

Lecture #7 – History of Sacred Music – Part I

I. Introduction

While we readily admit that a foundation for a philosophy of church music that is built fully upon Scripture is more than sufficient, we may also find a study of the history of church music to be beneficial. In doing so we may see that our philosophy of church music has been tested over centuries of debate and controversy. Many of the debates that are being fought today have already been addressed by our spiritual forefathers.

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” – philosopher George Santayana

II. Hebrew Poetry

It is sometimes difficult for a modern English-speaking reader to recognize and appreciate Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry is a very different style that we are used to. It is not built on rhythm and rhyming schemes like our poetry is.

One of the challenges is even in identifying portions of Scripture that are meant to be poetic. The ancient Hebrew texts have no method to indicate there is poetry present. For example: perhaps the first poem in the Bible is the words of Lamech in Genesis 4:23-24, but we only recognize this from identifying the style as poetry.

Parallelism

“The fundamental law of Hebrew poetry is parallelism, which is also very frequently found in the other books which are not classed as poetical.” - A.C. Gaebelein

Hebrew poetry is built on a system of *parallelism*. It is the interaction of two, and sometimes three (in the case of Lamentations 1-3), ideas. B.H. Carroll describes it as “one line corresponds in thought to another line.”

B.H. Carroll notes that there are three primary forms of parallelism are a few less frequent ones:

Synonymous

“a second line simply repeats in slightly altered phraseology the thought of the first line.”

Examples: Psalm 2:4, Proverbs 1:18

Antithetic

“the second line is in contrast with the first.”

Examples: Psalm 20:8, Proverbs 10:1

Synthetic/Constructive

“the second line supplements the first, both together giving a complete thought.”

Examples: Proverbs 1:10, 3:27

Climatic

“the second line takes up words from the first and completes them.”

Examples: Psalm 29:1, Judges 5:7

Introverted

“the first line corresponds with the fourth, and the second with the third.”

Examples: Proverbs 23:15

Emblematic

“the second line brings forward something similar to the first, but in a higher realm.”

Examples: Proverbs 25:14, 26:20-21

Strophes and Chiasms

Lines of Hebrew poetry can be grouped in stanzas or strophes based on common subject or thought. This can be found as many as sixteen lines in the sections of Psalm 119.

A common technique is the **chiasm**, which is a “mirror” structure (such as in ABBA or ABCCBA). Psalm 51:1 is an example of this structure.:

A - “Have mercy upon me, O God,”

B – “according to thy lovingkindness:”

B – “according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies”

A – “blot out my transgressions.”

Observing chiasm structures is not as common in older commentaries as it is in newer ones. Recent books on the organization of the Psalms highlight chiasm structure in the grouping of psalms. For example, this structure in Psalms 15-24 is highlighted in one recent commentary¹:

¹ Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary: Psalms, vol 1, by James M. Hamilton, Jr. Lexham Academic, 2021.

Psalm 15, Who Shall Ascend?

Psalm 16, Comfort

Psalm 17, Resurrection

Psalm 18, Deliverance for David and His Seed

Psalm 19, The Glory of God

Psalm 20-21, The King

Psalm 22, Death and Resurrection.

Psalm 23, Comfort

Psalm 24, Who Shall Ascend?²

Acrostic Poetry

Acrostic - “a composition in verse, in which the first letter of the lines, taken in order, form the name of a person, kingdom, city, etc., which is the subject of the composition, or some title or motto.”³

There are great variations to be found in Hebrew acrostic poetry. Some use all 22 letters, some do not. Some use multiple lines per letter, some do not.

The beauty of this poetic structure is sadly untranslatable, but it goes to prove the careful composition of Hebrew poetry.

| Alef | Bet | Gimel | Dalet | He | Waw/Vav | Zayin | Chet | Tet | Yod | Kaf |
|-------|-----|-------|--------|------|---------|-------|------|------|------|-----|
| א | ב | ג | ד | ה | ו | ז | ח | ט | י | כ |
| Lamed | Mem | Nun | Samech | Ayin | Pe | Tsadi | Qof | Resh | Shin | Tav |
| ל | מ | נ | ס | ע | פ | צ | ק | ר | ש | ת |
| | ם | ן | | | ך | ץ | | | | |

² Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary: Psalms, vol 1, p. 57

³ Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

⁴ Screenshot from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_alphabet - accessed 3-11-23

Acrostic Scriptures

Psalm 25 – “In the psalm before us, the general order of the Hebrew alphabet is observed, with the following exceptions: the two first verses commence with the Hebrew letter א (ʾ), the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; while the second letter, ב (b), is omitted.⁵ The Hebrew letters, ו (w) and ק (q), are also omitted, while two verses begin with the Hebrew letter ר (r), and at the close of the psalm, after the Hebrew letter ת (t), the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet - another verse is added, beginning with the Hebrew letter פ (p).”⁶

Psalm 34 – “The arrangement is regular in this psalm, except that the Hebrew letter ו (v) is omitted, and that, to make the number of the verses equal to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, an additional verse is appended to the end, commencing, as in the last verse of Ps. 25, with the Hebrew letter פ (p).”⁷

Psalm 37 – “In this psalm the uniqueness of the composition is, that the successive letters of the alphabet occur at the beginning of every other verse, the first, the third, the fifth, etc. The exceptions are at Psalm 37:7, Psalm 37:20, Psalm 37:29, Psalm 37:34. In Psalm 37:29 the Hebrew letter צ (ts) occurs instead of the Hebrew letter כ (c); and in Psalm 37:7, Psalm 37:20, Psalm 37:34, the letter introduces only a single verse.”

Psalm 111 – “The peculiarity of this psalm is that the first eight verses of the psalm contain ‘two’ clauses, beginning with the letters of the alphabet taken in their order; the last two verses, ‘three’.”⁸

Psalm 112 – “It is a psalm of the same structure as [Psalm 111], with the same number of verses; like that, it is alphabetical in its form, and composed in the same manner - the first eight verses with two clauses each, beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet - and the last two verses with ‘three’ clauses, beginning, in like manner, with three letters of the alphabet in succession.”⁹

Psalm 119 – “It consists of twenty two parts, according to the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet; the names of which letters stand between each part; and every part consists of eight verses, all of which begin with the same letter: thus, for instance, the first eight verses begin with the letter א, ‘aleph’, and the second eight verses begin with the letter ב, ‘beth’, and so on throughout; hence the Masorah calls this psalm the Great Alphabet. This the psalmist did, perhaps to excite attention to what he said, and also to help the memory.”¹⁰

Psalm 145 – “The arrangement in this respect is complete, except that the Hebrew letter nun (נ n, ‘n’) is omitted,¹¹ for which no reason can be assigned, unless it was from a desire that the psalm might consist of three equal parts of seven verses each.”¹²

⁵ It actually begins the second word of vs. 2 instead of the first word.

⁶ Barnes’ Notes – E-sword module.

⁷ Barnes’ Notes – E-sword module

⁸ Barnes’ Notes – E-sword module.

⁹ Barnes’ Notes – E-sword module.

¹⁰ John Gill’s Commentary – E-Sword module

¹¹ Would be between vs. 13 and 14.

¹² Barnes’ Notes – E-sword module.

Proverbs 31:10-31 – “This and the following verses are acrostic, each beginning with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet: Proverbs 31:10, א aleph; Proverbs 31:11, ב beth; Proverbs 31:12, ג gimel; and so on to the end of the chapter, the last verse of which has the letter ט tau.”¹³

Lamentations – “The Lamentations are correctly divided into five chapters in a very remarkable way. Chapters 1 and 2 consist each of twenty-two verses of three lines each. All is written in a certain meter. Each verse begins in both chapters with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. They are acrostics. The third chapter has instead of 22 verses, 66 verses, that is 3 x 22. The first three verses of this chapter begin each with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the next three with the second letter, so that in these 66 verses the Hebrew alphabet is again followed. The fourth chapter is also arranged in the same manner, acrostically, each of the 22 verses begin with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The last chapter shows no such arrangement.”¹⁴

Other portions of scripture appear to be partial acrostics, using only part of the alphabet. See Psalm 9, 10; Nahum 1:2-8.

On Variations from Strict Acrostics

The variations from strict acrostics have been used by Bible critics¹⁵ as evidence of corruption in transmission of the text.¹⁶ They assume that the original must have been a strict acrostic that was lost. Some versions, modern and ancient, even attempt to “correct” these so-called “mistakes”. We will see a couple of cases next that are examples of rational responses to this type of sloppy scholarship.

