collection of historical references.

Again, many of these historical events happened before David was king.

So . . . why do they show up here?

It seems . . . the editor is using them less for their specific historical chronology . . . and more for their enemy themes.

After David sinned with Bathsheba . . . great conflict entered David's house.

At one point David is forced to flee Jerusalem . . . And the wilderness wanderings of his youth repeat . . .

These Psalms pick up his suffering . . . but also David's faith.

Even as king, David did not misuse his authority.

He entrusted himself to the Lord . . . and we see how God saves him again.

This is what we find in the fourth movement.

In **Psalms 61–67** the nations are still in view . . . but this time, as David clings to the Lord . . .

God intervenes to save him . . . and bless them.

This is the difference between Books 1 and 2.

The Salvation for David is not just for David . . . it also has implications for Gentile nations.

Indeed, this is exactly what David himself understood when God promised him an eternal throne.

In 2 Samuel 7 . . . God promised David he would build him a house, that he would be his father, and that his son would sit on an eternal throne.

So overwhelmed by this promise of grace, David responded in with prayer and praise.

Here's part of what he said in 2 Samuel 7:18–19:

Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? 19 And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord God. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord God!

This instruction for mankind . . . could be read . . . the torah for mankind, or as Walter Kaiser has translated it. . . **the charter for humanity.**

In other words, David understood his covenant to have blessing for the nations. Just as God promised Abram . . . blessing would come to the nations thru Israel's chosen seed.

So now in the Psalms, we see this salvation coming to the nations, through David.

In fact, Psalms 65, 66, 67 all speak of the way God saves the Gentiles.

For example . . . listen to **Psalm 66:1–7** . . . READ

Verse 6 even suggests the nations will experience something like Israel's exodus.

While God made covenants Abraham, Israel, and David . . .

the goal was always a multi-ethnic, multi-national covenant mediated by a Son of David . . .

this theme will be developed further in Books 4 and 5, but for now we come to **Solomon**

In **Psalms 68–72** we find three more Davidic Psalms and one Psalm for Solomon – the **5th Movement**.

Psalm 68 recounts God’s faithfulness to save

In Psalm 69 . . . David cries out for salvation . . . and God answers.

Psalm 70/71 work together to describe the end of David’s life . . .

Before Psalm 72 extols the glory of Solomon and his kingdom.

Taken together . . . these Psalms summarize the work of God in David’s life.

Psalm 68 uses exodus imagery to describe the way God saved David.

Psalm 69 recounts the way David’s prayers were answered by God.

Psalm 71:9, 18 speaks of David’s old age and gray hair.

Psalm 72:20 closes this book with the end of David’s prayers.

Still, it is the glory of David’s Son that stands out.

And really . . . this is the point of application for us as well.

If you know the Jesus as your Lord . . . then you know he is the king of glory . . . to him belong all honor and praise and glory and dominion.

Indeed, the goal of the Bible is not to know **Israel’s history as an end in itself** . . .
. . . but you must know something of Israel’s history to know who Jesus Christ is.

Indeed, this is where the Psalms are going . . . they tell the story of David . . . because they prepare our hearts to know and love and worship his son.

And who is his son . . . yes it is Solomon. But as Jesus said . . . there is one now here who is greater than the greatest son of David . . . and Jesus is his name.

Church . . . the Psalms tell us the story of David . . . which means they tell us Christ’s story . . . they tell us our story! **And this is why we labor to understand their message.**

Soundtrack-ography may never take off . . . and that’s okay . . . we shouldn’t be interested anyways.

We already have a family album . . . and its soundtrack is found in the Psalms.

Let us learn to sing these songs . . . to pledge our allegiance to king Jesus . . . to find explosive joy in his story . . . and to leave behind our kingdoms . . . in order to take refuge in his.