

THE PSALMS: PRAYER BOOK FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

THE MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

I. CLASS INFORMATION:

First Class Period (at His Place Church): Saturday, October 12, 2019

9:00–11:00am (Pacific Standard Time)

His Place Church

3079 E. 16th Ave.

Post Falls, ID 83854

Weekly Class Periods (Online): Thursdays, October 31–December 19, 2019

5:00–6:30pm (Pacific Standard Time)

Direct Link to Zoom Conference Call: <https://zoom.us/j/622776909>

Alternatively, you may call in at (646) 558-8656; ID 622 776 909

Cohort Landing Page: <https://portal.moody.edu/cgte/his-place-church>

Instructor from Moody Bible Institute:

Jonathan J. Armstrong, Ph.D.

Professor of Bible and Theology

Director of the Center for Global Theological Education

jonathan.armstrong@moody.edu

Facilitator from His Place Church:

Jon-Michael Thurman

jon.michael.thurman@gmail.com

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Psalms have served as the prayer book for the People of God for three millennia. Through the ages, the Psalms have nurtured the faith of countless saints, martyrs, ordinary believers, and even Christ himself. The Psalms are divided into five books, and students will learn about the history and overarching structure of the Book of Psalms. Each Psalm belongs to a particular classification, including (1) psalms of lament, (2) penitential psalms, (3) imprecatory psalms, (4) psalms of praise, (5) psalms of thanksgiving, (6) covenant psalms, and (7) wisdom psalms. Following this course, the student will be equipped to incorporate the Psalms into private and public prayer.

III. OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ In this course, we will learn the basic structures of ancient Hebrew poetry and how the authors of the Psalms use these structures to focus theological reflection
- ❖ We will become fluent with the metaphors and theological word pictures of the Psalms
- ❖ We be able to assign each of the Psalms to one of the principle scholarly classifications
- ❖ We will be able to incorporate Psalms into corporate and private prayer

IV. PROCEDURES:

Onsite and Online Class Periods: The first class period will be conducted as a live event on the campus of the partner church and will consist of two lectures of 50 minutes each. This opening class period may be advertised as a free event for the general public and may be used as an avenue for outreach into the broader community. The partner church is encouraged to provide modest refreshments.

Subsequent class periods will be conducted as online conference calls, each of which will be 90 minutes in length total.

Video Recordings: The online class periods will be video recorded, and these video recordings will be distributed to the students via the cohort landing page. The video recordings are not intended to serve as independent educational resources; rather, the video recordings are created so that students may review any class periods from which they are absent and may thereby remain fully integrated in online class periods.

V. TEXTBOOK (FOR PURCHASE):

Wright, N. T. *The Case for the Psalms: Why They Are Essential*. New York: HarperOne, 2013.

VI. CLASS SCHEDULE:

Date:	Place and Time:	Subject:	Readings:	Assignments:
Saturday, October 12, 2019	His Place Church, 9:00–11:00am (PST)	The Poetry and Theology of the Psalms		
Thursday, October 31, 2019	Online, 5:00– 6:30pm (PST)	Overarching Themes from the Psalms	Wright, Chapter 1	Exercises A1, C1, D1
Thursday, November 7, 2019	Online, 5:00– 6:30pm (PST)	The Psalms of Lament	Wright, Chapter 2	Exercises A2, C2, D2
Thursday, November 14, 2019	Online, 5:00– 6:30pm (PST)	The Imprecatory Psalms	Wright, Chapter 3	Exercises B1, C3, D3
Thursday, November 21, 2019	Online, 5:00– 6:30pm (PST)	The Penitential Psalms	Wright, Chapter 4	Exercises A3, C4, D4
Thursday, November 28, 2019	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING			
Thursday, December 5, 2019	Online, 5:00– 6:30pm (PST)	The Psalms of Praise	Wright, Chapter 5	Exercises A4, B2, D5
Thursday, December 12, 2019	Online, 5:00– 6:30pm (PST)	The Psalms of Thanksgiving	Wright, Chapter 6	Exercises C5, C6, D6
Thursday, December 19, 2019	Online, 5:00– 6:30pm (PST)	Covenant Psalms and Wisdom Psalms	Wright, Afterward	Exercises A5, B3, E1 Psalms Classification Project Due

VII. ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. *Attendance*: In the case that a student is not able to be present for a class period, we recommend that (1) the student notify the class facilitator by email concerning the absence and (2) the student review the video recording of the class period before the next class period.
- B. *Reading*: There are reading assignments for each of the seven class periods following the first class period. Students are expected to read the assigned sections of the textbook prior to the start of the class for which they are assigned.
- C. *Assignments*: See the Course Exercise Book for full details.
 - i. *Quizzes*: We will complete 5 quizzes during the course, and each quiz will consist of 10 questions. The quizzes are designed to ensure class participants are reading the textbook with comprehension.
 - ii. *Scripture Memory*: We will memorize five Psalms in this course: Psalms 1, 4, 23, 46, and 67. Gaining an intimate knowledge of small passages of the Psalms will allow us to recognize larger patterns throughout the Psalter.
 - iii. *Case Studies*: These exercises will allow the class to reflect on the application of the course material to ministry situations.
 - iv. *Discussion Questions*: The purpose of these exercises is to sharpen the skill of producing theological arguments.
- D. *Psalms Classification Project*: Students are to read through the Book of Psalms and to assign each of the 150 Psalms to one of the principal classifications that will be presented during the class. Students are to include brief notes to justify their classification decisions. This project should be prepared as a Word or Pages document and should be no less than 2500 words.

VIII. FURTHER READING:

Brueggemann, Walter. *Praying the Psalms: Engaging Scripture and the Life of the Spirit*. Second edition. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2007.

Bullock, C. Hassell. *Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

Firth, David, and Philip S. Johnson, ed. *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*. Downers Grove, IVP Academic, 2005.

Gillingham, Susan. *Psalms through the Centuries*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.

Longman, Tremper. *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988.

Mays, James L. *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*. Edited by Patrick D. Miller and Gene M. Tucker. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Waltke, Bruce K., Houston J. M., and Erika Moore. *The Psalms as Christian Lament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.

IX. COMMENTARIES:

Brueggemann, Walter, and William H. Bellinger, Jr. *Psalms. New Cambridge Bible Commentary*. Cambridge: University Press, 2014.

Dahood, Mitchell. *Psalms*. 3 Vols. *The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1965.

Goldingay, John. *Psalms*. 3 Vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.

Hossfeld, Frank Lothar, and Eric Zenger. *Psalms*. 3 Vols. *Hermeneia*. Trans. Linda M. Maloney. Ed. Klaus Baltzer. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011.

McEachern, Alton H. *Layman's Bible Book Commentary: Psalms*. Nashville: Broadman, 1981.

Stott, John R. W. *Favorite Psalms*. Chicago: Moody, 1988.