

## Book of Psalms

### Part One

#### Psalter Introduction

Literary Period Covered: roughly 1500 B.C.E. to 537 B.C.E.

#### Lecture Segment

##### Psalms

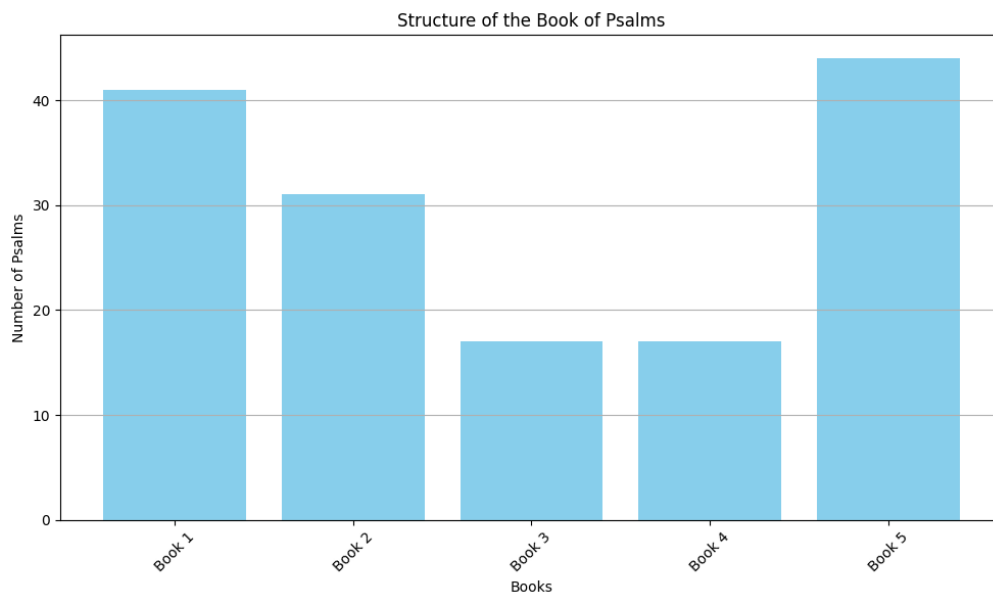
Psalms is a collection of 150 ancient Hebrew poems, songs, and prayers that come from different eras in Israel's history. Seventy-three of these psalms are connected to King David, who was a poet and harp player (1 Sam. 16; 2 Sam. 23). There were also many other authors involved. Asaph wrote 12 poems, the sons of Korah produced 11, and other worship leaders in the temple contributed as well (Heman and Ethan wrote one each; see 1 Chronicles 15:17-19). Two are connected to King Solomon and one other to Moses. Nearly one-third of the poems (49, to be exact) are anonymous.

Many of these poems were used by Israel's temple choirs (1 Chronicles 25; Neh. 11:22-23), but the book of Psalms is not actually a hymnbook. In the period after Israel's exile to Babylon, these ancient songs were gathered together with many other Hebrew poems and intentionally arranged into the book of Psalms. The entire work has a unique design and message that you won't notice unless you read it beginning to end.

(Bibleproject.com)

##### Structure

The Book of Psalms is divided into five sections or books, each ending with a doxology:



The chart illustrates the structure of the Book of Psalms, which is divided into five distinct sections, or "books," each with a specific range of psalms and a varying number of chapters:

Book	Psalms Range	Number of Psalms
Book 1	Psalms 1–41	41
Book 2	Psalms 42–72	31
Book 3	Psalms 73–89	17
Book 4	Psalms 90–106	17
Book 5	Psalms 107–150	44

- **Book 1** (Psalms 1–41): Focuses on trust in God, with many psalms attributed to David.
- **Book 2** (Psalms 42–72): Includes psalms from the sons of Korah and David, emphasizing hope for the messianic kingdom.
- **Book 3** (Psalms 73–89): Reflects on the devastation of Israel's exile and the downfall of David's royal line.
- **Book 4** (Psalms 90–106): Represents a period of maturity, with references to Chronicles.
- **Book 5** (Psalms 107–150): Concludes with themes of consummation, including the Psalms of Ascent and Hallel Psalms

## Themes and Purpose

The Psalms cover a wide range of themes, including:

- **Praise and Worship:** Expressing joy and adoration for God.
- **Lament and Distress:** Cries for help in times of trouble.
- **Hope for the Messiah:** Anticipation of a future king from David's line.
- **Trust and Faithfulness:** Emphasizing reliance on God's promises.

