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# The Book of Psalms as the Second Torah That Sings: A Canonical Approach to Prayer, Lament, and Praise

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***Abstract***
*The Book of Psalms, often called "the Second Torah that Sings," contains prayers, laments, and praises in a comprehensive way. This study examines the theological concept of the Psalms as the second Torah that sings, using a canonical approach to its expressions of prayer, lament, and praise. It employs qualitative library research, analyzing theological sources and the Hebrew text through Brevard S. Childs' canonical hermeneutics, which reads the Psalms in their final form. The findings show that the Psalms share structural similarities with the Torah, formed through a long redactional process with David as the central figure. Psalm 40 moves between thanksgiving and supplication, showing that faith is dynamic and cyclical, while Psalm 150 is the climax of comprehensive praise. Theologically, the Psalms guide God's people toward a unified faith directed to the eschatological hope of God's kingdom.*

*Keywords: Psalm, Second Torah, Canonical Approach, Prayer, Lament, Praise*

## Introduction

The Book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible. Beyond its important position in the Old Testament canon, it has also greatly influenced the spirituality and liturgy of the church. The Book of Psalms contains prayers, praises, expressions of joy, and songs of the soul addressed to God.[1] It draws much attention from readers because it contains a wide range of expressions of faith, from praise, lament, and confession of sin to hope in God.[2] Despite its fame, the Book of Psalms is also perplexing because many psalms are individual in character and lack a clear historical context or process of transmission. On the other hand, many meanings in the Book of Psalms point to positive aspects, as in Psalm 23:1, which carries a comforting meaning because this verse appears to indicate the assurance of salvation or security from the Lord as the source of life and consolation.

Today, many congregations have begun to use the Book of Psalms less and less in its entirety, both in worship and in personal prayer. The church tends to choose only those verses of the Psalms that are consoling or praiseful in nature, while the disquieting laments are very often avoided. This happens because they are regarded as unsuited to a liturgy that is positive

[1]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*, 1st ed, with Walter Brueggemann (Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2022), 27.

[2]Tremper Longman dan Raymond Bryan Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2. ed (Zondervan, 2007).

or oriented toward victory. Preachers also often avoid the psalms of lament because they are harder to interpret than the psalms of consolation. As a result, the psalms of lament are no longer preached, even though congregations need them, because it is in lament that authentic faith is tested.[3] The understanding of the Book of Psalms as the Second Torah that sings is largely unknown among ordinary lay people, even though the Psalms are a book in which the people's prayers and a collection of songs are found. When the church gives priority to joy over lament, this produces a shallow faith that is reluctant to learn from suffering, and therefore a conceptual investigation such as the one undertaken in this study is needed.

The Book of Psalms has the largest number of chapters in the whole Bible and has had a great impact on the Christian church, especially in liturgy and personal spirituality, which shape church life.[4] The Book of Psalms contains testimony to the Lord through songs or poetic praise for the glory of God. In Greek it is called *"Psalmoi" (ψαλμοί),* and in Hebrew *"mizmor" (מִזְמוֹר).*[5] Both terms mean a song, or even a stringed musical instrument, that is performed in worship of the Lord. Perhaps this is why reading the Book of Psalms feels like singing it, because at its core this book is a song.

The practice of singing the Psalms in churches today is a matter of concern. Webb (2023), in his dissertation, found that psalm singing in evangelical churches is steadily disappearing because congregations are less involved and have a poorer understanding of the psalms.[6] Jankowitz and Kruger (2010), by contrast, found that the church underwent a reform in hymnals that the congregation never actually sang from. They found that the church in South Africa was undergoing reform.[7] The failure to introduce new songs has left the tradition of psalm singing in danger of extinction. This reinforces the fact that the crisis of psalm singing is occurring globally and widely across many denominations. On the basis of this background, the present study seeks to answer several questions, beginning with the following: In what sense can the Book of Psalms be called the second Torah that is sung? How can prayer, lament, and praise shape the theological structure of the Book of Psalms? What are the theological and liturgical implications of this understanding for the life of faith of God's people? It is hoped that these three questions can be answered through a canonical approach.

