

THE PSALMS

**READING THE BIBLE CORRECTLY:
CRITICAL CLUES TO WATCH FOR
TO ENSURE YOU ARE READING THE BIBLE WELL**

There are many hermeneutical principles we must know and use if we are going to read, understand, and apply the Bible correctly. If we do not know these, and use them, then we will misread, misunderstand, and misapply the Bible.

We will be reading OUR meaning into GOD'S WORD, and then proclaiming OUR WORDS as if they came from GOD.

In other words, putting words in God's mouth. We will give an account to God someday for every time we have claimed to share, teach, or preach in His Name.

What are the questions we ask?

1. Is this Old or New Testament?
2. What kind of literature is this?
 - a. Narrative?
 - b. Law?
 - c. Poetry?
 - d. Prophecy?
3. Is this describing an historical event?
 - a. Is it using declarative, “literal” language?
 - b. Is it using figurative language (simile, metaphor, symbols, etc.)?
4. Is this a prayer or praise or lament or meditation?
5. etc.,

Among other things, we need to watch for Genre, Dischronology, Accommodation, and Figurative, Phenomenological, and Anthropomorphic Language.

ALL-IMPORTANT CUES FOR READING THE BIBLE

(The things you must recognize first in order to read and understand ...)

1. **GENRE** – The kind / type / category of literature to which a passage or book belongs
2. **DISCHRONOLOGY** – placing events, situations, or speeches out of their logical or original chronological sequence.
3. **ACCOMMODATION** – theological truth expressed in existing language and concepts familiar to the recipients
4. **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE** – Apocalyptic, numeric, metaphors, similes, hyperbole, picturesque language
5. **PHENOMENOLOGICAL LANGUAGE** – Describing an event, scene, or situation as the phenomenon is perceived by the senses.
6. **ANTHROPOMORPHIC LANGUAGE** – Describing God's appearance, feelings, needs, and actions in words normally used to describe humans

THE GOSPEL WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND IN ORDER TO BELIEVE ON CHRIST AND BE SAVED IS SIMPLE.

***HOWEVER, THE BIBLE ITSELF IS VERY COMPLEX.
Even the simplest parts can be hard to correctly understand.***

2 Peter 3

15 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

**WE NEED THE HELP OF PROPERLY TRAINED
SCHOLARS AND TEACHERS OF THE CHURCH.**

**THIS IS THE PRIMARY WAY THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US
UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE –
THROUGH THE SCHOLARS AND TEACHERS
OF THE CHURCH.**

**TO REFUSE PROPERLY EDUCATED AND TRAINED
SCHOLARS AND TEACHERS
IS TO REFUSE THE GIFT OF GOD.**

WE MUST CORRECTLY UNDERSTAND INSPIRATION ...

The doctrine of Inspiration includes ...

1. The original authors of original parts of Scripture.
2. The compilers and collectors of those original parts and oral traditions into the original books of Scripture.
3. The editors who brought archaic language up to date (the Hebrew scribes after Judah returned from Babylonian exile).

The original authors were permitted to use their own vocabularies, cultural norms, understandings of how the physical world functioned (our bodies, the earth, etc.), without God downloading modern concepts into their minds.

BIB322 Poetic Books, introduces students to two aspects of the Poetic Books: Poetry and Wisdom.

Poetry is the structure and delivery of the literature. This part of our study focuses on learning structural and literary conventions and clues so that we know how to correctly read and understand poetic literature.

Wisdom is the thematic category of the literature. This part of the study focuses on the pursuit of wisdom in ancient Israel, the genre, content, various themes, and social context of the wisdom writings.

The **style** is generally poetic. The **content / theme** is generally wisdom.

In Hebrew, poetry and prose exist on a continuum.

Many passages will have many poetic devices or characteristics of poetry but will not have all poetic characteristics. Such passages should still be read as poetic accounts or as “poetic prose” or “high prose.” Genesis 1 is such a passage.

“Poetic prose” or “high prose” should not be read as if it is a straightforward, literal prose or narrative. It should be read as a creative telling of a story or truth, and not as a straightforward or chronological “historical” account.

