

Sermon Notes from the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany – Year B

RCL Readings – Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; I Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

ACNA Readings – Deuteronomy 18:15-22; Psalm 111; I Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

[Original](#) – Aaron Eime (Old [Psalm 111](#)-112 – John Arnold)

Seasonal Introduction. Epiphany of the Lord is celebrated on the 6th of January in the Western Christian calendar and the season continues until Ash Wednesday and Lent. Epiphany is a Greek word meaning ‘showing forth, appearance, or manifestation’. During this season, the church celebrates the manifestation of the Messiah on earth between the time of His birth and preparation for His death and ascension. The Baptism of Jesus, His presentation at the Temple, and His transfiguration—all events with deep connections to Jewish life and history.

Common Theme. Messiah is a Jewish concept, the seeds of which are steeped in the sacred and prophetic history of the Jewish people. The Hebrew Bible prophesies of a messianic age, called the ‘days of the Messiah’ יְמֵוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ.¹ In our readings today, the coming redeemer would be someone like Moses and would usher in a time of universal peace and utopia. This was to be a fulfillment of God’s promises and covenant to Israel. The promise of a coming redeemer figure raises two questions: how would you recognize who this messiah was, and what would distinguish him from a false claimant? The readings will declare what qualities the Messiah should have and then examine whether Jesus of Nazareth can qualify as this Messiah

Hebraic Context. The book of Deuteronomy contains the last words of Moses as he prepared the people of God to enter the land of Canaan and set up a just and moral society that reflects the standards and instructions of the Lord. Moses had been the teacher, guide, and lawgiver of Israel since the Exodus from Egypt. The Israelites knew no other leader. Moses however will not be joining Israel as they cross the Jordan, and the people of Israel may have expressed anxiety as to their future rulers. In this setting, Moses promises that the Lord will choose prophets for the people and will raise up a prophet like himself.

The sentence; “a prophet like me” can be read as referring to a single entity or person. Thus another Moses was to be expected as a preeminent shepherd of the people. He would be a redeemer, challenge the kings of the earth, a lawgiver, miracle worker, and mediator for Israel and, later, the nations. To the anxious people of Israel on the plains of Moab, a measure of hope is given. This hope expanded as God revealed more and more about a future Messiah—a messianic hope was brought to all the people in the form of this ultimate redeemer. Each generation would hold to the hope that their generation would herald the one like Moses, later known as The Messiah.

¹ The Scriptures never use the term יְמֵוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ, however, this became the theological name of the concept (similar to how the Scriptures never use the term Trinity). ... Aaron addition if desired.

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However, Deuteronomy 18:15 can also be read as relating to any prophet God raises up. In each successive generation God would raise up a prophet and, like Moses, they would speak God's word.² They would be a guide and balance for both the people and the King. Indeed, each king would have a prophet. Sometimes, the king would listen, but many times the relationship became tense as neither the people nor the king desired to hear (and submit to) the word of God.

Deuteronomy 18:15-20. The separation between magic and superstition, religion and science was a fine line in the ancient world. This passage begins with Moses saying the Canaanite nations you will defeat listen to sorcerers and diviners. In truth, all ancient cultures embraced some form of magic.³ Even the Exodus event involved a battle of magicians performing mystical arts. God, through Moses, forbids the Israelites from accessing the power magic. The Bible does not deny that magic exists but simply says that it is forbidden. However, the Israelites will still have access to the spiritual realm through the institution of the prophet. Before there were kings or priests to function as the leadership for the people of God there were prophets, and Moses was one of the first of them.^{4 5}

² Prophets were found in each generation, as shown in the Scriptures. In the time of the Judges, we still read about Deborah, the prophetess. In the days of Samuel, "The word of the LORD was rare... there was no frequent vision." And yet, a man of God came to Eli (traditional Elkanah) and spoke as God's prophet. Samuel himself was a great prophet of whom it was said, "the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground."