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[3]J. Blommendaal dan P. S. Naipospos, *Pengantar kepada perjanjian lama*, Cet. ke-2 (Gunung Mulia, 1983), 11.

[4]Blommendaal dan Naipospos, *Pengantar kepada perjanjian lama*.

[5]Angelika Berlejung Jan Christian Gertz, *Purwa Pustaka*, 1 ed., 1 (BPK Gunung Mulia, 2017); *Perjanjian Lama: Ibrani - Indonesia* (Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2004).

[6]Philip Webb, "A DEFENSE OF PSALM SINGING: SOLUTIONS TO CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE" (University of Kentucky Libraries, 2023), https://doi.org/10.13023/ETD.2023.354.

[7]Hendrika J. Jankowitz dan Daleen Kruger, "Die stand van psalmsang in die NG Kerk," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 31, no. 1 (2010): 7–10, https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v31i1.400.

**Method**

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach, specifically the method of literature study (*library research).* The qualitative method explores the meaning of a problem through the analysis of documents, rather than through statistics or quantification. The qualitative method was chosen because the research here aims to understand and analyze in greater depth the concept of the Book of Psalms as the second Torah, since it contains the comprehensive, or universal, elements of prayer, lament, and praise.

The primary source of this research is the text of the Book of Psalms in Hebrew (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia) and the Indonesian translation (TB II, LAI). The main focus is on Psalms 40 and 150. Psalm 40 was chosen because this chapter explicitly shows a twofold structure of thanksgiving, namely verses 1-10, and lament or supplication, contained in verses 11-17, within a single psalm. Psalm 40 is able to represent how the dynamics of faith are not linear. Psalm 150 was chosen as the climax of the whole Book of Psalms, with the command "praise" *(Halelu)* repeated 10 times, becoming a universal call to "everything that has breath," which represents the culmination of the theology of praise. The secondary sources comprise books, national and international journals, and dissertations that discuss the Book of Psalms from a canonical approach, as well as prayer, lament, and praise. The principal works used are *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* by Brevard S. Childs and *The Shape of the Book of Psalms* by Gerald H. Wilson.

The analysis is carried out in four steps in accordance with the rules of canonical hermeneutics developed by Brevard S. Childs. First, the final form of the canonical text, namely Psalms 40 and 150, is analyzed, being read in its final form without first sorting out sources or redactional layers. The macrostructure of each psalm is also identified, beginning with the division of the verses and the change of genre from thanksgiving to lament in Psalm 40 and to universal praise in Psalm 150. The contextual relationships within the whole Book of Psalms are also analyzed by placing Psalm 40 in the first book, namely Psalms 1-41, and Psalm 150 as the conclusion of the fifth book, namely 107-150. The study traces how the individual prayer or lament in Psalm 40 relates to the communal praise in Psalm 150, and how the five parts of the Psalms form a theological trajectory from lament to eschatological praise.

The theological analysis attends to canonical function by asking, "What does the text in its final form teach the community of faith?" For Psalm 40: how does the structure of thanksgiving and lament shape a model of faith that is dynamic and honest before God? And for Psalm 150: "How does total praise become the final goal of all prayer and lament?" Synthesis and the drawing of implications are also carried out by comparing how the results of the analysis of Psalms 40 and 150 relate to the concept of the "Second Torah" that sings. The study then draws theological and liturgical implications for the church today, especially concerning the use of lament and praise in their fullness. The validity of the data is obtained through the *triangulation* of sources by comparing several scholars, as well as through *hermeneutical* consistency, whereby every theological claim must be grounded in an analysis

of the final form of the Hebrew text, not in hypothetical historical reconstruction. Through this procedure, the study does not merely claim to use a canonical approach but also demonstrates concrete steps for its application to the texts of Psalms 40 and 150, so that this article can be understood by the reader.