1. Stylized Structure and Symmetry in Genesis 1

First Triad			Second Triad		
Day	Creative Acts/Aspects	Form/Sphere	Day	Creative Acts/Aspects	Fill-and-Rule/Functionary
1	1	Light	4	1	Lights (sun, moon, stars)
2	1/2	Dome (sea, sky)	5	1/2	Inhabitants (fish, birds)
3	2	Dry Land Vegetation	6	2	Land animals Humans in God's image
Movement: Static			Movement: Increasing freedom, from a set course, to a range, to Humanity's unlimited access.		
Progress: From heaven to earth (Days 1-3)			Progress: From heaven to earth (Days 4-6)		
<p>Seventh Day – unique, unending; God enters his rest in his good and ordered cosmic temple, to sustain his creation, enter into relationship with humanity, host them, bless them, and receive their worship.</p>					

FOR EXAMPLE: Genesis 1 is filled with poetic devices such comparison, contrast, parallelism, symmetry, repetition, progression, allusion, dischronology, numeric symbolism, and so forth. It is **not** a simple straightforward narrative. It is poetry or poetic prose, the Hymn of Creation, the theological story of Creator and creation.

Parallelisms in Hebrew poetry work by using two lines to present and develop an image.

There are several kinds of parallelism: Synonymous, Antithetic, Synthetic, and Emblematic.

There are several kinds of chiasms. A chiasm is a structure within the passage that tells you what is really being emphasized in the sentence, passage, or book.

Chiasms are used in poetry, and most kinds of literature in the Bible.

WISDOM LITERATURE focuses on living our faith in our daily lives in such a way that we promote harmony, contentment, and a fullness of life in our community of relationships.

In the Bible, the community – our family, household, synagogue, church, the family of God – comes first, and the individual comes second.

WISDOM LITERATURE is composed of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, with some found in the Song of Solomon, and parts of Psalms. Wisdom sayings are found throughout Scripture.

[A definition of wisdom:](#) “Wisdom is the discipline of applying truth to one’s life in the light of experience.

Israel’s ancient educators were the “wisdom teachers” or “wise men.” They devoted themselves to gaining wisdom, and to serving as teacher-counselors to those who sought their wisdom. They originated around 1,000 B.C., and came to occupy a place similar to priests and prophets.

[Jeremiah 18:18](#) “They said, “Come, let's make plans against Jeremiah; for the teaching of the law by the [priest](#) will not be lost, nor will counsel from the [wise](#), nor the word from the [prophets](#). So come, let's attack him with our tongues and pay no attention to anything he says.””

Wisdom literature encompasses a variety of sub-genres:

1. Job - a long narrative piece of literature containing numerous sub-categories like disputation speeches, poetry, hymns, complaint, poetic soliloquy, etc.
2. Proverbs - a collection of sayings (succinct expressions that are normally true) using poetry, parallelism, comparison, description, prescription, etc., covering many subjects of life.
3. Ecclesiastes - a unique book of “personal reflection” using poetry, parallelism, instruction, comparison, etc.

Job is completely unique in ancient and biblical literature.

Proverbs is almost always conditional, covering many subjects.

Ecclesiastes is often cynical.

Wisdom literature presents various perspectives, and should therefore be read canonically, in the context of the whole book and the whole Bible.

The Primary Misuses of Wisdom Literature

1. “People often read these books only in part.”

They fail to read a passage in the context of the whole book, and therefore misunderstand and misapply the passage.

2. People often misunderstand wisdom terms, categories, styles, and modes because they try to read it without learning how to read it.

They misdefine the terms, misunderstand the meaning, and misapply the teaching.

3. People often fail to follow the line of argument the wise man was making.

They misunderstand the point and end up trying to live by what the author really said was incorrect.

Wisdom literature powerfully emphasizes that this natural, material world **and** how we live our lives in it are both important to God. This is a central concern of the Living God.

Wisdom literature holds everyone accountable. It gives no one excuses or exceptions for refusing wise advice, and living out stupid or rebellious attitudes, words, and actions.

Solomon is the central figure in Israel's wisdom tradition. With all of his wisdom, he became proud and fell prey to greed, power, lust, and folly. *We must continually apply wisdom to our lives with humility, obedience, and accountability.*

Remember the literary technique mentioned earlier: Chiasm.

This technique is used often in the Psalms.

There are several kinds of chiasms. A chiasm is a structure that tells you what is really being emphasized in a sentence, passage, or book. An author used a chiasm because he is pointing you directly to the main point or theme of his whole passage, the central truth that is controlling the whole passage. The primary reason he wrote this.

In a concentric chiasm the first and second half reflect each other, with the midpoint being the hinge that is the main point ...

A B C D C' B' A' (*A corresponds to A', B to B', C to C'*)

One famous example of this is the story of Solomon in 1 Kings ...

