



Walking Thru The Bible PSALMS

INTRODUCTION

A. The Hebrew title of the Psalms (*sepher tehillim*) means "book of praises." The Greek version of the OT bears the title *Psalmoi*, from this we get the English title, "**Psalms.**"

1. The Psalms were for the Jewish nation both prayer book and hymnbook. It is, of course, the longest book of the Bible.
2. The book was originally organized as five volumes, with each volume closing with a doxology psalm. The last (Psa 150) forms an appropriate doxology for the entire book.

Book I contains Psalms 1-41

Book II contains Psalms 41-72

Book III contains Psalms 73-89

Book IV contains Psalms 90-106

Book V contains Psalms 107-150

3. It seems likely since certain psalms appear in more than one collection, that each book was compiled somewhat independently. (e.g. Psa.14 and part of Psa.40 of Book I appear as Psa.53 and Psa.70 in Book II; and the latter halves of Psa.57 and Psa.60 of Book II appear as Psa.108 in Book V.)

B. AUTHORSHIP

1. ONE is ascribed to Moses, Psa.90.
2. SEVENTY-THREE are ascribed to David.

Book I consists wholly of David's songs; his name prefixed to all except 1 & 2, which are the preface; 10 which is a part of 9; and 33 which appears as an example of the last verse of Psa.32.

Book II eight psalms, 51-65 and 68-70.

Book III one psalm, 86.

Book IV two, 101, 103.

Book V fifteen, 108-110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138-145.

3. TWO are ascribed to Solomon, that is, "to" or "for" him, (72 & 127). Psa.72:1,20 indicates that it was written by David, as a prayer for divine guidance of his son Solomon. If 127 was likewise written by David for Solomon it is forecasting the building of the Temple. If

it was written by Solomon, it reflects the building of it (Cf. I Kings 8 and I Kings 4:32).

4. ELEVEN Psalms are ascribed "to" or "for" the "Sons of Korah" whose names are not recorded. Psa.42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88. Korah's children did not all perish with him (I Chron. 6:22, 27; 9:19; 26:1; 2 Chron. 20:19). They were eminent musicians at the time of David and Solomon.
5. TWELVE are ascribed to Asaph, a celebrated Levite, and Chief of the choirs of Israel in the time of David (I Chron.16:4,5). Psa.50, 73-83. Asaph is a combination poet and the philosopher. His subject matter is doctrinal and perspective. His style is more vehement than David's.
6. ONE EACH is ascribed to the sages of Heman and Ethan, who were the sons of Zerah (I Chron. 2:6), and flourished during the captivity. Psa. 88, 89. However Psa.88 is also connected with the sons of Korah.
7. TWENTY-FOUR have no inscription of any kind.
Book I -- 1, 2, 10, 33
Book II -- 43, 71
Book IV -- 91, 93-97, 99, 104, 105
Book V -- 107, 114-119, 136, 137
(The New Testament writers attribute certain of these to David: Psa.2 in Acts 4; and Psa. 95 in Heb.3 & 4).

C. Classification of the Psalms according to Subject.

1. **Prayers**-- For pardon of sin; under affliction and persecution; relative to public worship expressing trust in God; declaring the psalmists' integrity; for defeat of enemies.
2. **Thanksgiving**-- For mercies shown.
3. **Psalms of Praise**-- Declaring God's goodness and mercy; declaring God's power, majesty, and glory.
4. **Psalms and Instruction**-- Showing the blessings of God's people and the misery of His enemies; the excellence of God's law; the vanity of human life without God.
5. **Prophetical and Typical Psalms**-- (Messianic, etc.)
6. **Historical Psalms**-- The creation (8:5); Covenant established with Abraham (105:9-11); Deliverance from Egypt (78 & 105).

D. Superscriptions:

An interesting and difficult feature of the book of Psalms are the explanatory notes attached to the individual psalms.