## Discussion

### *The Psalms as a Canonical Book and the Second Torah*

The Psalms are one of the most beloved books compared with the other books in the Bible.[8] This is because the Book of Psalms expresses thoughts about God through words.[9] Most of the contents of the Book of Psalms are written in poetic form, which is believed to be Hebrew poetry. The Book of Psalms is itself the third part of the Old Testament, containing poetic and historical sentences that generally originate from the Babylonian period or the exile, so that it belongs to the last division of the Hebrew Old Testament, often called the "Ketubim," which means "the Writings."[10]

The theory of the canon is also set forth by Brevard S. Childs, who in his book *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* argues that the introduction of the canonical approach is a form of understanding of the Bible.[11] This approach criticizes the dominance of historical criticism, which overemphasizes the origins of the text. Instead, Childs stresses the theological meaning of the final form of the text as the canon that we know today, namely the Bible. The focus of interpretation shifts from history to how the text has now been received by the community of faith. The canon in this sense is understood not merely as a collection of books but as a framework of theological value that finds its meaning in the whole, because when viewed as a whole it yields an important theological function. Understanding a biblical verse by considering its historical context is not thereby neglected; rather, it is used as an auxiliary tool, not as the center of interpretation.

The expression "the Second Torah That Sings" is a theological designation for the Book of Psalms because its final form consists of five parts like the Pentateuch. Its guidance, however, comes not through narrative-legislative law but through prayer, lament, praise, and meditation of faith. The Book of Psalms was compiled by Old Testament scholars not as a mere collection of songs presented at random, but was arranged with a specific purpose and divided into five

[8]Longman dan Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 63–65.

[9]Paulus Subiyanto dkk., "Conceptualization of God in the Book of Psalm: A Study of Metaphor Based on Cognitive Theory," *Education and Linguistics Research* 5, no. 1 (2019): 46, https://doi.org/10.5296/elr.v5i1.14594.

[10]*The Writings: = Ketuvim*, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text, 3rd section (Jewish Publication Society of America, 1982), 107–18.

[11]Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 1st American ed (Fortress Press, 1979).

books, just like the Torah (the five books of Moses).[12] The Pentateuch contains five books that are the result of a lengthy process of compilation, so that the Book of Psalms came to have five parts, which are understood as a redactional form meant to depict the structure of the Torah, making the Psalms seem like a second Torah. The Psalms are not merely a collection of songs or prayers but a text that forms spirituality and teaches believers to live before God. The Psalms are very often likened to the Torah in the form of prayer. If the Torah is a rule of life, then the Psalms are a way of praying, a pattern for praying and for experiencing life in the Lord. The Book of Psalms has a final form that is not random because it was arranged with a theological purpose, since it contains the story of faith from King David before God toward the true God as king. The Book of Psalms deals with how we understand suffering, hope, and pray, which makes the Book of Psalms resemble the Torah that guides life.[13]

The root word *Mizmor (מִזְמוֹר)* affirms that genuine faith is not cold doctrine but prayer that is sung.[14] Music and poetry are the fitting media for pouring out the expression of a dynamic relationship with God. There are 57 psalms that use the word *Mizmor (מִזְמוֹר)* in their superscriptions, and this consistent usage serves as a liturgical code, indicating that these psalms were created to be performed in communal worship. *Sefer Tehillim* derives from the root הלל *(halal)* with the nominal form *tehillah (תְּהִלָּה)*.[15] This means praise, adoration, glory, and splendor. The root *halal* gives rise to the word Hallelujah, which is an exhortation to His people to praise the Lord, so that it is a call to action, not merely a description of content. *Psalmoi (ψαλμοί)* is the Greek form which, according to the LXX (Septuagint), is a translation from Hebrew into Greek that took place around 200 BCE, rendering Mizmor as Psalmoi, which means to pluck, to strum, a stringed musical instrument.[16]

The authorship of the Book of Psalms itself is very often attributed to David as the author of the psalms, who is also regarded as a poet. The name of David is mentioned 73 times, Solomon twice, Moses only once, Asaph 12 times, the Sons of Korah 11 times, and Ethan and Heman once each.[17] The Book of Psalms was not written by David alone, even though his name is mentioned 73 times. There is an argument that a later redactor added the attributions to David. David appears as the author of 73 psalms, for example Psalm 15, Moses as the author of Psalm

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kra[12] Isak Petrus Puling dkk., "Mazmur sebagai Doa dan Pujian: Tafsir Teologis terhadap Dinamika Emosi dalam Kitab Mazmur 146-150," *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Agama dan Filsafat* 4, no. 2 (2025): 132–45, https://doi.org/10.55606/jurrafi.v4i2.5083.

