

PSALMS

Date and Author: Psalms was written over a period of approximately a thousand years by various authors. Seventy-three of the psalms are directly attributed to David. Twelve are ascribed by Asaph, a priest who headed the service of music. Ten were written by the sons of Korah, a guild of singers and composers, and other psalms are ascribed to Moses, Solomon, Heman the Ezrarite, and Ethan the Ezrarite. Fifty of the Psalms are anonymous, although many of these are traditionally ascribed to Ezra. The earliest psalm is probably that of Moses (1450-1400 B.C.) and the latest is Psalm 137, which could not have been written before the sixth century B.C. The final compilation probably took place in the fifth century B.C. during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (450 – 425 B.C.).

Theme: To provide for the expression of prayer, praise, worship, and confession to God.

Key Verse: *“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.”* 150:6

At the very center of the Bible is the book of Psalms. This collection of songs and prayers expresses the heart and soul of humanity. It is the largest and perhaps the most widely used book in the Bible. The Psalms explore the full range of human emotions and experiences in a very personal and practical way. Written over a lengthy period of Israel’s history, the subject matter includes topics such as praise, prayer, worship, wisdom, jubilation, war, peace, judgment, anger, messianic prophesy, and lament. The Psalms served as the hymn book and prayer and devotional guide for the Jewish people.

The book of Psalms was gradually collected and came to be known as the *Sepher Tehillim* (“Book of Praises”), because almost every psalm contains some note of praise to God. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) uses the Greek term *Psalmoi* as a title for this book, meaning poems sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments, and this is the basis for the English term “psalm.” The psalms were originally individual poems. With the passing of time these were collected to form smaller books and the book of Psalms in its present form comprises five of these smaller books. Each of the five books ends with a doxology. Some scholars believe each book is linked in topical likeness to a book of the Torah or Pentateuch:

- Book 1 (Psalms 1-41)** Genesis: Man and Creation
- Book 2 (Psalms 42-72).** Exodus: Deliverance and Redemption
- Book 3 (Psalms 73-89)** Leviticus: Worship, Holiness, and Sanctuary
- Book 4 (Psalms 90-106)** Numbers: Wanderings and History
- Book 5 (Psalms 107-150)** Deuteronomy: Scripture and Praise

Examples of the different types of Psalms are:

1. **Praise** – praise to God (Ps. 7, 8, 18, 34, 40, 66, 68, 106, 146, 150)
2. **Lament** – prayers for God’s deliverance (Ps. 3, 42, 74, 102, 130)
3. **Penitential** – confession of sins (Ps. 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143)
4. **Pilgrimage** – sung by worshippers as they traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the festivals or feasts (Ps. 43, 76, 120-134)
5. **Royal** – portraying the reign of the earthly king, as well as describing God’s sovereign rule (Ps. 2, 21, 47, 89, 93, 96-99, 101)
6. **Wisdom** – instruction in wisdom, righteousness and God’s laws (Ps. 1, 37, 119)
7. **Imprecatory** – invoking God’s wrath and judgment against the enemies (Ps. 7, 35, 79, 144)
8. **Messianic** – anticipating the life and ministry of the Messiah, Jesus Christ (Ps. 2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 45, 72, 110)
9. **Thanksgiving** – giving thanks to God (Ps. 92, 100, 118, 136, 138)
10. **Trust** - showing faith and trust in God (Ps. 4, 9, 11, 13, 37, 56, 84, 119, 143)

The A-C-T-S of Prayer (Using Psalms)

(Adoration – Confession – Thanksgiving – Supplication)

Adoration (Praise God in your own words or use Scripture to praise Him.)

“I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.” Ps. 9:1-2

“I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.” Ps. 18:1-3

“Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God. For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful.” Ps. 147:1

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!” Ps. 150:6

Confession (Be specific as you confess your sins and ask for forgiveness.)

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.” Ps. 51:1-3

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me.” Ps. 51:10

“If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, my Lord would not have listened.” Ps. 66:18

“Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.” Ps. 119:11

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” Ps. 139:23-24

Thanksgiving (Be specific)

“Sing praise to the Lord, you saints of His, and give thanks at remembrance of His holy name.” Ps. 30:4

“We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near.” Ps. 75:1

“But giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors Me.” Ps. 50:23a

“So we, Your people and sheep of Your pasture, will give You thanks forever. Ps. 79:3

“Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good. For His Mercy endures forever.” Ps. 107:1

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.” Ps. 100:4

Supplication (Requests for yourself, family, friends, etc.)

“Hear my cry, O God; Attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry out to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” Ps. 61:1-2

“Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth.” Ps. 54:2

“Give ear to my prayer, O God, and do not hide Yourself from my supplication.” Ps. 55:1

“As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord will save me.” Ps. 55:16

“Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you.” Ps. 55:22

“Hear my prayer, O Lord, Give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, and in Your righteousness. Ps. 143:1

“The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.” Ps. 146:18

Closing – *“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.” Ps. 19:14*

[All Scripture is from the Holy Bible, NKJV]