

I. What are the basic tenets of “Exclusive Psalmody”?

- A. Whatever is not clearly warranted by the scriptures must be excluded from God’s worship.
- B. The singing of inspired praise is a scripturally warranted element (or part) of God’s worship.
- C. There is no clear scriptural warrant for the singing of uninspired praise to God in worship.
- D. There is no clear scriptural warrant for the singing of inspired praise outside the Psalter.
- E. Hence, NT praise songs must be limited to translated selections of the 150 Psalms.

II. What is the basic rationale for Exclusive Psalmody?

- A. The Book of Psalms is fully sufficient for the singing of Christ-centered New Testament praise.
- B. The Book of Psalms is inspired and therefore superior to all uninspired praise songs.
- C. There is no clear scriptural warrant for singing inspired or uninspired praise outside the Psalter today.

III. How does Exclusive Psalmody fit into the overall story of Redemptive History?¹

- A. **From Adam to Moses** – *No record of corporate singing in worship.*
- B. **From Moses to David** – *Inspired songs by prophets: Ex. 15:20-21; Deut. 32; Psalm 90; Judg. 5.*
- C. **From David to Exile** – *Inspired songs by David and his Levitical prophets: 2 Sam. 23:1-2; 1 Chron. 25:1-6; 2 Chron. 5:12-13; 29:30.*
- D. **From Exile to Closing of OT Canon** – *Inspired Davidic songs: Neh. 12:45-47 (Psalter finalized with canon)*
- E. **From Closing of OT Canon to Births of John/Jesus** – *Canonical Psalter: No prophets, no new songs.*
- F. **From Birth of John to Closing of NT Canon** – *Inspired songs by individual prophets (Lk. 1:46-55; 2:29-32; 1Cor. 14:13-15, 26) and Canonical Psalter for corporate praise (Mt. 26:30; Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16).²*
- G. **From Closing of NT Canon to Christ’s Return** – *Canonical Psalter: No prophets, no new songs.*
 - 1. Praise songs were always inspired, with no clearly warranted exceptions.
 - 2. Just as *Sola Scriptura* took full effect with the closing of the canon, so it was with *Exclusive Psalmody*.

IV. T. David Gordon’s Critique of Exclusive Psalmody³

- A. Contrary to common English usage, OT references to “the psalms” never refer *exclusively* to the canonical Psalter. Therefore, OT references to “the psalms” should not be identified with the canonical Psalter.⁴
 - 1. This contradicts the language employed by Jesus Himself (Lk. 20:42; 24:44).
 - 2. This contradicts the language employed by the inspired apostles (Acts 1:20; 13:33).
- B. Inspired biblical history records that Israel sang praise songs not included in the canonical Psalter. Since these non-Psalter songs were clearly authorized for use in public worship, we can infer that the compilers of the Psalter expected Israel to sing other songs.⁵

¹ For a more detailed treatment of this question, consult the following audio message: “Exclusive Psalmody: Traditional or Scriptural?” by Rev. Gavin Beers, available online: <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=1128101850448>

² For a detailed treatment of the phrase “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”: <http://www.opc.org/GA/song.html#Minority>

³ Based on Dr. Gordon’s writings against Exclusive Psalmody: (1) “The Israelites Were Not Exclusive Psalmists (Nor Are We)” available online: http://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=404&cur_iss=Y and (2) “Why Not Exclusive Psalmody” available online: http://www.tdgordon.net/theology/ecclesiology_worship_polity/why_not_exclusive_psalms.doc. Each section contains my summary of Dr. Gordon’s argument (along with a footnoted quote from Dr. Gordon), followed by an attempted refutation. The source for each footnoted quotation will be identified by a (1) or a (2) depending on which of the above sources is in view.