[13]Gerald H. Wilson, "The Shape of the Book of Psalms," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 46, no. 2 (1992): 129–42, https://doi.org/10.1177/002096439204600203.

[14]Philippus J. Botha, "Interpreting 'Torah' in Psalm 1 in the light of Psalm 119," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 68, no. 1 (2012): 7 pages, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v68i1.1274.

[15]*Perjanjian Lama*.

[16]Jan Christian Gertz, *Purwa Pustaka*.

[17]Blommendaal dan Naipospos, *Pengantar kepada perjanjian lama*.

90, and Solomon as the author of Psalms 72 and 127. Outside the Hebrew Bible, some codices of the Septuagint name other authors; thirteen psalms in the Hebrew Bible and 16 in the Septuagint provide additional information concerning the situations in David's life from which the psalm in question is considered to have originated. [18]

Another view holds that the Book of Psalms is a collection formed gradually by the community of ancient Israel, so that David is more a figure of theological tradition than a sole author.[19] In fact, this book seems to present the shape and formation of the Book of Psalms from an Eastern perspective, as expressed in *"The shape of the Psalter: authorship in the ancient Near East"*, which in Indonesian is rendered "Bentuk Kitab Mazmur: Kepengarangan di Timur dekat Kuno" ("The Shape of the Book of Psalms: Authorship in the Ancient Near East"). Recent research has expressed doubt that David wrote the Book of Psalms, because historical traditions were added by redactors or editors, and this took place during the process of the transmission of the Book of Psalms.[20] This has also been noted by several scholars who express uncertainty about the author. In the end, the authorship of the Book of Psalms is difficult to prove directly; the biblical tradition follows the conviction that David was the principal author, even though the historical evidence is uncertain. The Book of Psalms was not written by a single author; rather, it is believed that David was the dominant author, who may be described as central to the Book of Psalms, which is the result of a compilation by various authors in different periods through the canonical process.[21] Thus, the Book of Psalms, being a canonical product described as a collection by several authors with David as the central figure who wrote the most, is not the work of one person alone.

In terms of date, the Book of Psalms is divided into three parts or three periods: *Praexilic, Exilic*, and *Postexilic.* For example, Psalm 29 is a *Praexilic* psalm, a psalm of the *Exilic* period is Psalm 137, and a *Postexilic* psalm is Psalm 150. This is the basis for the dating, or time of writing, of the Book of Psalms, which is believed to have been written in the Pre-Exilic, Exilic, and Post-Exilic periods. The Book of Psalms is believed to have been written, or to have been completed, before 100 BCE. Its composition is believed to have taken a long time, about 1000 years, through a historical process, so that this book is believed to have been written from the 15th century to the 5th century BCE. [22]Traditionally, Psalm 90 is associated with Moses, while many other psalms are associated with David, Asaph, the Sons of Korah, and even Solomon. From the academic perspective, the psalms are understood as a process of

[18]Jan Christian Gertz, *Purwa Pustaka*.

[19]Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford, *Introduction to the Psalms: a song from ancient Israel* (Chalice Press, 2004).

[20]Longman and Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*.

[21]Longman dan Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*.