THE STORY OF SOLOMON – 1 Kings 1-12 – A Chiasm

A1 – Prophet gives the kingdom to Solomon (*Chapter 1*)

B2 – Solomon’s kingdom established (*Chapter 2, etc.*)

C3 – Solomon’s wisdom fruitful – humility, dependence, justice

D4 – Solomon blessed by God – Wisdom, God, creation

E5 – Preparations to build the Temple

F6 – Builds the Temple – 7 years

G 7:1-12 – “It took Solomon 13 years however, to complete the construction of his palace.” (*Solomon was already polluted by sin: he spent more time & money on his palace and a palace for a wife, Pharaoh’s daughter, than on God’s Temple.*)

F’7 – Furnishes the Temple

E’8 – Temple finished, dedicated, in use

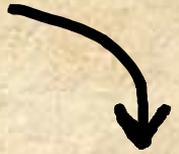
D’9 – Solomon blessed but warned – Slavery, Pharaoh’s daughter

C’10 – Solomon’s wisdom fails – pride, selfishness, majesty, affluence

B’11 – Solomon’s kingdom disestablished – foreign wives, idolatry, rebellion

A’12 – Prophet takes the kingdom from Solomon (Rehoboam) – Israel divides (*Chapter 12*)

*The midpoint (hinge) is the main point of the whole story. **Sin** had entered Solomon’s heart before God’s Glory came!*



THE PSALMS

GENRE – Poetry.

150 Hebrew poems from throughout Israel's history.

DATE – 1,400/1200 BCE through the return from Exile 400's BCE, with final editing probably done in the 200's BCE. Gradually gathered into collections, the collections gradually integrated, rearranged, etc.

AUTHORS – many authors over many centuries

- David – 73
- Asaph – 12
- Sons of Korah – 11
- Heman & Ethan – 2
- Solomon & Moses – 3
- Anonymous - 49

Some were written for Temple choirs – 1 Chron 25, Nehemiah 11

All were poems, using the many poetic techniques and literary conventions of Hebrew poetry to help convey the meaning God intended. *To fully understand what God and the human authors are trying to communicate, you MUST learn the poetic techniques that they chose to use!*

Scribes collected the collections of psalms after the return from Babylonian Exile (400's – 200's BCE), and edited them into their final form. They ...

- Updated archaic Hebrew words with newer language,
- Added editorial comments and headings,
- Added linking, ending, and introductory verses, and
- Carefully, systematically, theologically arranged the poems. (They are not chronological.)

The best way to discern the structure is to begin at the end ...

SO, IN THE CONCLUSION / EPILOGUE ...

5 PSALMS OF PRAISE – all begin and end with the same word.

- PS 146 – Hallelujah Hallelujah
- PS 147 – Hallelujah Hallelujah
- PS 148 – Hallelujah Hallelujah
- PS 149 – Hallelujah Hallelujah
- PS 150 – Hallelujah Hallelujah

Ps 146-150 are sometimes included as a part of Book V even through they are still acknowledged as the Conclusion of the whole Psalter.

A command to “Praise Yah” or “Praise Yahweh”

NOTE: Again, there are “5” Hallel psalms, reminding us again of Torah.

This clearly intentional structure encourages the reader to look for other structure.

The presence of the 5 poem Concluding section, and the 5-part division of the rest of the poems makes us aware of **a possible prologue or introduction**.
The first two poems are anonymous, while Book 1 is largely David's.

Psalm 1 – a hymn to Torah. "Law" or "Teaching." The Pentateuch. Psalms is being introduced as a new Torah that will teach God's obedient people how to live an obedient, "blessed" life of prayer to Yahweh.

"Blessed is the one who meditates on the Torah."

Psalm 2 – a poetic reflection on God's promised Messiah, based on 2 Samuel 7. An encouragement to look for God's promised King and Messiah.

"Blessed is the one who takes refuge in God's Messiah and King."

Psalms is the Prayer Book of God's People as they obediently await the coming Messiah. The poems are hymns, teaching, and prayers.

STRUCTURE OF THE PSALTER (PSALMS) ...

Divided into 5 books, corresponding to the 5 Books of Moses.

INTRODUCTION – Psalm 1 – A Torah Psalm,
Psalm 2 – A Royal Psalm

BOOK 1 – Psalms 3-41

BOOK 2 – Psalms 42-72

BOOK 3 – Psalms 73-89

BOOK 4 – Psalms 90-106

BOOK 5 – Psalms 107-145

CONCLUSION – Psalms 146-150 – The Hallel Psalms

... OR ...