⁴ **TDG (1):** “‘The Psalms’ is an unfortunate designation for this body of literature, because there is no secular equivalent in our speech to ‘psalms.’ For us, ‘psalms’ are always ‘the canonical Psalms.’ Other terms could be used, and/or have been used, that might be more helpful. We could refer to them, as our Hebrew text and Jewish friends do, as ‘Praises.’ ... Lexically, then, not any of the language employed in the OT suggests what our English ‘The Psalms’ does, to wit: a fixed collection of prayers or praises.”

⁵ **TDG (1):** “[T]here are a number of prominent songs recorded in the Old Testament that are not in the Psalter. Two ‘songs of Moses’ are recorded in the Old Testament (Exod. 15 and Deut. 32), the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), two of Samuel (1 Sam. 2:1–

1. Inspired vs. Uninspired
 2. Occasional vs. Perpetual (Psalter = Perpetual)
 3. The Psalter’s inspired selectivity (e.g. *including* Ps. 90 and *excluding* Deut. 32) was not arbitrary.
- C. During the OT period, the canonical Psalter grew out of five independent collections, each of which allowed for the other collections to be added. Therefore the entire Psalter must forever remain open-ended, with the possibility of new additions to the praises of God.⁶
1. Inspired vs. Uninspired
 2. Logically, this undermines a closed canon. ~ “During the OT period, the canon of scripture grew out of several independent collections, each of which allowed for other collections to be added. Therefore the canon of scripture must forever remain open-ended, with the possibility of new additions to the word of God.”
- D. New praise songs were written throughout the OT period each time God performed a mighty work of judgment or deliverance. Therefore, we should expect new praise songs to be written throughout the NT period, as God performs mighty works in history for His church.⁷
1. Inspired vs. Uninspired
 2. Praising God for a mighty work requires lyrics that *apply* to that event, not lyrics that *mention* it.
 3. Logically, this undermines a closed canon. ~ “New inspired prophecies and inspired historical accounts were written throughout the OT period each time God performed a mighty work of judgment or deliverance. Therefore, we should expect new inspired prophecies and inspired historical accounts to be written throughout the NT period.”
 4. Logically, this would require uninspired hymns about Luther, Calvin, Knox, and the Covenanters!

10; 2 Sam. 22), and the song of Habakkuk (Hab. 3). The Old Testament not only contains a record of these non-Psalter songs; it contains approval of those who composed and sang them. Yet the compilers of the five collections that eventually constituted our canonical psalms did not hesitate to omit them. Had those compilers thought that their collections would have been regarded as exclusive, they almost certainly would not have excluded such well-known songs. If a strict view of exclusive psalmody were held, we would be permitted to sing the 150 canonical psalms, but not permitted to sing these six other songs that are recorded elsewhere in the Old Testament canon. The Israelites could have lawfully sung them (and did), but we could not.”

⁶ **TDG (1):** “All students of the Psalms now recognize that what we call the Psalter was itself constructed of five collections of psalms that originally existed independently of one another: (1) Psalms 1–41 David Psalms; (2) Psalms 42–72 Solomonic Psalms; (3) Psalms 73–89 Despair over the Davidic Monarchy; (4) Psalms 90–106 Mosaic Psalms; (5) Psalms 107–150 A Coming King. Interestingly, with almost no exceptions, these five different collections of praises did not contain the praises that were in the other four (psalms 14 and 53 appear to be the exception). If any one of the five had intended to be exclusive, we would not have had the other four. Indeed, the second collection suggests that it was/is complete: “The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended” (Ps. 72:20). But whatever “ended” means here (LXX, ἐξέλιπον, Hebrew, כָּלוּ), it did not mean that an entire canon of exclusive psalms ended, because over seventy-five more followed it. The only thing that “ended” here was one of five collections of praises; but the ending of that collection did not exclude the other four.”