The Case of Psalm 145

For example: a supposedly missing *num* verse between Psalm 145:13 & 14 has been manufactured and appears in the NKJV,¹⁷ NIV, ESV, CSB, HCSB, CEV, NRSV, and others as part of verse 13, as verse 13b, or as a footnote. There were no Hebrew manuscripts¹⁸ that supported this verse until the Dead Sea Scrolls, which do include it. But the Dead Sea Scroll version also includes after each verse of the Psalm a refrain of “Praise the LORD, and praise his name for ever and ever”.¹⁹ No one that I can find argues on the authority of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the inclusion of the refrain today,²⁰ yet they argue it has sufficient authority to interject a verse missing from the all other aspects of the Hebrew

¹³ Adam Clarke’s Commentary – E-Sword module

¹⁴ Annotated Bible by A.C. Gaebelein, E-Sword Module.

¹⁵ Maybe they have OCD?

¹⁶ Example: Adam Clarke on Psalm 25 uses the variations as proof of textual corruption – “It is fashionable to be violent in encomiums [praises] on the Jews for the very faithful manner in which they have preserved the Hebrew Scriptures; but these encomiums are, in general, ill placed. Even this Psalm is a proof with what carelessness they have watched over the sacred deposit committed to their trust. The letter ו vau is wanting in the fifth verse, and ק koph in the eighteenth; the letter ר resh being twice inserted, once instead of ק koph, and a whole line added at the end, entirely out of the alphabetical series.”

¹⁷ Included as a footnote: “So with MT, Tg.; DSS, LXX, Syr., Vg. add *The Lord is faithful in all His words, And holy in all His works.*”

¹⁸ Adam Clarke, commenting on Psalm 145:13, states that the verse “which is found in no printed copy of the Hebrew Bible; yet one MS., now in Trinity College, Dublin, has it thus, I suppose by correction, in the bottom of the page...”

¹⁹ <http://dssenglishbible.com/psalms%20145.htm> – I did change “Yahweh” to “the LORD” because I like it better.

²⁰ Most experts citing the Dead Sea Scrolls to add the “missing verse” do not even acknowledge the added refrain.

textual tradition. I would argue that the added refrain shows that the Dead Sea Scroll text had been altered from the traditional text, which likely also included adding the *nun* verse.

The Rabbis had their own tradition for its missing *nun* verse:

“Additionally, with regard to this psalm, Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Why is there no verse beginning with the letter *nun* in *ashrei*?²¹ Because it contains an allusion to the downfall of the enemies of Israel, a euphemism for Israel itself. As it is written: ‘The virgin of Israel has fallen and she will rise no more; abandoned in her land, none will raise her up’ (Amos 5:2), which begins with the letter *nun*. Due to this verse, *ashrei* does not include a verse beginning with the letter *nun*.”²²

“In order to ease the harsh meaning of this verse, in the West, in Eretz Yisrael, they interpreted it with a slight adjustment: ‘She has fallen but she shall fall no more; rise, virgin of Israel.’ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak adds: Even so, David went and provided support, through divine inspiration. Although King David did not include a verse beginning with the letter *nun* alluding to Israel’s downfall, he foresaw the verse that would be written by Amos through divine inspiration; and the very next verse, which begins with the letter *samekh*, reads: ‘The Lord upholds the fallen and raises up those who are bowed down’ (Psalms 145:14). Therefore, through divine inspiration, David offered hope and encouragement; although the virgin of Israel may have fallen, the Lord upholds the fallen.”²³

The response from the Trinitarian Bible Society is good:

“It may, therefore, be concluded that there is positive evidence that the 1 verse is intentionally omitted from Psalm 145. The inspired authors of the Old Testament use the Hebrew language with great skill and they sometimes employ literary devices to enhance their message.

“It may also be concluded that the evidence for a supposed missing 1 verse is very dubious. The witnesses to the verse do not agree among themselves but give an inconsistent testimony to the wording of the verse.

