

NAME

It is called "Psalms" from the anglicized "Psalmoi" in LXX (Ψαλμοι "psalmoi" = "songs to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument")

The Hebrews called it "Book of Praises" (סֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים "tehillim" = "Praise songs" or "praises") - it was both a prayer book and hymn book for Israel

Early Christians called it the "Psalter" (poems set to music)

The New Testament designates this collection as Βιβλῶν Ψαλμῶν "biblos psalmon" ("Book of Psalms") in Luke 20:42; Acts 1:20

AUTHOR

The book of Psalms is traditionally ascribed to David. It is evident, however, that David did not write every psalm. The greater portion of these psalms were written by David and, therefore, general authorship of the book does belong to him.

- David (73): 3-9;11-32; 34-41; 51-65; 68-70; 86; 101; 103; 108-110; 122; 124; 131; 133; 138-145) - also Psalm 2 (Acts 4)

Six others are listed in Psalms as authors:

- Asaph - David's choir director (12): 50; 73-83
- Sons of Korah (10): 42; 44,45; 47-49; 84,85; 87
- Solomon (2): 72; 127
- Heman (Kohathite) (1): 88
- Ethan (Mararite) (1) : 89
- Moses (1): 90

Others identified by the LXX (the LXX has 151 psalms - #151 focuses on the Lord's choosing/anointing of David):

- Jeremiah: 137 - a psalm of exile
- Haggai and Zechariah (2): 146,147
- Ezra: 119 - the word
- Hezekiah (15): 120-134 (Isaiah 38:20)

The rest (50 of them are anonymous) are called "orphaned Psalms"

It is generally agreed that Ezra the scribe collected and arranged the Psalms in their present order. His scheme of arranging was not that of chronology but of progression of thought and by the usage of the names of God.

DATE

The book of Psalms is a collection of psalms written between 1400 - 500 B.C.

THEME

Halley page 43: "*National Hymnbook of Israel*"

Mitchell: The Book of Devotion

The Psalms hold the central place in the Bible as the heart of both testaments. They begin with God blessing man (Psalm 1:1), and end with man blessing God (Psalm 150), while in between is to be found every degree of human experience as seen in the light of eternity. The Psalms are truly the “heart throb” of the Bible. Today we pride ourselves in our intellectualism, but our emotions are equally of value. To move men to pious trust, we must shoot our arrows at the heart not the head.

WCBS Notes:

The purpose of the Psalms is: 1) To express the religious sentiments of God’s people through the whole range of human experiences; 2) to voice the yearnings of Messianic expectations and Millennial hopes; and 3) to give an eloquent expression of the feelings of the writers and also to enable others with kindred feelings, unexpressed, to join in personal worship, praise, confession, intercession, and thanksgiving to God.

The Book of Psalms can legitimately be called “The Hymnbook of the Ages” - no other hymnal has been used so long or by so many people.

Key Word (Nelson’s): Worship - The central theme of the Book of Psalms is worship—God is worthy of all praise because of who He is, what He has done, and what He will do. His goodness extends through all time and eternity.

Key Verses (Nelson’s):

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight; O Lord, my rock and my redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

“My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:21).

Key Chapter (Nelson’s): Psalm 100 - So many of the favorite chapters of the Bible are contained in the Book of Psalms that it is difficult to select the key chapter among such psalms as Psalms 1; 22; 23; 24; 37; 72; 100; 101; 119; 121; and 150. The two central themes of worship and praise are beautifully wed in Psalm 100.

Outline:

For outline see: <http://www.muncherian.com/DivisionsofPsalms.pdf>

The Hebrew text prefaces 116 psalms with inscriptions. The origin of these inscriptions date to antiquity (before the LXX) but are not necessarily authoritative. They include musical inscriptions, the designated use of the psalm in public worship, historical headings, and notes on the authorship. The LXX gives a title to all but two psalms.

Though the inscriptions are not part of the original text, they are worthy of consideration, for they represent man’s first effort to write an introduction to the psalms.

The musical inscriptions usually relate to the psalm preceding the title rather than to the psalm following. Listing of musical instruments: Halley page 298

RECIPIENTS

The psalms are written to be sung by God's people. The original recipients were the Hebrews. However, the Book of Psalms has been cherished as a book of worship by believers of all nations.

CONTRIBUTION TO CANON

- One of the most Messianic books in the Old Testament - more references to the Messiah than in any other Old Testament book
- Most quoted book in the New Testament - 283 Old Testament quotes in the New Testament - i.e. 116 from Psalms / 83 from Deuteronomy
- Spirit of Worship - most experiential book in the Bible
- Great Praise Book of the Bible
- Prayer (teaching on) - 1/2 psalms begin by addressing God - others: cry to God in distress
- Thanksgiving - 22 out of 36 Old Testament references of giving thanks to God in Old Testament
- It is of major value to us as a source of devotional material
- It is medicine for the soul

RESOURCES

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoizian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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