⁷ **TDG (2):** “Throughout the various epochs in which these psalms were composed, new songs were composed to celebrate (or lament) new historical developments... I suggest that the implied message of the Psalter itself is this: That as God does new works of salvation and deliverance, His people properly respond in praise and thanks to these new works, composing new devotional material to correspond to the new acts of God. That is, when the Israelites return from Babylon, they do not merely sing psalms about the deliverance from Egypt, even though one *could* certainly see the Exodus as “typical” of that later deliverance. Rather, despite the obvious typology/analogy, they compose new songs to express their gratitude for this *specific* act of deliverance. Throughout Israel’s history a three-fold pattern is evident: Deed-Prophetic Interpretation-Song. God acts, His prophets interpret those acts, and the people respond with appropriate song. The “cessation” of new psalms in the OT corresponds identically with the cessation of OT revelation itself; that is, when God’s distinctive acts, prophetically interpreted, cease, the composition of new songs also ceases. But any Israelite living in the period between the testaments would almost certainly have expected that the pattern of Deed-Prophetic Interpretation-Song would resume at the next epochal moment in her history...”

5. Comparatively, there are far more Psalms describing the Psalmist’s personal experience (specific sins, enemies, victories, etc.) than Israel’s historical experience. Who should be writing these songs today?
- E. In the canonical Psalter, God commands His people to praise Him for all His mighty works in history, the greatest of which is the saving work of Christ. Therefore, if we do not compose and sing new uninspired hymns to commemorate Christ’s saving work, we cannot obey this command.⁸
1. Inspired vs. Uninspired
 2. The Psalter is the “word of Christ.” (Ps. 2; 22; 45; 110, etc; Lk. 24:44-47; Col. 3:16).
 3. NT Christology is largely an unpacking of the Psalter (Acts 2:22-36; 4:24-30; 13:33-37; Heb. 1).
- F. The apostolic NT church sang praise songs outside the canonical Psalter [Lk. 1:46-55; 2:29-32; Acts 2:42; Phil. 2; 1 Cor. 14:26]. Therefore the church today may sing praise songs outside the canonical Psalter.⁹
1. The prophetic utterances of Mary and Simeon were both inspired and neither is called a song.
 2. There is no compelling evidence that the “prayers” of Acts 2:42 included uninspired hymns.
 3. There is no compelling evidence that Phil. 2 records a hymn, much less an uninspired hymn.
 4. Not only were the ‘psalms’ of 1 Cor. 14:26 revelatory, and it is unclear whether the *entire* assembly sang them in unison or if they were sung only by the prophet (Cf. 1 Cor. 14:13-15).
- G. In the Book of Revelation (5:9–10, 12–13; 7:10–12; 15:3; 19:1–8), John records the glorified saints in heaven singing explicitly Christ-centered praise songs outside the canonical Psalter. Therefore, the NT church on earth may sing explicitly Christ-centered praise songs outside the canonical Psalter.¹⁰

⁸ **TDG (1):** “If, therefore, Christians regard the cross as God’s judgment and the resurrection as God’s deliverance, we would surely expect prayers and praises to be composed to commemorate and celebrate (and lament) such... If the arrival of God’s anointed was an occasion for singing in the psalter, how could humanity not compose songs for the advent and birth of God’s Christ (“Come, thou long-expected Jesus”)? If the Israelites sang laments when David’s enemies drove him from the city (e.g., Psalm 3), how could Christians refrain from lamenting the Son of David’s Passion (“O Sacred Head, now wounded”)? If Israel sang when the exiled king returned to Jerusalem, how could we not sing when the crucified Redeemer returned to life (“Jesus lives, and so shall I; death, thy sting is gone forever”)? If Israel sang songs to celebrate the ascension of David or Solomon to rule, how could it be possible that we would not also compose songs when the Son of David ascended to the right hand of the Father (“Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne”)? How could we possibly refuse to sing about such things? \ ... The notion that his greatest acts—the incarnation, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of his Son—would be greeted mutely is contrary to the entire pattern of act-and-praise disclosed across biblical history, and is indeed contrary to the evidence of the New Testament.”