“The proposed verse looks like an addition by a scribe who merely noticed a superficial deficiency in an acrostic Psalm but looked no further, nor considered that the omission might be intentional. If the verse had indeed been dropped from the Psalm, it is remarkable that more scribes did not attempt to discover the missing verse and restore it to the Psalm since the deficiency in the acrostic must have been obvious to all. So why are the witnesses to the verse so few and inconsistent? A reasonable explanation is that most scribes knew that the verse was never originally present. Despite the inconsistency of omitting the verse, they had sufficient reverence for the text not to boldly supply what they could not be certain was authentic. However, a less cautious scribe, supposing the verse to have dropped out, perhaps supplied his conjectured version of the missing verse in the margin of the manuscript on which he worked, which was picked up in a pair of ancient translations. This explains both the paucity of witnesses and the inconsistency of their testimony.”²⁴

²¹ *Ashrei* is a Hebrew prayer based largely on Psalm 145.

²² <https://www.sefaria.org/Berakhot.4b.21?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en> – accessed 3-10-22

²³ <https://www.sefaria.org/Berakhot.4b.22?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en> – accessed 3-10-22

²⁴ <https://www.tbsbibles.org/page/psalm145> - accessed 3-10-22

Where did the manufactured *nun* verse come from? It appears that someone reworked vs. 17 to create it. The only word that was changed is the first Hebrew word from “righteous” to “faithful”.

The Case of the Letter ו

The Hebrew letter ו (v or w) has only a handful of words that begin with it, something like the situation with “x” in English. Strong’s only has 10 entries for words starting with it (H2051-H2060), but the letter can be added as a prefix to a word to be the conjunction “and”.²⁵ Albert Barnes comments on Psalm 119:41:

“This commences a new portion of the psalm, in which each verse begins with the letter Vau (ו v, or ‘v’). There are almost no words in Hebrew that begin with this letter, which is properly a conjunction, and hence, in each of the verses in this section of the Psalm 119:41-48 the beginning of the verse is in the original a conjunction - ו. This does not here indicate a connection, as with us the conjunction ‘and’ would naturally do; but is a mere artificial arrangement in order that the verse may begin with that letter, and it in no manner affects the sense. The phrase ‘Let thy mercies come’ is literally, ‘and thy mercies shall come,’ or ‘and let thy mercies come.’ That is, Let thy mercy be manifested to me; let me experience thy mercy and thy favor.”²⁶

Therefore, it is likely for the very practical reason that so few words actually begin with it that ו is omitted from Psalms 25 and 34.

III. Musical Instruments of the Ancient Israel

The focus of our study will be on the instruments that were used by the Jews during the Old Testament period. We will not examine the instruments used by other nations, as in Daniel 3.

String Instruments

The *kinnor* (Strong’s H4658, translated as “harp” 42x) was a type of harp or lyre. It would have a small, angled body with two arms stretching from it, a bridge between the arms, and strings stretched from bridge to body.

The *nebel* (Strong’s H5035, translated as “psaltery” 21x and “viol” 4x) is another type of harp/lyre. The distinction between it and the *kinnor* is unclear.

The word *men* (Strong’s H4482, translated as “stringed instruments” 1x) is a generic term for stringed instruments.

²⁵ Which Strong’s numbers do not indicate.

²⁶ Barnes’ Notes – E-sword Module

Wind Instruments

The *chalil* (Strong's H2485, translated as "pipe" 6x) was simple flute made from a hollowed reed, bone, or stick. It had holes bored into it to produce different tones. Sometimes two of these could be combined into an inverted "V" shape so that two tone could be produced at once.

The *uggab* (Strong's H5748, translated as "organ" 4x) was perhaps a primitive bagpipe, but the design is not certain.

Percussion Instruments

The *toph* (Strong's H8596, translated as "tabret" 8x and "timbrel" 9x) was a small hand drum. These were often constructed by stretching skin over a hoop of wood

The *tslatsal* (Strong's H6767, translated as "cymbals" 3x) was a type of cymbal that made a rattling or buzzing sound. This word has non-musical meanings so it more descriptive than definitive. The plural word *metsiltayim* (Strong's H4700, translated "cymbals" 13x) describes a pair of these cymbals.

Non-Instruments

There are a few devices that can easily be confused for musical instruments, but their use was not musical.

