

# Hermeneutics Crash Course: A Psalm

## HOOK

The bible is not the constitution. It's not meant to be interpreted and reinterpreted or amended and voted on by different generations with different worldviews and changing biases. We can watch politicians abuse the constitution and twist it to mean anything they want for their agenda. This is often tried with the bible, but it is NOT a dynamic document open for unique interpretations or remixes.

## BOOK

**2 Peter 1:16-21** - *For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased," 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, 20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

## LOOK

\*The goal of studying scripture is to discover its meaning.

\*The Holy Spirit used authors to write with the intention of being understood so there is a "consciously willed meaning."

## 5 Basic types of analysis

1. Genre – What kind of literature am I reading? How should I interpret it?
2. Structural – Scripture passages were built with purposes in mind.
3. Historical and Cultural – Trying to understand through the eyes of who wrote it and what they meant to say in their own history to their intended readers.
4. Keyword – There are themes the author is communicating, Spotting repetition or certain words is key.
5. Theological – What does this teach us about God? What does it teach us about His people?

**Overall Questions:** What are we being told? Why are we being told this and why in this way?

**The genre of Poetry in the bible is recognizable in three ways.**

1. They are the best words in the best order.
2. The language has rhythm and is organized.
3. The lines don't reach the margins.

### **Psalm 111**

1 Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,  
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

2 Great are the works of the Lord,  
studied by all who delight in them.

3 Full of splendor and majesty is his work,  
and his righteousness endures forever.

4 He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;  
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

5 He provides food for those who fear him;  
he remembers his covenant forever.

6 He has shown his people the power of his works,  
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.

7 The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his precepts are trustworthy;

8 they are established forever and ever,  
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

9 He sent redemption to his people;  
he has commanded his covenant forever.

Holy and awesome is his name!

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;  
all those who practice it have a good understanding.  
His praise endures forever!

### **Genre Analysis:**

- What is the genre that we're reading?
- How might this change how we read it? (Why are we being told in this way?)

### **Structural Analysis:**

- Is there an intended structure?

### **Historical/Cultural Analysis Questions:**

- Who it was written by?
- When was it written?
- What circumstances was the author in?
- Who was the author writing to and what circumstances were they in?
- What is the overall purpose of this psalm?
- What works is the author referring to in v.2?
- What event(s) is the author referring to in v.5? Why?
- What event(s) is the author referring to in v.6?
- What precepts (laws) is the author referring to in vs.7,8?
- What event is the author referring to in v.9?
- Why are we being told this in these ways?

### **Keyword Analysis:**

- What are some words or phrases which are repeated often?

### **Theological Analysis:** (The answers are based on what we've learned in the first 4.)

- Knowing when it was written, who it was written by, and the circumstances it was written in, what would its intended reader get out of it?
- What do we learn about God from this?
- What do we learn about God's people from this?

### **TOOK**

Study Psalm 111's counterpart Psalm 112 and apply the same analyses. Enjoy!

**Challenge:** Select a portion of the bible tonight and apply what you learned tonight for the next 6 days.