⁹ **TDG (1):** “When Jesus took on human flesh, his conception and birth were greeted by song (Mary’s *Magnificat* in Luke 1:46–55 and Simeon’s *Nunc Dimittis* in Luke 2:29–32). If Calvin’s interpretation of Acts 2:42 is correct, the earliest meetings of the apostolic churches included singing of praise that was not restricted to the Old Testament psalms. Paul’s letters contain both an example of what is likely a Christ-hymn in Philippians 2, and Paul’s instructions about singing in the congregation in texts such as 1 Corinthians 14:26: “What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.” While it is possible that the “hymn” here is an Old Testament canonical psalm, the context suggests that it, like the “lesson” or “revelation” contained New Testament truth.”

¹⁰ **TDG (1):** “The songs recorded by the apostle John in the book of Revelation are never Old Testament psalms; they are always new compositions, and sometimes expressly Christological, referring to the slain “Lamb” (Rev. 5:9–10, 12–13; 7:10–12; 19:1–8), and one of which expressly juxtaposes the songs of Moses to those of the Lamb: “And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, ‘Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty!’” (Rev. 15:3). **TDG (2):** “The 150 canonical Psalms are manifestly *not* sufficient for the redeemed in heaven; the songs of Revelation are *not* OT psalms; and the redeemed find it lawful, if not necessary, to offer express adoration to “the Lamb that was slain,” not merely to some Davidic type thereof. These heavenly songs therefore present two substantial challenges to exclusive psalmody: they require us (if exclusive psalmody is correct) to believe that the heavenly, perfected, eschatological worship, for which we strive daily, is *not* a pattern for what is lawful on earth; and they manifestly refute one of the arguments of the exclusive psalmist position, namely that the canonical psalms are *sufficient* for Christian worship.” **TDG (2):** “And, if [the 150 Psalms] were sufficient, why wouldn’t the eschatologically-redeemed saints, whose worship is represented to us in John’s Revelation, have employed those psalms? Why do the saints in the consummated state worship via something other than OT psalms, if those psalms are sufficient?”

1. Inspired vs. Uninspired (glorified saints vs. regenerate sinners)
 2. Logically, this would lead us to abandon all worship ordinances not practiced in heaven.
 3. Logically, this would lead us to introduce the following heavenly ordinances into NT public worship: (1) incense, Rev. 8:3-4; (2) golden altar, Rev. 9:13; (3) temple, Rev. 4:17-18; (4) ceremonial white robes and/or fine linen garments, Rev. 7:9, 13-15; 19:8; (5) waving of palm branches, Rev. 7:9; (6) musical instruments, Rev. 5:8; (7) enthroned, crowned elders, Rev. 4:10; 11:16.
 4. Logically, this would lead us to affirm that OT saints would have been justified in abandoning the Mosaic ceremonial law in favor of NT practices.
 5. Logically, this undermines *Sola Scriptura*, since the saints in heaven do not rely on Scripture alone.
 6. The heavenly songs in Revelation (e.g. 15:3, “the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb”) emphasize OT typology no less than the canonical Psalter!
 7. The Psalter is the “anatomy of the soul” for the church *militant*, not the church *triumphant*.
- H.** Roman author Pliny the Younger (AD 61–113) wrote that the early Christian church met for worship to “sing a hymn to Christ as to a god.” Therefore, the early Christian church sang uninspired hymns.¹¹
1. Pliny speaks of Christians singing *to* Christ as God, not necessarily singing *of* Christ as God.
 2. The Psalms repeatedly highlight Christ’s divinity (Ps. 2; 45; 110).
 3. Jesus and His apostles use the Psalter to prove His divinity (Matt. 22:41-46; Heb. 1).
 4. In light of NT revelation, virtually any Psalm or hymn to “Jehovah” may be sung to Christ as God.
- I.** Since neither OT Israel (Ex. 15:20-21) nor the apostolic NT church (1 Cor. 14:26) practiced Exclusive Psalmody, we are not obligated to practice it in the church today.¹²
1. Inspired vs. Uninspired.
 2. Logically, this resembles the Roman Catholic (and Pentecostal) argument against *Sola Scriptura* ~ “Since neither OT Israel nor the apostolic NT church practiced *Sola Scriptura*, we are not obligated to practice it in the church today.” [“complete” makes “partial” obsolete; 1 Cor. 13:8-13; Heb. 1:1-2]
 3. Though the Bible does not necessarily contain every inspired prophecy ever given, it is our exclusive and fully sufficient source of divine revelation today. Similarly, though the Psalter does not necessarily contain every inspired praise song ever sung, it is our exclusive and fully sufficient source of divine praise today.
- J.** Logically, if we regard “sing praises” (Ps. 47:7) as a command to sing from the Psalter *only*, nothing would keep us from regarding “pray for one another” (James 5:15) as a command to pray *only* the Lord’s Prayer or “preach the word” as a command to preach *only* sermons from the Book of Acts (2 Tim. 4:2).¹³