The *shofar* (Strong's H7782, translated as "trumpet" 68x or "cornet" 4x) is a hollowed-out animal horn that is blown primarily for as a signaling instrument. It can be mentioned along with musical instruments (I Chronicles 15:28) but it could not be used for melody or harmony. It would at times be sounded at the end of lines of songs, but its usage would be musically speaking would be similar to the cannons that are fired during the "1812 Overture".

The *yobel* (Strong's H3104, translated as "jubilee" 21x, "ram's horn" 4x, and "trumpet" 1x) is another term for the *shofar*.

The *chatsotrah* (Strong's H2689, translated as "trumpet" 27x) was a metal trumpet. These had no valves and could produce limited tones, so their musical use was limited. These were signaling devices.

The *paamon* (Strong's H6472, translated as "bells" 7x) is the bell that was on the bottom of the High Priest's robe in Exodus 28 and 39. This was not used for musical purposes.

The *metsillah* (Strong's 4698, translated as "bells" 1x) is used for the bells placed upon horses. These were not used for musical purposes.

The *menaanea* (Strong's H4517, translated as "cornet" 1x) only appears once in I Samuel 6:5. The parallel passage in I Chronicles 13:8 lists *trumpets* (*chatsotrah*) instead of these. Some say these are rattle-like percussion instruments called *sistrums*.

III. Music in the Tabernacle and Temple

The earliest associations between the Jews and music are not regarding worship. We read of trumpets (*shofar*) as signals for war, as in Judges 7:18-20. We also find reference to music in times of merriment, as in Genesis 31:27 and Judges 11:34. The first time we find music and worship together is when Israel danced before the Golden Calf in Exodus 32:18-19. Because of music's association with pagan rites and secular settings, it appears the early Jews may have been careful to incorporate it into their worship. Quoting from the *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible*:

“Hebrew leaders who ministered in the temple took great care to avoid using music that was associated with sensuous pagan worship. In cultures where fertility rites were common, women singers and musicians incited sexual orgies in honor of their gods. Even instruments not associated with pagan practices were sometimes restricted. For example, priests feared that a happy, melodious flute tune in the temple could distract someone’s mind from worship.”²⁷

During the use of the Tabernacle (1490-1004 B.C.²⁸) it is unclear how much of a role music played in worship there. There are few references to music in connection to Tabernacle worship in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, or Deuteronomy. We find numerous uses of trumpets for signaling (examples: Leviticus 25:9 and Numbers 10:2). There are also bells on the high priest's robe, but these were used to show the priest was alive and moving (Exodus 28:33-35).

When we come to the time of David, we find the most references to music in organized Jewish worship. Whether he originated this use or expanded upon it is not clear. David appears to have organized the first musicians and singers among the Levites in I Chronicles 15:16-24 after the Ark was returned from the Philistines.

During the times of the First Temple (1004-586 B.C.) and Second Temple (516 B.C.-70 A.D.)²⁹ we find that music was an important part Temple services. Alfred Edersheim, writing in his book *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* says:

“To the wealth and splendour of the Temple corresponded the character of its services. The most important of these, next to the sacrificial rites, was the hymnody of the sanctuary. We can conceive what it must have been in the days of David and of Solomon. But even in New Testament times it was such that St. John could find no more adequate imagery to portray heavenly realities and the final triumph of the Church than that taken from the service of praise in the Temple....”³⁰

On the use of instruments in the Temple, Edersheim writes:

“Properly speaking, the real service of praise in the Temple was only with the voice. This is often laid down as a principle by the Rabbis. What instrumental music there was, served only to accompany and sustain the song. Accordingly, none other than Levites might act as choristers, while other distinguished Israelites were allowed to take part in the instrumental

²⁷ *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 493-494

²⁸ Dates found in *Reese's Chronological Bible*

²⁹ Dates found in *Reese's Chronological Bible*

³⁰ <https://ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/temple/temple.v.html> - Accessed 12-28-21. This quote stops mid-paragraph for the sake of brevity but is worth reading for the ties he shows between Temple music and the imagery of Revelation.

music. The blasts of the trumpets, blown by priests only, formed—at least in the second Temple—no part of the instrumental music of the service, but were intended for quite different purposes....