STRUCTURE OF THE PSALTER (PSALMS) ...

Divided into 5 books, alluding to the 5 Books of Moses (Torah).

BOOK 1 – Psalms 1-41

Introduction – Psalm 1 – A Torah Psalm, Psalm 2 – A Royal Psalm

BOOK 2 – Psalms 42-72

BOOK 3 – Psalms 73-89

BOOK 4 – Psalms 90-106

BOOK 5 – Psalms 107-150

Conclusion – Psalms 146-150 – The Hallel (Praise) Psalms

The best Study Bibles (NIV, ESV, etc.) will provide you with detailed explanations of the focus and flow of all 5 Books, their internal structure, and how they are designed to flow together in teaching and worship.

All good translations show the Psalter's division into these Five Books.

The scribal editors ended each Book with a Doxology of Praise.

BOOK 1 – Ends with 41:13 “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.”

BOOK 2 – Ends with 72:18-20 “Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen. This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.”

BOOK 3 – Ends with 89:52 “Praise be to the Lord forever! Amen and Amen.”

BOOK 4 – Ends with 106:48 “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the Lord.”

BOOK 5 – Ends with 5 Hallel (Praise) psalms and 150:6 “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!”

PRIMARY THEMES OF THE PSALTER ...

TORAH / COVENANT – Torah Psalms

Language / Sub-themes – Relationship, King-Shepherd,
Law-and-Blessings, Lament, Repentance, Forgiveness,
Covenant-Lovingkindness-and-Faithfulness (Hesed),
God's Character – Mercy-Goodness-Righteousness

MESSIAH / KING – Royal Psalms

Language / Sub-themes – Anointed One, King, Son, God, Servant,
Shepherd, Lament, Suffering, Deliverance, Victory

NOTE: If you never sing songs of lament, or pray prayers of lament, and have never done so, you are not yet a mature, well-formed believer.

BOOK 1 – Illustrates the Main Themes are always intertwining ...

Chapters 15-24 – Who Can Access the Temple?

Psalm 15 – A Call to Covenant Faithfulness

Psalm 16-18 – Poems celebrating David's past deliverance, covenant faithfulness, and resulting elevation to King

Psalm 19 – *Psalm to Torah. An acrostic of the Hebrew alphabet.*

Psalm 20-23 – David becomes the type of the Messianic King of the future.

Focus on the future King's deliverance and his kingdom over the nations.

Because Great David's Greater Son, the Future Messiah will be perfectly faithful, people from all nations will access God's Temple (the Church).

Psalm 24 – A Call to Covenant Faithfulness

SO, the themes announced in Psalm 1 (Torah / Covenant) and Psalm 2 (Messianic King) are tied together closely. They weave together throughout the Psalter.

PERVASIVE THEMES / MOTIFS OF THE PSALTER ...

Within Primary Themes of Torah/Covenant and Messiah/King, are several corollary motifs and metaphors moving through the Psalter ...

- Creation
- Election
- Deliverance
- Holy War
- Inheritance of the Land
- Zion/Jerusalem as the Place of God's Presence and Home of His King
- God's Blessing on Covenant Faithfulness
- God's Punishment of Covenant Unfaithfulness
- God's Fundamental Predisposition to Bless His People
- Israel's Role in Blessing the Nations

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE – Word Pictures

The Psalms are permeated with figurative language – figures of speech, words and phrases that use an image, a picture, to make a point or communicate a theological truth.

Figurative language is explicitly meant to be understood “literarily” as a literary convention commonly used in literature.

The Psalms are the songs of God’s People. Parts of a Psalm must be read within the context of the whole Psalm, the context of the whole book of Psalms, the context of the rest of the poetic and wisdom literature, and the context of the Scripture as a whole.

The Psalms must be read carefully, as poetic literature.

Psalm 90

- 1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.
- 2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
- 3 You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men."
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.
- 5 You sweep men away in the sleep of death;
they are like the new grass of the morning-
- 6 though in the morning it springs up new,
by evening it is dry and withered.

This is a simile, a word-picture, a picturesque way of saying something, of making a point. "Thousand years" is figurative = a very long time.

2 Peter 3

8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: **With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.**

9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

In both the Old and New Testaments, the phrase “a thousand years” is a picturesque way of saying “a very long time.”

And, here “a day” means “a short time.”