The relationship between King and Prophet was established through Samuel. Each king had their own prophet, Nathan and Gad worked with (and confronted) David. Ahijah declared that Jeroboam would be king while Iddo became the prophet of God to (and against) Rehoboam (and possibly Jeroboam). Huldah was the prophetess in the time of King Josiah. It was unusual, indeed, when no prophet could be found—such as in the time of Solomon (the prophets strangely do not interact with Solomon) or the Maccabees. Which isn't to say there were no prophets after Malachi. Anna, of Asher, was a prophetess long before the birth of Jesus while Zechariah, Mary, and Simeon could also be considered prophetic—as was John the Baptist.

³ Deuteronomy 18:9-14

⁴ Moses is the traditional author of the Book on Deuteronomy, with an unknown author and redactor adding the account of the death of Moses and presumably other sections of the Torah. Jewish tradition says that the redactor of the Torah was Joshua. The book is known as Sefer Devarim in Hebrew (the Book of Words), in Greek it is called Deuteronomy following a mistranslation in the Septuagint of 'Mishneh Torah' in Chapter 17:18. The book of Deuteronomy appears to be the longest monologue in the entire Bible, presented by Moses (who at the start of his career complains to God that he can't speak). Somewhere along the line Moses became quite erudite indeed.

⁵ Moses was born in Egypt, educated and raised in the household of Pharaoh and given an Egyptian name. The ancient Egyptians had a fascination with death. They constructed mighty monuments to the dead Pharaohs, they embalmed themselves, created frescoes on the afterlife and underworld, turning death into a cult and even a form of worship. In contrast, Moses' own death (he dies at the end of his monologue) was anti-Egyptian, there is no great pyramid, nor mummification, dynasty or fresco. God is a

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The highest authority in the Hebrew Bible did not belong to the monarchy or to the priesthood, but to the prophet—the one in whom God puts His words. Moses took the role of mediating the voice of God at Mt Sinai when the Israelites could not stand to hear God's voice directly.⁶ During the Second Temple period, the expectation was for someone with the role of “the coming Prophet” to be part of the messianic age. The Lord Himself adds that the coming one will have the words of God in his mouth. Thus, the tradition became that one quality of the Messiah is that he will be able to teach the Word of God. After Jesus performed the miracle of feeding 5,000 people, the Gospel of John records the people declaring, “surely this is the Prophet!” (John 6:14).

Psalm 111. The author of Psalm 111 is unknown, however they have beautifully crafted a double acrostic poem.⁷ Apart from the opening imperative to ‘Praise the Lord’ (*Hallelujah*), every sentence begins with the next successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet using all 22 Hebrew characters for the 22 line (not verse) psalm. This demonstrates that prayers can be well thought out and well constructed ahead of time.⁸ The psalmist desires we worship the Lord with our

God of Life and in Him there is no death. The kings of Egypt may be remembered by name, but for all their effort, their importance is gone. Moses, who spoke the words that God commanded him, is still remembered. It is also Moses that lives still, even meeting Jesus on earth at the transfiguration.

⁶ Mount Sinai is more often referred to as Horeb in Deuteronomy. There are no convincing explanations for the two names of the same mountain, though many commentators have attempted an explanation in the past. Jewish sages unconvincingly claim that one side of the mountain was called Sinai and the other was Horeb. The root of Horeb refers to ruin, destruction or sword. Which is an interesting name for a mountain that God would choose to descend from Heaven and present His Torah. The New Testament does not use the name Horeb, the mountain is exclusively called Mt Sinai.

⁷ Psalm 111 can hardly be read without including its counterpart, Psalm 112.

⁸ While there are many times to cry out, praise, or thank God in prayer in the moment, there is also something to be said for crafting a liturgical prayer. If what we pray shows what the desires of our heart is, perhaps it is good to think about what we so commonly pray. Are we constantly asking God for His blessings but never blessing Him in return? Do we constantly give thanks, but only for the good things God gives us? Do we call out to Jesus as if stating His name will magically make everything better? These prayers can easily become ways to take the Lord's name in vain.

This Psalmist used all their skill to give thanks to God. They thought through the reasons they truly should be thankful. Then they blessed God by taking time and effort to make something beautiful, just to praise the LORD. And, of course, knowing what God did for them, the Psalmist proceeded to write out practical ways that they could bless God in the following Psalm.