“The music of the Temple owed its origin to David, who was not only a poet and a musical composer, but who also invented musical instruments (Amos 6:5; 1 Chron 23:5), especially the ten-stringed Nevel or lute (Psa 33:2; 144:9). From the Book of Chronicles we know how fully this part of the service was cultivated, although the statement of Josephus (Anti. viii. 3, 8.), that Solomon had provided forty thousand harps and lutes, and two hundred thousand silver trumpets, is evidently a gross exaggeration. The Rabbis enumerate thirty-six different instruments, of which only fifteen are mentioned in the Bible, and of these five in the Pentateuch. As in early Jewish poetry there was neither definite and continued metre (in the modern sense), nor regular and premeditated rhyme, so there was neither musical notation, nor yet any artificial harmony. The melody was simple, sweet, and sung in unison to the accompaniment of instrumental music. Only one pair of brass cymbals were allowed to be used. But this ‘sounding brass’ and ‘tinkling cymbal’ formed no part of the Temple music itself, and served only as the signal to begin that part of the service. To this the apostle seems to refer when, in 1 Corinthians 13:1, he compares the gift of ‘tongues’ to the sign or signal by which the real music of the Temple was introduced.”³¹

Edersheim, describing the singing in the Temple:

“As already stated, the service of praise was mainly sustained by the human voice. A good voice was the one qualification needful for a Levite. In the second Temple female singers seem at one time to have been employed (Ezra 2:65; Neh 7:67). In the Temple of Herod their place was supplied by Levite boys. Nor did the worshippers any more take part in the praise, except by a responsive Amen. It was otherwise in the first Temple, as we gather from 1 Chronicles 16:36, from the allusion in Jeremiah 33:11, and also from such Psalms as 26:12; 68:26. At the laying of the foundation of the second Temple, and at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the singing seems to have been antiphonal, or in responses (Ezra 3:10, 11; Neh 12:27, 40), the two choirs afterwards apparently combining, and singing in unison in the Temple itself. Something of the same kind was probably also the practice in the first Temple. What the melodies were to which the Psalms had been sung, it is, unfortunately, now impossible to ascertain. Some of the music still used in the synagogue must date from those times, and there is no reason to doubt that in the so-called Gregorian tones we have also preserved to us a close approximation to the ancient hymnody of the Temple, though certainly not without considerable alterations.”³²

IV. Music in the Synagogue

Synagogues have their root in the Babylonian exile and the *Diaspora*. Jews gathered locally to worship when they could not go the Temple to do so. By the time of Christ, they were deeply ingrained into Jewish society and worship. In a synagogue service during the first century A.D., you would expect singing, prayers, Scripture reading, and lectures. No instruments were allowed to be played in the synagogue. The songs sung would have been Psalms. A **cantor**³³ (Hebrew: *hazzan*) would sing a line and the congregation would sing a response in unison.

The style of chanting Scripture, called **cantillation**, has been preserved by use of **trope** symbols. The website MyJewishLearning.com explains cantillation:

“Cantillation consists of the musical system for chanting texts from the Bible. The Pentateuch is generally read in short sections each Sabbath over the course of a year; various readings from the Prophets accompany the reading from the Pentateuch every week, and sections of the Writings

³¹ <https://ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/temple/temple.v.html> - Accessed 12-28-21.

³² <https://ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/temple/temple.v.html> - Accessed 12-28-21.

³³ A term still found today in liturgical denominations.

are often read on special holidays. These sections of the Bible are read by one member of the congregation while the rest of the congregation listens.

“The written notation for cantillation was developed by a group known as the Masoretes (from the Hebrew word *Mesorah*, meaning ‘tradition’), active as early as the sixth century, but who may have been recording much more ancient practices. The Masoretes inscribed each word in the Bible with a cantillation mark, indicating how it was to be sung. Those markings do not indicate specific notes or melodies, but only guidelines for enunciation. During the ensuing 1,500 years, each community’s cantillation melodies diverged and took on the character and sound of music of surrounding peoples, but the Masoretic markings and guidelines for cantillation have remained the same.”³⁴

The arrows below point to the cantillation marks³⁵:



For an example of singing in a synagogue, I recommend watching the YouTube video titled “Mizrahi Jews Singing in Synagogue”, found at <https://youtu.be/ulEoW5eCNOU>

³⁴ <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/synagogue-music/> - accessed 9-4-22

³⁵ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Example_of_biblical_Hebrew_trope.svg – accessed 9-4-22