[22]J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament: From Its Origins to the Closing of the Alexandrian Canon*, Rev. ed, The Old Testament Library (Westminster Press, 1980).

compilation with a long redaction, beginning in the pre-exilic period, through the exile, to the post-exilic period. Likewise, the golden age of Israel under David and Solomon occurred in the 10th century BCE, which concerns most of the Psalms, in which David wrote 73 Psalms, and the Psalms of Solomon are Psalms 72 and 127. Asaph, Korah, and the Lamentations wrote 12 Psalms, which are believed to date from the 10th–6th centuries BCE. This is shown by the period of the exile in Babylon.[23]

The last part of the Psalms consists of psalms regarded as originating in the 6th to the 5th century BCE, or even said to date to 100 BCE, which are believed to have been compiled during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. [24]This period is marked by Psalm 137, which clearly recounts the exile in Babylon that took place in 586–538 BCE, because it portrays the suffering experienced by the Jews during the exile, for example Psalm 137:1.

"By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion."[25]

This shows that the Book of Psalms was written no earlier than the 6th century BCE. Besides the writing of Psalm 137, there are also other features indicating that this took place in the post-exilic period, namely the presence of late Hebrew linguistic features, for example the relative particle *"še" (ש)*, which became the basic form of *"'ăšer" (אֲשֶׁר)*, found in Psalms 122–144. [26]This is a grammatical difference that indicates the time of writing of the Book of Psalms as originating from the Persian period, from the 6th to the 4th century BCE.

The Book of Psalms is almost the same as the five books of Moses. The Book of Psalms likewise consists of five books. The first book of Psalms consists of Psalms 1–41, which itself consists of two parts, namely the first prologue, called the Torah, and the first prologue consisting of a single psalm only, namely Psalm 1. This is followed by the second prologue, which contains the Psalms of David concerning the Messiah, found in Psalms 2–41. The second part, Psalms 42–72, is often called the *Elohistic* Psalms because they basically use the word *Elohim*. This book is divided into several sections, namely Psalms 42–49 as the Psalms of the Sons of Korah, and Psalm 50 as a Psalm of Asaph, Psalms 51–71 as the Psalms of David, Psalms 70–83 as the Psalms of Asaph again, Psalm 72 in particular as a psalm of Solomon, and finally Psalm 89 as the Psalm of Ethan.[27] At the very least, the Book of Psalms is divided into five parts, a conclusion reached after two thousand years of struggle, namely Psalms 1–41; 42–

[23]Bruce K. Waltke, *The Psalms as Christian lament: a historical commentary* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014).

[24]Jan Christian Gertz, *Purwa Pustaka*.

[25]*Perjanjian Lama*.

[26]*Perjanjian Lama*; Avi Hurvitz dkk., *A concise lexicon of late biblical Hebrew: linguistic innovations in the writings of the Second Temple period*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, volume 160 (Brill, 2014).

[27]W. S. Lasor dkk., *Pengantar Perjanjian Lama 2*, vol. 13, 13 10002011999 (Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994; 13 ed., BPK Gunung Mulia, 2011).

72; 73–89; 90–106; and 107–150.[28] Many opinions hold that the Book of Psalms has similarities with the Torah, particularly in the not very great difference in the number of chapters, with Psalms having 150 and the Torah 153 chapters.

The third part of the Book of Psalms, namely Psalms 90–106, consists of praise to יהוה *(Adonai)* as king, and these psalms also include psalms of various kinds, beginning with the Psalm of Moses, Psalm 92, the Sabbath Psalm, Psalm 92, the Todah Psalm, Psalm 100, and the Psalms of David, Psalms 101 and 103. The fourth part, namely Psalms 120–134, consists of psalms from the *"Ma'alot"* (the "Songs of Ascents"), which are also called Pilgrim Psalms or even Psalms of David. In the fifth part of the Book of Psalms, namely Psalms 138–145, which are Psalms of David, this is followed by Psalm 149, said to be the first epilogue by the *Messianic* people, and finally the second epilogue in the form of "Praise God" in Psalm 150.[29] There is a slight difference between the two books. This is because the difference lies not in their basic structure but in differing perspectives regarding the interpretation of authority, titles, time of writing, and the process of redaction by redactors. At the end of each section of this book there is always a closing word, as in Psalm 41:14, which declares "Amen and Amen." Many Psalms bear a superscription, always in the first verse; all of them can reliably be traced back to later additions. A superscript is writing, a number, or a symbol written smaller and slightly higher than the main text.

