

### Categories or Genres of Psalms (cont.)

**Lament Psalms** are the most common sort of psalm and are characterized both by their tone of anguish or distress (whether individual or communal) and by their structural movement from plea or lamentation (at the beginning) to an expression of confidence or praise (at the end). Such structural movement “from plea to praise” is usually not symmetrical, but instead involves a significantly longer plea section followed by a shorter concluding praise section. These respective sections may include the following elements:

- a cry to God, asking for deliverance
  - a description of the distress undergone
  - a confession of innocence (or more rarely, a confession of sin)
  - an appeal to the LORD for his judgment and vindication
- 
- a vow or promise to offer sacrifice in thanksgiving after having been delivered
  - a concluding expression of confidence and/or praise, in anticipation of deliverance

Examples of lament psalms include Ps. 3–7, 12–14, 17, 22, 26, 31, 38–44, 53–61, et al.

**Psalms of Confidence** are characterized not by any formal or structural features, but by their tone or mood of peaceful trust in God in the face of adverse circumstances. Rather than foregrounding these adverse circumstances (as in lament psalms), psalms of confidence focus instead on the LORD, especially as refuge. In this, they may be well described as measured expressions of faith, as they lack both the anguish that is the hallmark of lament psalms and also the post-deliverance exuberance that tends to characterize hymns and thanksgiving/todah psalms.

Examples of psalms of confidence include Ps. 11, 16, 23, 27, 62, 63, 73, 91, 115, 121, 125, and 131.