¹¹ **TDG (1):** “Indeed, even secular Roman sources of the period were aware of the Christian practice of singing expressly Christological songs. When Pliny the Younger reported to the emperor Trajan about professing Christians, he examined those accused with infidelity to the emperor carefully, found that many of them had never been Christians, and some only for a time, who then renounced their faith. But among those who had been Christians, Pliny’s accusation included this: “However, they assured me that the main of their fault, or of their mistake was this: That they were wont, on a stated day, to meet together before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ, as to a god, alternately; and to oblige themselves by a sacrament [or oath], not to do anything that was ill.” Pliny received this testimony from their own mouth, and since, in his report, he was exonerating them, he was not attempting to include in his report anything incriminating. So the testimony is almost certainly authentic.”

¹² **TDG (2):** “Therefore, the OT itself teaches that the OT saints sang a greater variety of material than was (later) collected into the canonical psalter. It would be profoundly ironic, then, if the NT saints could not only sing no *more* than the OT saints, but *less*. Even the Israelites were not exclusive psalmists.” **TDG (1):** Cf. sub-heading “New Testament Saints are Not Exclusive Psalmists” as well as title of entire article: “The Israelites Were Not Exclusive Psalmists (Nor Are We).”

¹³ **TDG (2):** “By the hermeneutic of such an exclusive psalmist, we might also take each of Paul’s exhortations to prayer in his letters as a reference to the so-called “Lord’s Prayer,” and say that what is required/permitted by these texts is not that we pray

1. The Lord’s Prayer was given primarily as a pattern or guide for prayer (Matt. 6:9), whereas the Psalter was written to be sung by God’s people in corporate worship (2 Chron. 29:30).
 2. Reading an inspired sermon from the Book of Acts without explaining or applying it to a contemporary assembly constitutes the reading (but not the preaching) of the word (Neh. 8:8).
 3. There is clear scriptural warrant for praying in our own uninspired words (Rom. 8:26; Phil. 4:6) and for preaching by uninspired men (Phil. 1:15-18; 2 Tim. 2:2), but not for singing uninspired praise.
- K.** Some praise songs within the canonical Psalter are called prayers. Therefore, if we allow uninspired prayers, we must also allow uninspired praise songs.¹⁴
1. Logically, this would lead to female preachers ~ “The singing of praise is sometimes called ‘teaching and admonishing’ (Col. 3:16). Therefore, if we allow women to sing praise within the congregation, we must also allow them to ‘teach and admonish’ the congregation.
 2. Logically, this would lead to uninspired scripture readings ~ “Some reading portions within the Bible are called prayers. Therefore, if we allow uninspired prayers, we must also allow uninspired readings.”
- L.** The singing of praise songs is an *element* of worship, whereas the content of each song is a *form* of worship, left to the discretion of the church. Since *forms* of worship (e.g. the content of public prayers or sermons) may include material outside the inspired word of God, the content of praise songs may also include uninspired material.¹⁵
1. Logically, leads to uninspired readings ~ “Public readings are an *element* of worship, whereas the content of each reading is a *form* of worship, left to the discretion of the church. Since *forms* of worship (e.g. the

