

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

The Book of Psalms is like all Scripture; it is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). Please remember that as one of the five poetical Books, the original setting is found in human experience.

When the collection of Psalms was brought together as one, the Hebrew title for the collection was *Tehillim*, meaning "praise songs". The Grek translators gave it the title *Psalmoi*, meaning "songs to the accompaniment of stringed instrument". This was the title used in the days of Jesus (Acts 1:20). Jesus Himself authenticated the Psalms in Luke 24:44.

The collection of Psalms was the inspired prayer and praise Book of the nation of Israel in their Temple worship. Today both Jews and Christians of many denominations use them.

THE AUTHORS

The Book of Psalms is often referred to as the Book of David because he wrote so many of them. I have attempted to classify the authors listed with their corresponding works.

DAVID 73 - 3 thru 9; 11 thru 32; 34 thru 41; 51-65; 68 thru 70; 86; 101; 103; 108 thru 110; 122; 124; 131; 133; 138 thru 145.
 ASAPH (DAVID'S CHOIR LEADER IN JERUSALEM) 12 - 50; 73 thru 83.
 DESCENDANTS OF KORAH 10 - 42; 44 thru 49; 84-85; 87.
 SOLOMON 2 - 72; 127.
 ETHAN 1 - 89.
 HEMAN 1 - 88
 MOSES 1 - 90
 ANONYMOUS - 50

There is reason to believe that David wrote some of these. An example is Psalm 2 credited to David in Acts 4:25.

A question comes up about the author of Psalm 119. I have seen in various instances credit being given to David, but also to Daniel.

The CENTRAL MESSAGE of the Psalms seems to be "Praise Ye The Lord", or as some have stated, Praise THrough Prayer!

THE STRUCTURE

The Psalms were divided into FIVE DIVISIONS from the time of Ezra. The *Midrashim* which meant "interpretation" was the commentary of the day explaining Scriptures. According to the Midrashim on the first Psalm, "Moses gave to the Israelites the five Books of the Law, and the counterpart is that David gave the Psalms which consists of five Books. Below you see the structure.

	BOOK 1 41 PSALMS Begins at Chapter 1	BOOK 2 31 PSALMS Begins at Chapter 42	BOOK 3 17 PSALMS Begins at Chapter 73	BOOK 4 17 PSALMS Begins at Chapter 90	BOOK 5 44 PSALMS Begins at Chapter 107
DONOLOGY AT	41:13	72:18-19	89:52	106:48	150:6
WORSHIP THEME	ADORING WORSHIP	WON-DROUS WORSHIP	CEASE-LESS WORSHIP	SUB-MISSIVE WORSHIP	PER-FECTED WORSHIP
LIKENESS TO THE PENTA-TEUCH	GENESIS —ISRAEL— —MAN—	EXODUS —ISRAEL— DELIVER- ANCE	LEVITI- CUS —SANC- TUARY—	NUMBERS —MOSES & WILDER- NESS—	DEUTER- ONOMY —LAW AND LAND—
AUTHORS	MAINLY DAVID'S	MAINLY DAVID'S & KORAH'S	MAINLY ASAPH'S	MAINLY ANONYMOUS	MAINLY DAVID'S

You will notice that the *Doxology* appears at the end of each of the five books. Your Bible may have the five divisions indicated at the beginning of each section.

Classification of the Psalms

Although many subjects are covered in the Psalms, there are some major types:

INSTRUCTION or DIDACTIC - Psalms 1, 5, 7, 15, 50, 73, 94, 101.

HISTORY (in reference to Israel) - Psalms 78, 105, 106, 136.

PRAISE - Psalm 106, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 135, 146-150.

CONFESSION - Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

SUPPLICATION - Psalm 86

THANKSGIVING - Psalms 16 and 18.

MESSIANIC - Prophecies concerning Christ. I chose this to be the major point of this study so we will deal with it separately.

Messianic Psalms

The Psalms are filled with Christ in His two advents: His first advent in humiliation and His second advent in glory.

1. In the Psalms Christ is not only referred to, but He actually speaks so that we see the heart of Christ. We find some of His prayers pre-written, so that we are able to see the Divine inspiration of Scripture.
2. Psalm 22 is a prewritten account of our Lord's death on the cross and through a human writer, the pre-incarnate Christ Himself actually as though He was already on the cross.
 - a. Matthew 27:35-36. This Scripture gives us part of what was going on surrounding the cross, but Psalm 22 is **prophecy** in detail. When you read Psalm 22 and compare it to Matthew 27 you would almost think that they were written at the same time, rather than hundreds of years apart.
3. The messianic Psalms give us an amazing witness to Christ.
 - a. The witness to His person, the Son of God - Psalm 2:6-7.
 - b. The witness to Christ as the Son of Man - Psalm 8:4-6.
 - c. The witness of Christ as the Son of David - Psalm 89:3-4, 27
 - d. The witness to His "offices" as a PROPHET - Psalm 22:22; as PRIEST - PSALM 110:4; As KING - Psalm 2.
4. The main Messianic Psalms are:

2, 8, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 31, 35, 40, 41, 45, 50, 55, 61, 68, 69, 72, 89, 96, 97, 98, 102, 109, 110, 118, 132.

In these Psalms we have Christ's birth, betrayal, agony, death, resurrection, ascension, coming again in glory and His reign.

Some Psalms are linked as a group. A good example would be Psalms 22, 23,

24. You can remember these as follows:

Psalm 22 - Suffering Savior; The Good Shepherd (John 10:11). Past Cross.

Psalm 23 - Living Savior; the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20). Present Crook.

Psalm 24 - Exalted King; the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). Future Crown.

"Cursing" Psalms

There are many Psalms that express anger against enemies and them that do evil. There is no need to puzzle over this when you realize that a Jew who is faithful to God would consider God's enemies to be his own. He would therefore pray to God to honor His own righteousness by punishing those who denied the sovereignty of God.

Some of these "Cursing" Psalms are: 35, 52, 58, 69, 83, 109, 137, 140.

These Psalms are really brought to light in Psalm 139:21-23.

The Word of God

All of the teaching in Psalm 119 is around the Word of God. This is the longest chapter of the Bible and it reveals the very heart of God. Every verse speaks of the Word of God, or law, or precepts, or statutes of God. In this chapter there are 22 sections of 8 verses each: one section for each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order.

Memorize Psalm 119:11 and 119:105:

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

The Psalms are the expression of human experience written through Divine inspiration. God included these beautiful Psalms for us because they will enrich our lives as we meditate upon them.

FOR NEXT WEEK:

READ

PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES AND SONG OF SOLOMON