1. "*For the Chief Musician.*" This note is attached to fifty-five psalms. It refers to the leaders of the temple singers and so is

translated "choirmaster" by the RSV. "To the Choirmaster" would mean instructions to the choirmaster as to how the particular psalms was to be sung. Thus in the RSV of Psa.4 we have a clear statement of directions: "To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments," i.e., this psalms is to be sung with stringed instruments. This shows the psalms was specially meant for the Temple (tabernacle) worship.

2. "*Song of Degrees*" (Psa. 120-134). The ASV and RSV translate this "Song of Ascents." It refers undoubtedly to a group of psalms that were sung by the Jews on their way up to Jerusalem to keep the annual feasts (cf. Psa. 122:1-4).

3. "*Maskil*" This term is found at the top of thirteen psalms. The word means "instructions" and denotes these psalms as didactic (teaching) in nature.

4. "*Michtam*" (Ps. 16, 56-60) The meaning of this term is unknown. In rabbinical writings it is taken to mean "a golden poem."

5. "*On Neginoth*" This word appears with six psalms and means "with stringed instruments." The ASV and RSV have greatly helped their readers by giving this translation.

6. "*Upon Nehiloth*" means "on wind instruments," probably flutes.

7. Other terms:

a. There are many other unfamiliar terms also-- for example, Psa.9 "upon Muth-labbed" ("Death of the Son") this means "set to the tune of a song entitled Muthlabben.

b. "Selah" occurs seventy-one times, but its precise meaning remains unknown. The word seems to mean "to raise up" and could be instructions for crescendo, or for the lifting the hand to silence to allow a musical interlude, etc.

SUMMARY

The Psalms express the "heartbeat" or the outpouring of the emotions and personal feelings of God's people. Men and women everywhere can identify their lot in life with that of the psalmists.

The Psalms tend to display and illustrate the character of our LORD and to enforce the character which His servants are called upon to display.

In every experience of our own, no matter how deep the pain or great the frustration or how exhilarating the joy, we can find psalms which echo our innermost thoughts; psalms which God used to bring comfort or to confirm to us that He understands.

The Psalms were used in public worship and private devotions in both ages. In them we share every thought and feeling with our LORD.

"Let Us Go Into The House of the Lord"

Psalms 122:1

1. We see in these words the pleasure which David took in approaching the house of the Lord for worship unto his God.
2. It is God's will and command that we worship Him in public worship. Acts 2:42, 46; 11:26; 20:7; Heb. 10:24-25.

I. THE CALL TO WORSHIP-- "Let us go into the house of the Lord."

- A. WHY WORSHIP? Why have we assembled this morning?
1. Because it is a natural and necessary thing for man to do.
 2. Because worship makes the worshiper like the things he worships. 2 Cor. 3:18
 3. Because in worship we are reminded of values which the world makes us forget. Heb. 11:1.
 4. Because worship is an experience that rebukes the sin in one's life. Psalms 42:2; 84:2.
- B. WHAT IS WORSHIP? WHAT WORSHIP DOES--
1. "Religion: is *re-tieing* man to God. ["Religion" is from the root of the word "ligament."] Worship is the celebration of our religion.
 2. Our Worship strengthens our religion. It reminds us what God has done for us... It reminds us of our relationship... It reminds us of power available... It renews our commitment

II. THE PLACE OF WORSHIP -- "Let us go into the house of the Lord."

- A. God's house in the O.T. was the temple -- 1 Kings 8:27
- B. God's house is His church -- 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:22; 1 Pet.2:5

III. THE SPIRIT OF WORSHIP -- "I was glad when they said unto me..."

- A. David sure it did him good to "go into the house of the Lord."
- B. True spirit of worship demands reverence-- Ps.89:7. Heb.12:28.
- C. The worship of the apostolic Christian was truly an offering of the heart-- I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:22
1. Worship should be a happy, joyful, uplifting experience.

IV. WHY WE SHOULD NEVER FORSAKE THE WORSHIP--

- A. On God's account -- 1 Peter 3:12
- B. On Christ's account -- Matt. 18:20
- C. For the sake of the church -- I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30
- D. For our own sake -- Matthew 6:33

CONCLUSION

1. Let us say with David, "I was glad when ... "
2. The church says in the words of Moses, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." (Num. 10:29).