Written prayers can also, along with the Holy Spirit (who, as Hebrews 3:7 points out, is the actual author of Psalm 95, a commonly used liturgical Psalm), help us pray in times when we don't know how to pray ourselves. Many have faced the same situation as we face, their prayers are precious and often theologically astute (if it has been preserved within the Church). They can help guide our hearts and minds to God, just as the Psalms have for generation upon generation.

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whole heart. Psalms were sung and prayed in the Temple while sacrifices would be ongoing. Nonetheless, the real sacrifice that's important to the author is an undivided heart for the Lord.⁹

The worship of God is also done in public, commonly in the courts of the Temple in Jerusalem (and likely the case in Psalm 111-112). Here on Mt. Zion, the worshipper joined with others to form a congregation or an *assembly of the upright*. The psalmist placed emphasis on the great works of God. The Lord is to be praised, not just for who He is but also for what He has done. The most common command in the Hebrew Scriptures is 'to remember'. One way to recall the good things God has done is to include them in our prayers. The psalmist wants the worshipper to remember the wondrous deeds of the Lord, noting that He also remembers His covenant and promises. The works of God are called truth (some translated as faithful) and justice. From this we can conclude that God will be faithful to bring about His promises spoken through the Torah and the Prophets.

The prophets declare that God will indeed send a redeemer and so He will. Verse 9 links His covenant with redemption and connects everything with the holy and awesome name of God. The final verse; '*Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*' is echoed in Proverbs 9:10 and Job 28:28—and more immediately in Psalm 112:1 as the Psalmist turns to how we fear God. Fear, not in the sense of being scared—such a fear is inadequate—but in the sense of awesome respect for the power and authority of God. This fear leads to walking in the footsteps of God.¹⁰ God gave food to those who fear him (Psalm 111:5) so those who fear God should give to their neighbours (Psalm 112:5) Fearing God leads to respect of His power and of obedience to His instructions—it also helps us be steadfast in the time of evil tidings. "All those who practice [fear] have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!"

I Corinthians 8:1-13. Idolatry in the ancient world was prolific. Most ancient religions visualized their deities through vibrant imagery such as statues and temple carvings. Coinciding with idolatry, many pagan festivals included sexual immorality and the consumption of food sacrificed during the event, much of the meat still containing blood in it. These were all concerns for the early church in Acts 15. In most cases much of the meat in Greek and Roman culture was

⁹ This is not to diminish the role and nature of a sacrifice as the sacrifice has achieved its function—it has brought the worshipper into the presence of God while in a position of humility. The worshipper must come not only with his offering but also their heart.

¹⁰ Tertullian, in *Prescription against Heretics* 43, states that, if there is no fear of God (or reason to fear God) all things are permitted. But the only time there is no fear of God is in the place God does not exist and where God does not exist, there is no truth. However, where God does exist...

"... there exists 'the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom.' Where the fear of God is, there is seriousness, an honourable and yet thoughtful diligence, as well as an anxious carefulness and a well-considered admission (to the sacred ministry) and a safely-guarded communion, and promotion after good service, and a scrupulous submission (to authority), and a devout attendance, and a modest gait, and a united church, and God in all things."

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“sacrificed” to various pagan deities as part of the food preparation. In both Jewish and Greek religious custom the flesh of the sacrificed animal was divided into several portions. There was a portion that was burnt on the altar to the gods, another portion was returned to the worshipper who may have taken that portion home or eaten the meat during the ceremony and the last portion was for the priest.¹¹ If the priest didn't want it or couldn't use it then they would sell the unused meat in the local market. Usually, the Jewish people did not partake in pagan festivals nor consume sacrificial foods offered to foreign gods.¹²

