

An Old Testament Glance

The Poetry Books – Psalms, Part 1

Written	1400 – 450 B.C.	Period*	Timeless	Author	Multiple People
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*Dates are sometimes hard to know. They can vary depending on scholars & sources of information.

Psalm 1-41	Book 1	Possible Common Theme – God is Beside us
Psalm 42-72	Book 2	Possible Common Theme – God goes Before us
Psalm 73-89	Book 3	Possible Common Theme – God is all Around us
Psalm 90-106	Book 4	Possible Common Theme – God is Above us
Psalm 107-150	Book 5	Possible Common Theme – God is Among us

The large book of Psalms is obviously broken into 5 smaller books which you see in the chart above. A "Psalm" is a "Song of Praise". The book of Psalms is a hymn book (a book of poetry) for the Jewish people.

*Some think that the 5 books of the Psalms each refer to the first 5 books of the Bible (The Pentateuch). **Fill in the chart.***

Chapters of the Psalms	Book # of the Psalms	Related Pentateuch Book
1-41	1	Genesis
42-72	2	
73-89	3	
90-106	4	
107-150	5	

To be honest, it is not easy trying to divide or outline the Psalms. I see no need to try forcing a theme.

Obviously, the Jewish scribes & priests who organized the Psalms had a reason for dividing it into 5 smaller divisions.

1. How do each of the 5 sections **begin**? Write out the verse.

a. Psalm 1:1 _____

b. Psalm 42:1 _____

c. Psalm 73:1 _____

d. Psalm 90:1 _____

e. Psalm 107:1 _____

That may not have helped you much. Let's look closer.

*"**Blessed** is the man who does not walk like the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1) could be referring to the struggles of following God (like in **Genesis**).*

*"**As** the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, Lord" (Psalm 42:1) could be remembering the wilderness wandering (like in **Exodus**).*

*"**Truly** God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart" (Psalm 73:1) could be referring to the guidelines given by God for a pure life (like in **Leviticus**).*

*"**Lord**, You have been our dwelling place in all generations" (Psalm 90:1) could be reminding the Jews of the Tabernacle in the wilderness that travelled with them (where God's presence was) (like in **Numbers**).*

*"**Oh**, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever" (Psalm 107:1) could be reminding the Jews of the merciful second chance that God gives to the generations that follow failure (like in **Deuteronomy**).*

2. What do you think of this analysis of the 5 sections of Psalms?

3. Let's take another step. Summarize how all the sections **end**?

a. Psalm 41:13 _____

b. Psalm 72:18 _____

c. Psalm 89:52 _____

d. Psalm 106:48 _____

e. Psalm 150:6 _____

Isn't that interesting? It sounds like words in a hymn book. It looks like someone designed them that way. Well, duh!!

The words "bless", "blessing", or "blessed" are obviously the same word but they have a different emphasis depending on who is getting blessed.

To us it would mean "good fortune, comfort, protection, full of God's grace".

To God it would mean "You are great, I honor You & worship You."

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The Poetry Books – Psalms, Part 2

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Psalm 1-41	Book 1	Possible Common Theme – God is Beside us
Psalm 42-72	Book 2	Possible Common Theme – God goes Before us
Psalm 73-89	Book 3	Possible Common Theme – God is all Around us
Psalm 90-106	Book 4	Possible Common Theme – God is Above us
Psalm 107-150	Book 5	Possible Common Theme – God is Among us

The PURPOSE of the Psalms is pretty incredible: first, to provide a musical & poetical way to express thanks to God to FOR WHO HE IS AND FOR ALL THAT HE HAS DONE, and second, to express our true feelings, emotions, and fears out loud to others or to God.

1. Read the following "Favorite Psalms" in your Bible. Check the ones that really blessed you right now. (Yes, you can check them all if you wish)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Psalm 19:1
<input type="radio"/> Psalm 27:1
<input type="radio"/> Psalm 23:1
<input type="radio"/> Psalm 46:10 | <input type="radio"/> Psalm 55:22
<input type="radio"/> Psalm 84:10
<input type="radio"/> Psalm 103:11-12
<input type="radio"/> Psalm 118:1 |
|---|--|

Here's mine – Psalm 84:11

THE LORD IS A SUN AND SHIELD TO ME; HE WE WILL PROVIDE GRACE & GLORY FOR ME. NO GOOD WILL HE WITHHOLD FROM ME IF I LIVE A RIGHTEOUS LIFE.

Look at the beginning or end of the following Psalms. Who wrote them?

2. Psalm 3 _____
3. Psalm 50 _____
4. Psalm 42 _____
5. Psalm 72 _____
6. Psalm 90 _____
7. Psalm 89 _____

Some people study the Psalms by dividing them up by authors. See the chart on the next page.

THE PSALMISTS

DAVID

- Israel's greatest king
- Musician "messiah"
- "Psalms of David" may be written for David, or in his style.
- Designed the temple

73 Psalms
(maybe 12 more)

ASAPH (+ sons)

David's worship leader 12

KORAH (sons)

Major Levite family 11

"ORPHANS"

- No designated psalmist
- Possibly from tradition, or from the scribes who crafted the book

50

MINOR CONTRIBUTORS:

- SOLOMON - 2
- MOSES - 1
- ETHAN - 1
THE EZRAHITE
- HEMAN - 1-ish
THE EZRAHITE

Another way to study the Psalms is by types. Match the categories.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| ___ Praise Psalms | a. A cry to God for help (6,13,79) |
| ___ Wisdom Psalms | b. Refers to King David & Christ (2,110) |
| ___ Royal Psalms | c. Give honor to God (30,34) |
| ___ Thanksgiving Psalms | d. Express gratitude to God (30,92) |
| ___ Lament Psalms | e. Guidelines for godly living (37,49) |

When do we read Psalms?

- When we are joyful (Psalms of praise & gratitude).
- When we are sad (Psalms of Lament & Despair)
- When we are ignorant (Psalms of Wisdom)

8. What Psalm have you needed lately? _____
Why? _____