***The Psalms as the Prayer of the People of God***

Robert D. Miller II, in *The Psalms as Israel's Prayer and Our Own*, asserts that the Book of Psalms is the prayer of the people of Israel, not merely a collection of poems with religious themes, but a medium of prayer expression that lives within the relationship between human beings and God.[30] The texts contained in the Book of Psalms have been widely used in worship because the Book of Psalms is regarded as a medium for shaping spirituality that is employed by the people in prayer. The church, which preserves the value of tradition, finds the Psalms to be a prayer relevant across all ages. Throughout its history the Psalter has been understood as a Book of Prayer because it depicts the dynamics of faith and religious practice among the people of God. The Book of Psalms is conveyed in two ways or two methods, namely collectively (communally) and personally (individually), as recorded in history.[31] What may be called a double framework, accompanied by an external framework that encompasses the whole Book of Psalms, Psalms 1–150, from the Torah to universal praise, is a doxology; in other

[28]Lasor dkk., *Pengantar Perjanjian Lama 2*, vol. 13.

[29]Blommendaal dan Naipospos, *Pengantar kepada perjanjian lama*; Jan Christian Gertz, *Purwa Pustaka*.

[30]Robert D. Miller, *The psalms as Israel's prayer and our own*, Christian heritage rediscovered 2 (Christian World Imprints, 2013).

[31]Longman dan Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*.

words, a guide to praising God.[32] This is supported as a climax of praise contained in Psalms 146–150,[33] which seems to show that the end is an expression of faith that moves toward the summit of praise to God. The Psalms themselves are divided into five parts, ending at 41, 72, 89, 106, and 150, each of which concludes with a doxology, so that it is also described as a book that imitates the Torah, which is a trajectory from Lament. [34]

The final form of the Book of Psalms contains a very broad space, like meditation and personal prayer. This is evidenced by the existence of about 35–40 individual psalms that are specifically addressed to God in the midst of personal crises, such as sickness, guilt or sin, and even oppression by enemies.[35] They also contain an individual thanksgiving that addresses God directly, voices lament or distress, calls for God's intervention, and is then concluded with a testimony of faith or thanksgiving for deliverance. The basic foundation of this individual prayer is rooted in the early Davidic psalm tradition, which then underwent a broader process of compilation. On the other hand, the Psalms were also redacted communally; those personal experiences were united by the redactors into a double framework, both internal and external, that encompasses Psalms 1–150 as a single doxological unity. This is a guide to praising God for the whole congregation. The five-part structure of the Psalms, concluded with doxologies at Psalms 41, 72, 89, 106, and 150, shows that personal lament is ultimately directed toward becoming common and universal praise, the climax of which is contained in Psalms 146–150. Through communal redaction, including the *Elohistic* editing process that changed the designation YHWH to Elohim, the Psalms became hymns of command as well as participatory hymns that voice faith communally for the people of God in His presence.

### *Lament as the Language of Honest Faith*

Lament is often regarded as a form of prayer from the depths of the abyss that makes praise the climactic peak of the whole journey of faith. However, lament is not merely the antithesis of praise, because it has a theological function that can stand on its own. The Book of Psalms shows that lament is the most honest language of faith, a form of prayer in which the people of God lay aside pretense and appear before the Lord with their own wounds, anger, and confusion. The same is also found in Psalm 150, verse 6:

"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!" (Ps 150:6)[36]

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[32]Jan Christian Gertz, *Purwa Pustaka*.

[33]Puling dkk., "Mazmur sebagai Doa dan Pujian."

[34]Rullyanty M. Tulende, *Kajian Terhadap Kitab Mazmur 52:1-10 Dalam Upaya Berteologi Kontekstual Tentang Pohon Zaitun dan Relevansinya Dengan Pohon Pala di Pulau Siau*, 25 April 2024, https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.11064087.

[35]Jan Christian Gertz, *Purwa Pustaka*.

[36]*Perjanjian Lama*.