In I Corinthians 8, Paul was making comments to the Gentile Christians in Corinth on the permissibility of food offered to idols. Paul appears to permit foods in the theological sense, in that pagan idols are essentially “nothing” as there are no other gods besides God. For Paul the false idol is really nothing, it has no authority, it did not create the animal nor provide the Corinthians with it. However, in fellowship, he does forbid pagan food for the sake of the community. The Corinthian community was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. Table fellowship was a big concern in the early church as there was a strong Jewish prohibition against eating unclean foods. (Footnote - Many of these early debates and issues appear in the New Testament in Acts 15 and Galatians 2. At the council of Jerusalem there is a clear message that food containing blood, strangled animals and that which is offered to idols is forbidden. While in Galatians Paul berates Peter for social separation around the table over unclean food. In Rabbinic tradition there are two competing ideas as to the Messiah and whether there is a change in Jewish food laws, known as *kashrut*. One view is that the Messiah will be obedience to the Torah and thus he will keep the halachic rules for *kashrut* and avoid eating unclean food, the other view is that when the Messiah comes there will be a change some aspects of the Torah, particularly when it comes to the Temple, its practices and to food consumption. Rabbi Rashi is known for a saying that, ‘During the days of the Messiah pig will return to Israel’.) If eating food offered to idols is harmful to another believer then is to be avoided to the sake of love and unity.

¹¹ Scripture is very clear that sacrifices were to be celebrated communally with both the priests, levites, and worshipping parties eating part of the sacrifice. Concerning the sin offering, guilt offering, and peace offering, the priest who offers it (along with all the male priests who are working at that time) must eat it in the court of the tent of meeting (Leviticus 6:24-30; Leviticus 7:1-7, 11-18). Every grain offering was to be divided up amongst all the levites (Leviticus 7:9-10).

God, in fact, promises to provide for the priests and levites through the sacrifices (Numbers 18:8-20 and Deuteronomy 18:1-8; Joshua 13:14 and even I Corinthians 9:13). So, in I Samuel 2:28, when Eli's sons take the little that God had not already given them and the worshippers, they are judged. Not only the priests are judged, in Joel 1:9 when there is no grain offering or drink offering brought to the house of the Lord, the day of the LORD draws near. The people of Israel were breaking the promise that God gave to the priests and Levites—that is not a light thing to do.

¹² **Idols are nothing, idols are demonic—and though they may give what you ask, the cost is exceedingly greater than the reward.**

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Mark 1:21-28. There is a lot of mosaic imagery in the gospels. For example, Moses feeds people in the desert while Jesus feeds the 5000. (Footnote - While the miracle of the mana in the wilderness was from the Lord, it was performed under the auspices of Moses and so in Jewish tradition is attributed to his leadership and authority.) One of the messages of the gospel writers is to reveal Jesus as the new Moses. As Moses was a great teacher, bringer of the Word to the people, and doer of miracles, then so too is Jesus. In today's reading in Mark we have Jesus teaching the Word of God in the synagogue at Capernaum with authority, which all who hear can perceive. (Footnote - In the 1st Century there were no set teachers in the synagogues. Pharisees were itinerant preachers among the people and the rabbinical movement was only just beginning. In fact in the New Testament only Jesus is called a rabbi, He does not engage with any other rabbis and in Acts Paul does not once encounter a rabbi in all his extensive travels. The first person called a rabbi in Jewish literature is Gamaliel in the Pirke Avot. Just like today, synagogues of the 1st Century were not controlled by rabbis but by elders. Today a modern Jewish synagogue is overseen by a president with the community hiring the services of a rabbi.) We are not told what Jesus was teaching, which occurs more often than you think in the gospels. What we are told is the reception to His teaching, which was extremely positive. Jesus is described as teaching with authority. It is a rabbinic tradition to cite other sources when teaching (as it is in much of academia today) usually to say the name of the scribe or rabbi from which the teaching tradition came from. Throughout the gospels Jesus does not cite another teacher except to quote literal Scripture, which is a hallmark of His authority. Within the community at Capernaum there was a man with an impure spirit who recognized Jesus as 'the Holy One of God', a term derived from the prophet Isaiah who expresses the Lord as the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 1:4). The book of Isaiah was an influential text in the 2nd Temple period. Both the possessed man and the demon were probably quite familiar with the material in Isaiah. Mark deliberately pairs the teaching in the synagogue with the driving out of an impure spirit. This demonstrates that Jesus is greater than Moses as today's text reveals that Jesus also has authority over the demonic.

