

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF PSALMS

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- I. Title.
 - A. The Jews referred to Psalms as "The Book of Praises".
 - B. The LXX entitled it "The Book of Psalms" (from a Greek word indicating hymns/songs sung to accompaniment of stringed instruments).
 - C. The collection was the hymnal of the Jews.
- II. Authorship and Date.
 - A. The titles to the individual psalms attribute 73 to David, 2 to Solomon, 12 to the sons of Korah, 12 to Asaph, 1 to Heman, 1 to Ethan, and 1 to Moses.
 - B. The majority of the psalms were written during the time of David (10th century BC).
- III. Contents.
 - A. The psalms are divided into five books/collections.
 1. Chapters 1-41.
 2. Chapters 42-72.
 3. Chapters 73-89.
 4. Chapters 90-106.
 5. Chapters 107-150.
 - B. Each division ends with a doxology (41:13; 72:18,19; 89:52; 106:48; 150).
- IV. Classification of Psalms.
 - A. Lament or petition psalms (Ps.3 and 41).
 - B. Thanksgiving or praise psalms (Ps.30 and 65).
 - C. Trust in God psalm (Ps.4).
 - D. Psalm about Jerusalem (Ps.48).
 - E. Didactic and wisdom psalms (Ps.1, 37, and 119).
 - F. Imprecatory psalms (Ps.7, 35, 55, 59, 69, 79, 109, 137, and 139).
 - G. Rebound/reversion recovery psalm (Ps.6).
 - H. Psalm of pilgrims (Ps.120).
 - I. Creation psalms (Ps.8 and 9).
 - J. Psalm of the Exodus (Ps.78).
 - K. Messianic psalms (Ps.2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 45, 72, 110, 118).
 - L. Enthronement psalm (Ps.47).
- V. Nature of Hebrew Poetry.
 - A. Hebrew poetry is not based on rhyme or meter, but on rhythm and parallelism.
 - B. The rhythm is not achieved by balanced numbers of accented and unaccented lines, but by tonal stress on key words.
 - C. In parallelism the writer states the concept in the first line, then reinforces it by various means in the succeeding line or lines.
 - D. Synonymous parallelism has the second line repeating essentially the idea in the first line (Ps.3:1).
 - E. Antithetic parallelism has the second line stating an idea opposite to that of the first (Ps.1:6).
 - F. Synthetic parallelism has the second or succeeding lines add to or develop the idea of the first (Ps.1:1,2).
 - G. Emblematic parallelism has the second line elevate the thought of the first, often by the use of a simile (Ps.42:1).
 - H. Parallelism is not restricted to two lines, but may extend to strophes (smaller units of a few lines) and stanzas (longer units).
 - I. Psalm 119 is an alphabetical acrostic of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