prayers of human composition, but that we pray the all-sufficient prayer taught us by Christ himself... The apostolic sermons were also inspired, by [Michael] Bushell’s definition (we have an inspired record thereof). Why wouldn’t we argue that the Acts of the Apostles, containing a variety of sermons preached to both Jews and Gentiles on different occasions, contains a sufficient collection of preaching to direct the church until the return of Christ? Why wouldn’t we, on each Sunday, simply read one of the sermons from Acts?”

¹⁴ **TDG (2):** “[I]t shows the artificiality of the exclusive psalmist argument that we may *pray* in words of “human composition,” but we cannot lawfully *sing* in such words. I would suggest that prayer and song are not as rigidly separated categorically in the scriptures as they are in exclusive psalmody; that they are much more similar (as human addresses to God) than they are dissimilar; which would make it surprising if the one would be governed by a different principle than the other. The preface to Psalm 102 entitles it “A Prayer (προσευχή) of One Afflicted,” and the preface to 142 calls it also “A Prayer” (προσευχή), indicating again that many of what we call canonical “psalms” are, in fact, prayers. So why can some prayers be human compositions but other prayers require inspiration? ... Generally, it is already problematic that exclusive psalmody argues that the words of songs of praise must be inspired, and restricted to the canonical psalter, while the words of the other elements of worship are not so restricted (ministers can speak to us, on behalf of God, in *uninspired* words, but we may only speak to God in *inspired* words). But this is even more acute a difficulty when two elements in scripture that are so similar (prayer and praise) are considered to be regulated differently. What is it in the nature of *songs* of praise or thanks that requires that our words be restricted to canonical psalms, while *spoken prayers* of praise or thanks need not be so restricted?”

¹⁵ **TDG (2):** “Some of Bushell’s candid statements about the difficulty of the element/circumstance distinction is due to the fact that some considerations regarding worship do not fall into either category. I join our confessional heritage in also recognizing a *third* category of discussion: forms. A “form” of worship is the distinctive linguistic (or possibly, in the case of song, musical) *content* of an element of worship. When one opts to sing Psalm 8, as opposed to Psalm 50, one is selecting one *form* versus another; and when one selects (especially from a metrical psalter) a different musical tune, one is again selecting a different *form*. Singing of praise is an *element* of worship; but which song to sing is a *formal* consideration... Because Bushell does not operate with this third category, he finds himself choosing between whether the *content* of sung praise is an element or a circumstance. Forced to make such a choice, he opts for element (which he sometimes call “substance” or “substantial,” as so here), saying: “But because the words of the songs sung in religious worship necessarily have spiritual and religious significance, they must also be considered to be substantial parts of worship, and do not therefore lie within the realm of the discretionary power of the Church” (pp. 133-34). To test this rationale is to disprove it. If the test is this, that words that “have spiritual and religious significance” are elemental, and therefore non-discretionary, then what does this mean for preaching and praying? We either are forced to preach or pray about things that are *not* “spiritual and religious” in their significance (e.g., sermons about politics), or, if we choose to preach and pray about things that *are* spiritual and religious, we must do so by reading only the sermons and prayers found in scripture.”

content of public prayers or sermons) may include material outside the inspired word of God, the content of public readings may also include uninspired material (e.g. Meredith Klein, etc.)