Hebraic Perspective. Exorcism was actually common in the ancient world. Many cultures in antiquity believed in a spiritual realm which could touch and interact with the physical realm. Some sort to placate those forces through worship and sacrifices, others sort control of the spiritual forces and further others sought to defend or rid themselves of spiritual influence. The usual method for getting rid of demons involved a variety of prayers, incantations, and magic spells. Judaism of the late Second Temple period had a well-developed system for exorcism. We meet Jewish exorcists in Acts 19 that were not disciples of Jesus. Demonic activity seems to have been prevalent in the ancient world. According to the historian Josephus, King Solomon performed exorcisms, and incantations attributed to him are found in *Sefer HaRazim* (the forbidden Book of Magic). According to the Gospels, Jesus performed 24 exorcisms, and exorcisms were also part of the practice of the early church. The Greek word used in Mark 1:26

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to describe the spirit is *ἀκάθαρτος* (*akathartos*), usually translated as “impure.” The word can also be translated in context as “foul” or “evil.” Judaism was very concerned with ritual impurity before the Lord. Impurity could be caused by demonic activity in the form of possession or disease. Release from demonic oppression resulted in people being restored back to a worshipping community.

Optional Context 1

Optional Context 2

Further reading. [if supplied]

Sources and Bibliography.

Readings - Deuteronomy 18:15-20, Psalm 111, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Mark 1:21-28

Introduction - Epiphany celebrates the revelation of the incarnation of Jesus and His revelation to the peoples of the world. That celebration continues for a time as there are six Sundays in the Christian calendar that comprise the season of Epiphany. Today's readings reveal that Jesus has the authority to not only teach the Scriptures but also authority over the powers of darkness.

Common Theme - The Hebrew Bible had prophesied a coming redeemer, one like Moses. This was to be a fulfillment of His promises to Israel and thus His covenant. This raises two questions: how would you recognize who this Messiah was, and what would distinguish him from a false claimant? Today's readings reflect some of the qualities we expect to find revealed in Jesus of Nazareth.

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Hebraic Perspective - Moses has been the teacher, guide, and lawgiver of Israel since the Exodus from Egypt. The Israelites had known no other leader. Moses however will not be joining Israel as they cross the Jordan, and the people of Israel may have expressed anxiety as to their future rulers. Moses says that the Lord will choose prophets for the people and will raise up a prophet like Moses. Deuteronomy 18:15 has several levels of meaning. There will be a prophet for each generation and, like Moses, they will speak God's word and be a guide and balance for the people and the king. Each king had his own prophet. The relationship between prophet and king, both appointed by God, was often a tense one. Solomon remains the only monarch not to have a functioning prophet during his reign. "A prophet like me" can also be read as a single entity or person. Thus another Moses was to be expected as a preeminent shepherd of the people. He would be a redeemer, challenge the kings of the earth, a lawgiver, miracle worker, and mediator for Israel and later the nations, too. Hope is given to Israel. Prophets will always be with them so the people can always hear the words of Heaven. And a messianic hope is brought to the people in the form of the ultimate redeemer, known as the Messiah. Each generation would hold to the hope that their generation would herald the one like Moses.

First Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 - Before there were kings or priests for the people of God there were prophets, and Moses was the first of them. Thus the highest authority in the Hebrew Bible did not belong to the king or to the priesthood, but to the prophet. During the Second Temple period, the expectation was for "the coming Prophet" as part of the messianic age. After Jesus performed the miracle of feeding 5,000 people, the Gospel of John records the people declaring, "surely this is the Prophet!" (John 6:14).

Moses does speak here in the singular. Verse 15 says, "the Lord will raise up a prophet like me," so clearly the coming one will be like Moses. The Lord Himself adds that the coming one will have the words of God in his mouth. Thus the tradition became that one quality of the Messiah is that he will be able to teach the Word of God.

Second Reading: Psalm 111 - This psalm is a very uplifting song of praise. The opening verse to praise the Lord is an imperative, thus the worshipper is drawn into the request to praise God. The psalm begins with the great deeds of the Lord which reflect His righteousness, majesty, and greatness. We remember His wondrous deeds, and He remembers His covenant and promises. The works of God are called faithful and just, and we can conclude that God will be faithful to bring about His promises spoken through the Torah and the Prophets. God will indeed send a redeemer. Verse 9 links His covenant with redemption and connects it also with the Name of God. Interestingly the last verse of this psalm is recited by orthodox Jews following ritual handwashing. It reminds us that, in all the goodness of the works of God and His faithful promises, our response should not only be one of praise but also a healthy "fear of the Lord."