In other words, God looks at time completely differently than humans.

The Bible is NOT equating a thousand years with a day.

The Bible is NOT meaning a thousand years “literally.”

The biblical authors – Moses and Peter in this case – are using the phrase to describe “a very long time” in a colorful way in order to make their point more memorable.

The biblical writers often used similes, metaphors, and symbols to help readers remember the real point.

They constantly used these kinds of techniques in poetic passages and apocalyptic passages, but they also used them in narratives (historical accounts), gospels, and epistles (N. T. letters).

Revelation 20

1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

The number “1,000” or the phrase “a thousand years” is a figure of speech meaning a very large amount or very long time. It is symbolic and was never intended to be read literalistically.

John 10

(10:1-5 ... Jesus uses the image of gate, gatekeeper, and shepherd to describe himself.)

“6 Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

7 Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

One of the most important things you can do when learning to understand God's message in the Bible, is to learn to identify word pictures – figurative, picturesque language such as metaphors, similes, and so forth.

It was **God** who chose to use figures of speech.

If you refuse to accept God's figures of speech for what they are you're really rejecting God's Word, rejecting God's meaning, and substituting your own.

WHEN READING PSALMS, Remember These Reading Cues! ...

(The things you must recognize first in order to read and understand ...)

1. **GENRE** – The kind / type / category of literature to which a passage or book belongs
2. **DISCHRONOLOGY** – placing events, situations, or speeches out of their logical or original chronological sequence.
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In addition to understanding figurative language when reading Hebrew poetry or high prose, it is necessary to understand the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) cosmology of Israel and all surrounding peoples.

As did all of her neighboring nations and people-groups, Israel understood God's relationship to creation as ...

- > **Immediate Relationship** – no mediating processes (weather systems, cell division, earthquakes, etc.); all natural things result from God immediately and directly causing them.
- > **God-to-Temple Relationship** – God created the cosmos as His temple-home, with the Earth as His footstool, the place where He sits and rests (Sabbath)

This was true regarding Cosmology, the structure of the physical universe. This is what the ANE people, including Israel believed ...

The sun rose and the stars moved.

The earth was fixed and never moved.

The sun, moon, and stars moved around the earth – a geocentric universe.

The earth was flat, with edges and four corners (or was a flat disc).

The earth rested above the abyssal waters on pillars.

The sky was a firmament, a dome, a solid thing that God had stretched out as a vault over all the earth. (*Hebrew: raquia*)

This dome rested on the pillars of heaven, mountains at the edges of the earth.

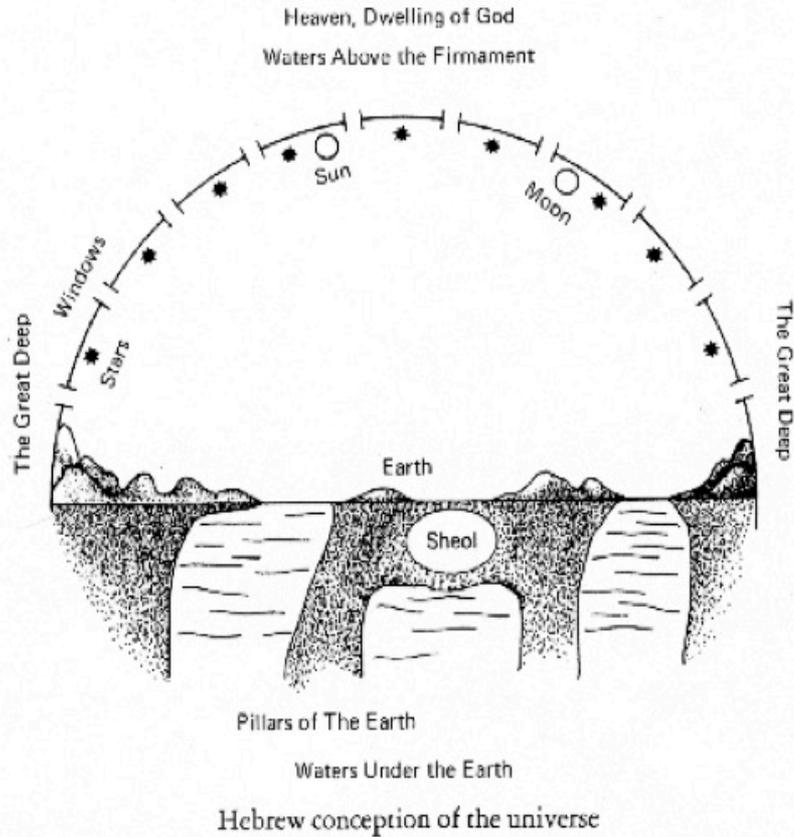
There were waters above this dome, and above that, God's upper chambers.