2. Worship “forms” are *not* a third category, but a subset of worship “elements,” which must be regulated according to what scripture says about that element (e.g. reading, praying, singing).
- M.** The inspired praise songs of the OT were not known to be inspired (even by their authors) until they were later collected into the canonical Psalter. These praise songs were sung by God’s people simply because they were accurate, appropriate, and approved by the OT church, not because they were inspired. Therefore, the NT church may sing any accurate, appropriate, and church-approved praise song, regardless of whether it is inspired or uninspired.¹⁶
1. David knew he was writing the Psalms under prophetic inspiration (2 Sam. 23:1-2; Acts 2:30).
 2. David commanded that Israel’s praises be composed by Levitical prophets (2 Chron. 25:1-9).
 3. The “reformed” OT church made it a point to sing songs written by prophets (2 Chron. 29:30)
- N.** The canonical Psalter was given by God to the OT Jewish church living under the Sinai Covenant, not to the multi-ethnic NT church. Therefore, we cannot assume that the canonical Psalter was designed to be sufficient for NT worship.¹⁷
1. The NT church is organically united to the OT church (Rom. 11:17-20; Eph. 2:11-22; Heb. 3:1-6).
 2. God has given “all scripture” to His NT church, including the Psalter (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 3. The Psalter anticipates and presupposes the in-grafting of the Gentiles (Ps. 47:1; 66:5; 67; 86:9; 117; etc.)
- O.** Since OT revelation is incomplete without NT revelation, the OT Book of (inspired) Psalms must be incomplete without the addition of uninspired NT praise songs.¹⁸
1. Inspired vs. Uninspired (If the Psalter is incomplete, why didn’t the *apostles* write new praise songs?)
 2. Logically, this would lead us to deny the sufficiency of the Ten Commandments as a comprehensive categorical *summary* of God’s moral law for Christians today, since it was revealed in the OT.
 3. NT revelation actually unlocks the Psalter’s full NT sufficiency (both doctrinally and experientially) by explaining its full meaning in relation to the person and work of Christ.

¹⁶ **TDG (2):** “[Michael] Bushell [author of “Songs of Zion: The Biblical Basis for Exclusive Psalmody”] suggests that the psalms were sung by the Israelites because God had given them, by inspiration, a collection of inspired literature. This would be a fair and nice supposition, were not the facts manifestly against it. The Israelites sang such things as the song of deliverance from Egypt, Deborah’s song, the song of Balaam, etc., *in addition to* the songs later collected in the psalter. And we have every reason to believe they sang them for the same reasons: that they were accurate, appropriate responses to God’s person and works, approved by the officers of the covenant. Nothing in any of the biblical narratives suggests that any of the authors of these works was aware of being inspired when they were written; and, more importantly, nothing in the biblical narratives suggests that anyone else thought so. That is, they sang them because they were appropriate and approved. Later, much (but not all) of what was appropriate and approved was collected into the five collections that make up our present psalter. Only after this fact, however, can we say that they were *known* to be inspired. And on the same ground, we would assert that the songs of Deborah, Balaam, et al. were inspired also, though not in the psalter.”

¹⁷ **TDG (2):** “But God certainly did not, even in this providential sense, hand these psalms to “us;” He handed them, providentially, to the members of the Sinai covenant community, not to the members of the New Covenant community. He handed them to Jews, not to Gentiles; to members of a theocratic community, not to members of a non-theocratic community; to people who lived in a holy land, not to people who do not live in a holy land. The Psalms are “handed” to us just as the OT scriptures are “handed” to us; they were providentially given to the members of the Sinai covenant, and were entirely adequate to their purposes. But they were not given to the members of the New covenant as entirely adequate to *our* purposes.”

¹⁸ **TDG (2):** “The OT scriptures are *not* sufficient to reveal to the world God’s accomplishment of redemption in Jesus of Nazareth, God’s Christ; they are *not* sufficient to reveal to the church its ethic or polity; and they are *not* sufficient to reveal the Triune God, either ontologically or economically considered. For these reasons, they are also not sufficient to express the worship of saints who are familiar with NT realities.