Lament is a concrete demonstration that the Psalms are a second Torah not because they replace the Torah, but because they form the spirituality of the people through prayer, lament, praise, and meditation on the ways of the Lord. The expression "second Torah" is a modern theological metaphor, advanced and supported by canonical approaches such as those of Brevard S. Childs, Gerald H. Wilson, and Gordon Wenham. Structurally, the Book of Psalms was deliberately arranged into five books like the Pentateuch (Ps 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150), and in this respect it functions as an authoritative guide for the life of the people of God. The difference is that the Torah speaks through law and narrative, whereas the Psalms speak through prayer, song, and lament, which serve as a model of a dynamic relationship with God. The Psalms as a second Torah are not merely instruction about suffering; they grant the people of God legitimacy to complain, to question, and even to wrestle with the Lord. If this is an honest prayer free of false piety, then lament becomes a form of protest of faith before God. Lament teaches precisely that the people of God are given a legitimate language in which to complain, to question, and even to wrestle with the Lord. This is the prayer of an honest person, without the mask of false piety. It leads the Psalms to show us why we should marvel at the Lord, who invites and receives our complaints and embraces every question born of a wounded heart. Psalm 40 is a perfect example. Verses 1-10 are an expression of thanksgiving for help received, whereas verses 11-17 are a lament containing a plea for protection. This structure shows the transition between lament and praise within a single psalm, without removing the theological tension. This is what demonstrates that, in spirituality, the psalms of lament and praise can live side by side in motion, in other words dynamically, within one and the same prayer, yet this is not regarded as contradictory.

Furthermore, lament in the Book of Psalms functions as a means of resisting a spirituality that pursues only victory. Integrating lament into worship means that the church provides a space of restoration for suffering congregants. Lament becomes a liturgical therapy that acknowledges the reality of suffering without losing hope. A distinctive feature of the Book of Psalms is its process of redaction, in which it was written as if in poetic form, a poetry from the Hebrew language that is believed to have been composed with the technique of parallelism.[37] Parallelism is a phrase followed by a second phrase that repeats, adds to, or even contrasts with the first phrase, as an example found in Psalm 38 : 19.

"Yes, I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin."[38]

In this case, it is described as a form of repetition, and a process of comparison also occurs in Psalm 1:6.

[37]Robert Lowth, *Robert Lowth (1r710-1787): The Major Works ; [8 Volumes]* (Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1995).

[38]*Perjanjian Lama*.

"For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction,"[39]

This seems to point to messianic expectation.

The theology contained in the Psalms also touches on lament. Taken as a whole, the Psalms speak of Yahwism, which contains the theological anthropology of the Old Testament and which seems to have been regarded as a canon by M. Luther, who likened it to a little book.[40] The Book of Psalms is regarded as Israel's answer to the Torah given by the Lord. The theology it contains includes, for example, God who acts individually within history, and God who, though transcendent, acts as creator through a history of liberation and protection in the wilderness. Second, it is as if a Torah for the life of faith, because the Book of Psalms is believed to function theoretically, that is, to guide the people of God to live out the Torah through prayer, lament, praise, and meditation of faith, in which a successful life is something obtained when it is lived together with God; conversely, without God it will become a failure.[41]

There is also a theology showing that human beings before God are fragile yet endowed with glory given by God, as in Psalm 8, which depicts a holy God and humanity as a sinful people. The next point is prayer, which becomes our means of flourishing, in which the emphasis falls on prayer not merely as a ritual but as an essential part behind a flourishing life. Something interesting is shown through individual and communal laments expressed through helplessness and anxiety, followed by supplication and hope, and continuing with the purpose of prayer, which becomes the means of uniting the human will with the divine. Lament also functions as a means of resisting a spirituality that pursues only victory. By eliminating lament, the church would form a shallow faith. The Psalms also provide a space of restoration for suffering congregants, so that lament becomes a liturgical therapy that acknowledges the reality of suffering without losing hope. The next theological value concerns the *particularism* of the Psalms, which contain the first prayer of Israel as a whole on behalf of all nations, so that God may be glorified.