The book serves as a prayer book for God's people, guiding them in expressing emotions and communicating with God.

## Authors

The Psalms were written by multiple authors over a thousand years:

- David: Contributed 73 psalms.
- Asaph: Wrote 12 psalms.
- Sons of Korah: Contributed 11 psalms.
- Solomon: Authored 2 psalms.
- Moses: Wrote one psalm (Psalm 90).
- Ethan and Heman: Each wrote one psalm.

## Historical Context

Psalms were composed from the time of Moses (Psalms 90 – Exodus 1446 B.C.E. which pits this at approximately 1500 B.C.E.) to the Babylonian exile (Psalm 137 written after 596 B.C.E., some theologians put it around 537 B.C.E.), when they were compiled into their current form.

## Significance

The Book of Psalms is invaluable for worship and personal devotion, offering a rich tapestry of human emotions and divine interaction. It remains a central part of religious life, providing models for prayer and praise.

## Main Themes of the Book of Psalms

The Book of Psalms encompasses a wide range of themes that reflect the full spectrum of human emotions and experiences. Here are some of the main themes:

- **Praise and Worship:** Many psalms express joy and adoration for God, celebrating His creation, power, and faithfulness. These psalms often call upon all creation to praise God, emphasizing His role as the King of all creation.
- **Lament and Distress:** A significant portion of the psalms are laments, where the writer's express pain, confusion, and anger in the face of evil or personal hardship. These psalms demonstrate that lament is a valid response to suffering and that God can be approached with honesty about one's emotions.
- **Hope for the Messiah:** The Psalms frequently reference the promise of a future messianic king from David's line, who will establish God's Kingdom and bring justice and peace. This theme is particularly prominent in Psalms like 2 and 72.
- **Trust and Faithfulness:** Psalms emphasize the importance of trusting in God's promises and faithfulness, even in times of uncertainty or hardship. This trust is often linked to the covenant between God and His people.
- **Wisdom and Reflection:** Some psalms, like Psalm 1 and 37, reflect on wisdom themes, encouraging readers to live according to God's teachings and to seek wisdom in life's challenges.
- **Monotheism and Creation:** The Psalms affirm monotheism, highlighting God as the Creator and Ruler of all, who will vindicate His justice and goodness.
- **Steadfast Love** ("Khesed" - (often transliterated as "chesed") signifies loyal love, kindness, mercy, and enduring commitment, particularly in the context of God's relationship with humanity.): The Psalms frequently mention God's steadfast love, emphasizing His enduring faithfulness and loyalty to His people.

These themes are woven throughout the five sections of the Book of Psalms, providing a rich tapestry of spiritual reflection and worship.

## **Alternate Structure**

An alternate way to gain a deeper understanding of the Book of Psalms is to look at the Psalms by category or type:

### **1) Davidic Psalms**

- a) Psalms 3 to 41; 51 to 70; 138 to 145
- b) With the possible exception of Psalm 32; 66 and 67
- c) David has been attributed to writing 73 of the 150 Psalms
- d) Attributed to experiences in David's life

### **2) Songs of Asaph**

- a) Psalms 73 to 83; Psalm 50 may have been part of this set
- b) Asaph a Levitical musician played a central role in worship during the time of David - 1 Chronicles 15:17-19; 16:4-5
- c) His descendants carried on this tradition and there are a number of Psalms attributed to them as well.

### **3) Psalms of the Sons of Korah**

- a) Psalms 42 to 49; 84 to 88
- b) With the possible exception of Psalm 43 and 86
- c) Levites who were descendants of Kohath who we first heard about in 1 Chronicles 6:16 - 19
- d) They were involved in the music of the Temple

### **4) Psalms of Ascent – i.e. Going up**

- a) Psalms 120 to 134
- b) Energetic Psalms – Psalms of encouragement used in the travel from the valleys to Jerusalem for Festivals

- c) Pilgrimage to Jerusalem typically from the north to south
- d) 700 feet) below sea level (Sea of Galilee to 2500 feet above sea level (Jerusalem).
- e) 17-mile journey from Jericho (900 feet below sea level)
- f) 3-day journey

#### 5) Egyptian Praise (Hallel) Psalms

- a) Psalms 113 to 118
- b) Psalms used during the Passover Meal
- c) Matthew Chapter 26

#### 6) General Hallel or Praise Psalms

- a) Psalms 146 to 150
- b) Form a grand crescendo to the end of the Book of Psalms
- c) They are joyous and are sung in community

As we journey through the psalms we will look at them through multiple lenses to gain a deeper understanding of them.