God had set gates or windows into this dome that he could open to allow rain to fall or wind to blow.

He had made doors in this dome to let sun, moon, and stars in and out, and between these doors they ran a regular circuit or course.



This is how the ANE cultures, including the Hebrews, thought the universe was structured.



This is how the ANE cultures, including the Hebrews, thought the universe was structured.

This was also true regarding meteorology, geology, etc. ...

God directly, in an unmediated manner, caused weather of all kinds, caused earthquakes, caused crops to grow, flocks to be fertile, etc.

Psalm 135 “6 The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths. 7 He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.”

Isaiah 29:6 “...the LORD Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire.”

Isaiah 66 “1 This is what the LORD says:

“**Heaven** is my throne, and the **earth** is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? 2 Has not my hand made **all these things**, and so they came into being?” declares the LORD.”

Repeatedly, throughout Scripture, the cosmos is portrayed as God’s temple, his house, the place he rests.

Humanity is his image, his children are his particular dwelling place, but all creation is truly his temple.

This is what ancient Israel believed.

This was and is TRUE. **It is the spiritual / theological reality.** God revealed this truth without changing Israel’s cosmology.

Job 38 “4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

This is the language of architecture, specifically of temple or palace building. Ancient Hebrews viewed the cosmos as God’s temple, because that’s how the ancients thought!

*Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly communicates **THEOLOGICAL** truths of creation using ANE / Israel’s concepts of how the universe was structured. God was **NOT** affirming their cosmology. He was **USING** their concepts of the universe to communicate **SPIRITUAL** truth. Through science we have a more accurate understanding of the physical universe today, but the **THEOLOGICAL** truths God revealed about **HIMSELF** remain just as true as ever.*

Gen 7:11 “...on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.”

Deut 33:13 “May the LORD bless his land with the precious dew from heaven above and with the deep waters that lie below;”

1 Sam 2:8 “For the foundations of the earth are the LORD’s; on them he has set the world.”

Psalms 75:3 “When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.”

Job 26:1 “The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke.”

Prov 8 “27 I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, 8 when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, 29 when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.”

Psalm 104 describes God's Wisdom in Creation ...

Psalm 104 “2 The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent 3 and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. ... 5 He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.” *(Note: this is being written after the Flood; this was still Israel's cosmology.)*

Psalm 19 describes how God's Creation declares, witnesses to, His glory, power, and wisdom ...

“1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

3 They have no speech; they use no words; no sound is heard from them.

4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

When reading the Psalms, we must always be alert for all of the reading cues and hermeneutical principles mentioned earlier:

Accommodation, anthropomorphisms, figurative language, phenomenological language, and so forth, as well as all of the literary devices common to Hebrew poetry.

The presence of any of these reading cues will alert us that we should NOT read the passage containing them in a simplistic literalistic fashion, but instead recognize the author is writing using his ANE worldview (or using Hebrew literary techniques) to express THEOLOGICAL or SPIRITUAL truths that God is communicating.

When we study Creation according to the laws, the principles of Creation itself (the sciences), we “hear” Creation speak, and it declares the TRUTH about itself to the glory of the Creator!

(For example, if Creation tells us that it is extraordinarily old, then it is speaking truthfully! It is extraordinarily old! When Scripture is interpreted properly, it will not contradict that!)

God wrote two books: Scripture and Nature, His Word and His Works.

When properly interpreted, from beginning to end, according to the time and place and manner in which they were “written,” there is no contradiction between the two books of God.

We study Creation through the sciences, and we learn how the heavens go. We study Scripture through hermeneutics, and we learn how to go to heaven.

(Galileo)

CONCLUSION

- Do not read Psalms, Job, or any of the ancient texts through modern eyes, with modern values, modern thoughts, and modern meanings. *Don't put your words in God's mouth.*
- Use good hermeneutical principles to read the ancient text with ancient eyes, ancient concepts, ancient context. THEN bridge the gap to apply it today.
- Always read the OT through the lens of the NT: Jesus Messiah is the fulfillment of all things: Abraham's Seed, David's Son, all of the OT was pointing to Christ! All of the old was pointing toward the new.