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Third Reading: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 - Idolatry in the ancient world was prolific. Much of the meat in Greek and Roman culture was “sacrificed” to various pagan deities as part of the food preparation. Usually, the Jewish people did not partake in pagan festivals nor consume sacrificial foods. Paul was making comments to the Gentile Christians in Corinth on the permissibility of food offered to idols. Paul appears to permit foods in the theological sense, in that pagan idols are essentially “nothing” as there are no other gods besides God. However, in fellowship, he does forbid pagan food for the sake of the community.

Fourth Reading: Mark 1:21-28 - The season of Epiphany concerns the revelation of Jesus to the world. The Gospel of Mark is clear to reveal Jesus as the new Moses. As Moses was a great teacher, bringer of the Word to the people, and doer of miracles, then so too is Jesus. He teaches the Word of God in the synagogue with authority, which all who hear can perceive. Jesus is greater than Moses as today's text reveals that Jesus also has authority over the demonic. Together the teaching and demon cleansing reveal that one greater than Moses had indeed appeared.

Hebraic Context - Exorcism was common in the ancient world. The usual method for getting rid of demons involved a variety of prayers, incantations, and magic spells. Judaism of the late Second Temple period had a well-developed system for exorcism. We meet Jewish exorcists in Acts 19 that were not disciples of Jesus. Demonic activity seems to have been prevalent in the ancient world. According to the historian Josephus, King Solomon performed exorcisms, and incantations attributed to him are found in *Sefer HaRazim* (the forbidden Book of Magic). According to the Gospels, Jesus performed 24 exorcisms, and exorcisms were also part of the practice of the early church. The Greek word used in Mark 1:26 to describe the spirit is *ἀκάθαρτος* (*akathartos*), usually translated as “impure.” The word can also be translated in context as “foul” or “evil.” Judaism was very concerned with ritual impurity before the Lord. Impurity could be caused by demonic activity in the form of possession or disease.

About the author

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Psalm 111-112 Research

הִלְלוּ יְהוָה אֹדֶה יְהוָה בְּכָל-לֵבבִי בְּסוּד יְשָׁרִים וְעֵדָה: 111

גְּדֹלִים מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה דְּרוֹשִׁים לְכָל-חַפְצֵיהֶם: 2

הוֹדוּ-וְהַדְרִפוּ עֲמָדַת לַעַד: 3

זָכַר עֲשָׂה לְנַפְלֹאתָיו חֲנּוּן וְרַחֲמִים יְהוָה: 4

טָרַף נָתַן לִירְאָיו יִזְכָּר לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ: 5

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כַּח מַעֲשֵׂיוֹ הִגִּיד לְעַמּוֹ לְתִתּוֹ לָהֶם נַחֲלַת גּוֹיִם: 6

מַעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיוֹ אֲמַת וּמִשְׁפַּט נְאֻמִּים כָּל-פְּקוּדָיו: 7

סֻמוּכִים לְעֵד לְעוֹלָם עֲשׂוּיִם בְּאֲמַת וַיִּשָּׂר: 8

פְּדוּתוֹ שֶׁלַח לְעַמּוֹ צִוְּה-לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ קְדוֹשׁ וּנְרָא שְׁמוֹ: 9

יִרְאֵשִׁית חֲכָמָהּ וַיִּרְאֵת יְהוָה שֶׁכָּל טוֹב לְכָל-עֲשִׂיָּהֶם תְּהִלָּתוֹ עֲמַדַת לְעֵד: 10

הִלְלוּ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-אִישׁ יִרְא אֶת-יְהוָה בְּמִצּוֹתָיו חֲפֹץ מְאֹד: 112

גִּבּוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה זָרְעוּ דוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל יְבָרַךְ: 2

הוֹן-וְעֵשֶׂר בְּבֵיתוֹ וְצִדְקָתוֹ עֲמַדַת לְעֵד: 3

זָרַח בַּחֲשֶׁךְ אִזּוֹר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם וְצִדִּיק: 4