**[150 Hebrew Poems]**

DAVID (73)    HEBMAN & ERIHAN (2)  
 ASAPH (12)    SOLOMON & MOSES (3)  
 SONGS OF KORAH (11)    ANONYMOUS (41)

# PSALMS

Torah & Messiah  
 Lament & Praise  
 Faith & Hope

**HOW LONG, O LORD?**

**LAMENT**

- PRAYERS OF PAIN, CONFESSION, & ASKING
- DRAW ATTENTION TO CURRENT SUFFERING IN THE WORLD
- ASK GOD TO DO SOMETHING

**PRAISE**

- PRAYERS OF JOY & CELEBRATION
- DRAW ATTENTION TO CURRENT GOOD IN THE WORLD
- EXULT THE STORY & THANK GOD
- GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD

MANY WRITTEN FOR CHOIR...  
 (SEE 1 CHRONICLES 25 & MATTHEW 17:27-28)

...BUT NOT A HYMNBOK

BOOK 1  
 PSALMS

## LAMENT & PRAISE BOOK 1 BOOK 2 BOOK 3 BOOK 4 BOOK 5 PRAISE & LAMENT

**1** BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO MEDITATES ON THE TORAH  
 PSALMS = A MIDS TORAH ABOUT PRAYER

**2** POETIC REFLECTION ON 2 SAMUEL 7  
 BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO TAKE REFUGE IN THE KING

**15** CALL TO COVENANT REMEMBRANCE  
 DAVID'S FIRST REFERENCE  
 ELEVATION AS KING

**16-18** PSALM 119 TORAH  
 DAVID'S FIRST REFERENCE  
 KINGSHIP OVER THE NATIONS

**20-23** CALL TO COVENANT REMEMBRANCE  
 DAVID'S FIRST REFERENCE  
 ELEVATION AS KING

**41-43** THE NATIONS

**42-72** HOPE FOR A FUTURE RETURN TO THE TEMPLE IN ZION

**72** FUTURE REIGN OF THE MESSIANIC KING  
 LEAGUES THE FOOTSTEPS  
 -ISAIAH 11:45 & 60  
 -ZECHARIAH 9  
 FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM  
 (75:72-77 - GEN 12:3 & 22:17)

**72-10-17**

**73-89** PROMISE OF A FUTURE KING  
 EXILE & DOWNFALL OF DAVID'S KINGDOM

**89-92** DON'T FORGET YOUR TROUBLES

**90-106** HAVE MERCY ON YOUR SERVANTS  
 THE LORD REIGNS AS KING  
 LET THE TREES CLAP  
 LET THE HILLS JUMP & ROCKS SING

**106-16**

**107-110** THE MESSIANIC KING  
 DEFEATS EVIL & BRINGS GOD'S KINGDOM

**113-118** THE HALLEL

**118** MESSIANIC KINGDOM  
 SUDAN HOPE IN A FUTURE EXODUS WHEN GOD REIGNS HIS PEOPLE

**119** PSALM 119 TORAH

**120-136** THE SONGS OF ASCENTS  
 MESSIANIC KINGDOM

**137-145** THE MESSIANIC KING  
 DEFEATS EVIL & BRINGS GOD'S KINGDOM

**146** HALLELU-YAH

**147** HALLELU-YAH

**148** HALLELU-YAH  
 "GOD HAS RAINED UP A RAIN FOR HIS PEOPLE" (108:17)

**149** HALLELU-YAH  
 SET HIM 240 & 1312:17

**150** HALLELU-YAH  
 HALLELU-YAH  
 PRAISE YAHWEH

PSALMS: THE PRAYERBOOK OF GOD'S PEOPLE WHO ARE STRIVING TO BE ENTHRALLED TO THE TORAH AND CLINGING FOR THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

HAY THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL BE BLESSED FOREVER, AMEN AND AMEN



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