

Psalms

Breakdown

- The book is named for the type of writing: psalms which means “songs of praise”. Many of the psalms were originally put to music and used during worship in the Jewish temple.
- Psalms is a collection of 150 poems composed by at least seven different writers over the course of about 1000 years. After the Israelites returned from exile in Babylon, Ezra the priest compiled and arranged all the present psalms together in the Book of Psalms we know today.

Main Points

- The psalms are the expression of human experience written through divine inspiration. Psalms is a book of prayers and hymns meant to draw our attention from ourselves to God. The psalms highlight mankind’s position before a perfect, holy God, and this sets God in His rightful place - as Ruler over all people as well as the world.
- Through singing praises, giving thanks, and crying out for help, the psalms remind us that we are not alone in the struggles, concerns, and uncertainties in life. Psalms shows us that no matter what we go through, God listens to us when we call on Him. He walks beside us, goes before us, encamps around us, reigns above us, dwells among us, and loves us with an overflowing never-ending love. He is God, and He deserves our praise.

Did you know?

- There are 150 Psalms which most people think make it the longest book of the Bible, but by word count, it is actually the third longest. Do you know which 2 books are longer?
- Only about half of the Psalms were written by David. Another third are anonymous, and there were at least 6 other contributing writers of the Psalms. Who were they?
- The entire book of Psalms is divided into 5 sections that correspond with the first 5 books of the Bible. Which sections correspond with which books?
- Do you know which is the most memorized Psalm? It was written by David in remembrance of his first job for his father.
- Psalm 90 is one of the oldest chapters in the Bible. Do you know who wrote it and when?
- Do you know which Psalm is the most well-known for God’s protection? The writer is unknown, but he writes about God keeping us safe under His wings.
- During the Passover celebration, it was customary for Jews to recite Psalm 136 and Psalms 113-118. Jesus would have recited these at the Last Supper with the disciples.

Further Thought

- The key word in the Psalms is “praise” which appears 211 times compared with 129 occurrences in all the rest of the Bible combined. What does this mean for us?
- David and the other writers of the Psalms were very open with God about their feelings, even questioning where God was at times. How can we apply this to our lives?
- Many of the psalms start on a negative, complaining note, but at some point, they pivot, remembering who God is and that He is always on our side. What can we learn from this?