

Old Testament Introduction

The Book of Psalms

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INTRODUCTION

- 1) The Book of Psalms is the _____ book in the Bible with _____ chapters.
- 2) The Hebrew title of Psalms is *Sepher Tehillim* or “Book of _____.” The English title of Psalms comes from the Septuagint title *Psalmoi* or “_____, with instrumental accompaniment.”
- 3) Psalms is one of the most quoted Old Testament books in the New Testament. Over _____ of the OT quotations in the NT are from the Psalms.
- 4) Psalms was both the _____ and the devotional guide for Jewish believers. It was, and is, both a book of praise and _____.
- 5) Psalms is one of the most universal and _____ books of the Old Testament. It is wondrously suited to the human heart, running the gamut of the human experience ranging from dark despondency to bright hopefulness, defeat to victory, and mourning to rejoicing. It has been said that the Psalms “*play upon the keyboard of the human soul with all the stops pulled out...expressing the deep feelings of all believing hearts in all generations.*”
- 6) Charles H. Spurgeon wrote a classic commentary on the Psalms, *The Treasury of David*, which took twenty years to complete. This was his testimony at the end of his endeavor.

“A tinge of sadness is on my spirit as I quit The Treasury of David, never to find on this earth a richer storehouse, though the whole palace of Revelation is open to me. Blessed have been the days spent in meditating, mourning, hoping, believing, and exulting with David. Can I hope to spend hours more joyous on this side of the golden gate? The book of Psalms instructs us in the use of wings as well as words: it sets us both mounting and singing.”

AUTHORSHIP

- 1) **The Traditional view:** The Book of Psalms is commonly spoken of as _____ because he wrote the larger number of individual Psalms. _____ are ascribed to him in their titles and in addition, **Psalms 2** and **95** are ascribed to him in the NT (**Acts 4:25 & Hebrews 4:7**). _____ Psalms are ascribed to authors other than David.
Moses = **Psalm 90**

Solomon = **Psalms 72 & 127**

Asaph, David's Levitical choir director = **Psalms 50 & 73-83**

Sons of Korah = **Psalms 42-49, 85 & 87**

Heman, the Ezrahite = **Psalm 88**

Ethan, the Ezrahite = **Psalm 89**

- 2) **The Critical view:** Critics acknowledge David's authorship of many of the Psalms, but believe that much of the material in the Psalms was borrowed from or influenced by the idolatrous religious poetry of Canaan, Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon.

RECIPIENTS

The Lord = **3:7 & 4:1**

The righteous = **33:1 & 37:1**

Israel = **78:1 & 105:5-6**

Mankind in general = **1 & 2**

DATE OF WRITING

The Psalms were written during the various historical periods of Israel's history.
Patriarchal period = **Psalm 110** (*Penned by David about this period of history.*)
Theocratic period = **Psalm 90**
Monarchichal period = **Psalm 23** (*David as shepherd*); **7** (*David as fugitive*); **24** (*David as King*).
Exilic period = **Psalms 74 & 79** (*After destruction of Temple*) **Psalm 137** (*After arrival in Babylon*)
Post-exilic period = **Psalm 126** (*Upon return from captivity*) **Psalm 147** (*At dedication of Temple*)

PURPOSE OF BOOK

To provide poetry for expression of _____, _____, and _____ to God.

THEME OF THE BOOK

The believer communing with his God through _____ and _____.

OUTLINE

- I. Book One = Adoring Worship **1-41**
- II. Book Two = Wondering Worship **42-72**
- III. Book Three = Ceaseless Worship **73-89**
- IV. Book Four = Submissive Worship **90-106**
- V. Book Five = Perfected Worship **107-150**

Musical Terminology in Psalms

1. “*Alamoth*” = Comes from the Hebrew word for virgin. Could indicate either female voices or instruments played in today’s soprano range. This word would signify the normal key for most teenage girls range and could be translated as “*set to young women’s voices.*”¹ (***Psalm 46***)
2. “*Gittith*” = A word derived from the wine or olive press. It may have been a musical instrument from Gath. (***Psalms 8, 81, 84***)
3. “*Jeduthun*” = According to **1 Chronicles 25:1, 3, 6**, a Levite appointed by David to conduct the music of the Temple along with Heman and Asaph.² (***Psalms 39 & 77***)
4. “*Maschil*” = A meditative psalm of instruction. (***Psalms 42, 45***)
5. “*Michtam*” = The meaning is uncertain, but the best sense of the word may signify a work of gold, and may be rendered, “*a golden Psalm.*”³ (***Psalm 16, 56, 60***)
6. “*Neginoth*” = A stringed instrument (***Psalms 4, 5, 54***, etc.)
7. “*Negiloth*” = A wind instrument (***Psalm 5***)
8. “*Selah*” = A musical interlude or rest. Some take it to indicate a pause for meditation.
9. “*Sheminith*” = Means the eighth. Could refer a song of eight notes or a stringed instrument of eight strings. (***Psalm 6***)
10. “*Shiggayon*” = Comes from a word which means to err or wander. Based upon this, it may be understood as “*an erratic*” or “*wandering ode,*” which would be a song or psalm consisting of various kinds of meter and sung with various notes. (***Psalm 7***)

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra: 1955–1995*, (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary) 1997.

² *The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

³ *Gill’s Expositor*, (Online Bible).