

A number of the Psalms seem to be chiefly historical in content, using the history of the nation to argue for continued devotion to the Lord. (105, 78)

We are less sure of later periods of Israel's history although Psalm 137 certainly reflects the Babylonian Captivity and some of the psalms are thought to relate to the services of the New Temple in the time of Zechariah, etc.

When we discuss the interpretation of the psalms, we will press to learn as much of the historical data behind any/all of them that may be available to us as the historical setting is sometimes of great help in assessing meaning.

C. Literary Features of the Psalms

1. Hebrew Poetry:

*to give, or
read together*

This is a tangle in itself. There is a lot of thinking about Hebrew poetry today and some of the older concepts are being rethought or reexpressed. We may safely say that the genius in Hebrew poetry does not survive in rhyme and/or meter as we know these things in western verse but seems to have its basic expression in rhythm, bounce, or feeling. I have not assigned detailed reading in this field.. it requires a good deal of background for any real comprehension. But if you want..the articles in the New International Standard Bible Dictionary, the Anchor Bible Dictionary, and Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary will get you started. More precise works such as Peterson and Richards: Interpreting Hebrew Poetry may then be pursued. I have an innate feeling that poetry is always understood by poetic souls and never really understood by non-poetic souls no matter how many books they may read. I think it has to be felt and this is a mystical note that should not even appear in academic class work..but I really think it is right!

a. Brief note on form