טוֹב-אִישׁ חוֹנֵן וּמְלִוָּה וְכָל-כָּל דְּבָרָיו בְּמִשְׁפָּט: 5

כִּי-לְעוֹלָם לֹא-יָמוּט לְזָכַר עוֹלָם יְהוָה צִדִּיק: 6

מִשְׁמוּעָה רָעָה לֹא יִירָא נִכּוֹן לִבּוֹ בְּטַח בִּיהוָה: 7

סוּמוּךְ לִבּוֹ לֹא יִירָא עֵד אֲשֶׁר-יִרְאֶה בְּצִרּוֹ: 8

פְּזָרוּ נְתָן לְאֲבִיוֹנִים צִדְקָתוֹ עֲמַדַת לְעֵד קִרְנוֹ תְרוּם בְּכָבוֹד: 9

רָשַׁע יִרְאֶה וְכַעַס שִׁנּוּי יַחֲרֹק וְנִמְס תַּאֲוֹת רְשָׁעִים תַּאֲבֹד: 10

תַּאֲוֹת and חֲפֹץ

Good: Psalm 10:[3], 17; Psalm 21:2; Psalm 38:9; Proverbs 10:24; Proverbs 11:23; Proverbs 13:12, 19; Proverbs 19:22; Isaiah 26:8

Bad: **Genesis 3:6**; Numbers 11:4; I Samuel 2:16; Proverbs 18:1; Proverbs 21:25-26; Psalm 10:3[, 17]; Psalm 78:29-30; Psalm 106:14; Psalm 112:10;

Other: Job 33:20;

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Marc Zvi Brettler, The Riddle of Psalm 111

- Postexilic Period
 - Diachronic Chiasm, reversal of Classical vs Late Biblical Hebrew such as וְרָחוּם וְרָחוּם in postexilic, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2, Psalm 112:4; Psalm 145:8; Nehemiah 9:17, 31 and II Chronicles 30:9 with the classical וְרָחוּם וְרָחוּם in Exodus 34:6; Psalm 86:15 and 103:8.
 - Declaration of intent to praise God, vs 1.
 - Praise, 2-9
 - Closing comment, 10
 - Synonymous and Antithetical Parellelism not used as such
 - Word pairs aren't used here as a synonymous parellelism but rather as a singular idea, with the Psalmist flouting the normative pattern of Biblical [Ancient Hebraic] Poetry.
- בְּסוּד יִשְׁרִים וְעֵדָה -
הוֹדוּ וְהִדָּר -
חֲנִין וְרָחוּם -
אֱמֶת וּמִשְׁפָּט -
לְעֵד לְעוֹלָם עֲשׂוּיִם בְּאֱמֶת וַיִּשֶׁר -
קָדוֹשׁ וְנוֹרָא -
- Pronominal Suffix, i creates a form of structure and repetition pointing towards meaning.
 - All 3ms refer to God (in Psalm 111)
 - [Used in 111 for God as the pronoun, 112 for man as the pronoun.]
 - Unusually large number of pronouns in such a short psalm
 - Although the name of God is still used four times as well!
 - 2, לְכֹל-הַפְּצִיָּהֶם: and 10, לְכֹל-עֲשִׂיהֶם are the only exceptions, emphasizing them.
 - Fear of the Lord, יְרָאָת יְהוָה, as seen in post-exilic Psalms, Psalm 19:9 and Psalm 34:9, 11, may have as much to do with the practical keeping the precepts of the Torah, such as keeping ones tongue from evil and deceit than the more wisdom literature conceptualized subordination to God.
 - Question, is the Psalm about God or the Torah?
 - Psalm 119:97, the love of Torah as a replacement for the love of God?
 - The Torah and its content, is it somehow separate to God's past salvific actions?
 - Generally Historical Psalms, about God's actions, are very clear on which events the Psalmist is talking of, such as Psalm 78. This one is quite ambiguous.
 - Psalm 111:5, טָרֶף is sometimes referenced to the manna and quail in the wilderness. Other scholars disagree...

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- It does fit with Psalm 112:10, תִּאֲחַז–Numbers 11:4; Psalm 78:29-30; Psalm 106:14