### *Praise as Theological Climax*

Psalm 150 is the concluding doxology, composed as a universal call. Praise is no longer limited to the Temple or to the nation of Israel but involves all of creation, as stated in the phrase "everything that has breath." This shows that all creation is called to praise the Lord universally. This is followed by the theology of Zion, which contains a place of safety, the destination of all nations, and the point at which God establishes peace. Finally, there is the value that shows eschatology, which becomes the means of awaiting the kingdom of God through a prayerful

[39]*Perjanjian Lama*.

[40]Martin Luther, *Luther's Works. 35: Word and Sacrament: 1*, American ed, ed. oleh Jaroslav Pelikan dan Helmut T. Lehmann (Concordia Publ. House [u.a.], 1960).

[41]Jan Christian Gertz, *Purwa Pustaka*.

call such as "Your kingdom come," in which Zion becomes a symbol of a hope that points to the attainment of consummation.[42] Thus, as a whole, the theological value contained in the Book of Psalms is a theology of prayer that becomes the means of an authentic life lived before God with lament, praise, thanksgiving, and hope, together with the awaiting of the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. Zion is a holy place, where יהוה *(Adonai)* is the site that saves from catastrophe, a place which one day belongs to all nations; this is what makes it the means by which יהוה *(Adonai)* brings about peace.

***Theological and Liturgical Implications for the Church***

Understanding the Book of Psalms as the Second Torah that Sings has implications for the faith and liturgy of the church today. First, theologically, the church is called not merely to treat the Psalms as a text to be read, but also as a prayer to be lived. If the Torah teaches law as the way of life, then the Psalms teach that prayer, lament, and praise are the breath of authentic faith. The church needs to correct itself so that lament is recovered as liturgy; restoring the full use of the Psalms, especially the psalms of lament and imprecation, can lead the congregation to spiritual honesty before God. Using the Psalms in daily worship, personal prayer, and communal celebration will form a spirituality rooted in the struggles of the people of God throughout the ages. The Psalms are not only songs but also a school of faith in which the people learn to pray in joy and sorrow, in certainty and doubt, accompanied by the awaiting of the fulfillment of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ.

The church need not fear lament; on the contrary, lament will become a space in which faith can be tested and deepened. The church's liturgy also needs to design worship that gives congregants room to voice their grief, doubt, and anger directly to God, as exemplified in Psalm 40. In addition, the psalmist teaches that praise is not merely a form of escape from suffering but the climax of a journey of faith through the dark valley and toward eschatological hope. The church should dare to sing psalms of lament, not only psalms of praise; in this way the congregation will discover that biblical faith never pretends to be happy but continues to experience struggle and to believe. The Psalms form the people of God into a community that is honest before the Lord, faithful in suffering, and longing for his coming kingdom.

**Conclusion**

The Book of Psalms is a collection of Hebrew poems formed through a long process of redaction across the ages, with David as the central figure but not the only author. The theology it contains is in prayer, which becomes a distinctive medium for expressing faith, in which God is personal toward human beings, so that both fragility and glory appear before him. The Psalms are not only a response to the Torah but the Torah itself, which becomes a guide for the life of believers in establishing the relationship between human beings and God, the divine will. The book also brings together Israel's particular consciousness and the universal call to glorify the

[42]Jan Christian Gertz, *Purwa Pustaka*.

name of God. In the end it is directed toward eschatological hope and the establishment of the kingdom of God through the symbol of Zion as the center of peace. The Book of Psalms is a collection of Hebrew poems. Accordingly, understanding the root of the word *mizmor (מִזְמוֹר)* as a song accompanied by plucked strings and *tehillah (תְּהִלָּה)* as a cry of praise confirms that the Psalms are not merely a text but a living liturgical event. The dynamic between honest lament and universal praise, as seen in Psalms 40 and 150, shows that true faith is never static but is always moving in struggle and hope. Therefore, the Book of Psalms deserves to be called the Second Torah that Sings, because it guides the people of God to pray, lament, and praise within one comprehensive unity of the experience of faith.

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