

Purpose

To express praise, worship, and confession to God

Meaning of Psalms

Songs of Praise, Hymns

Penmen

David wrote 73 psalms; Asaph wrote 12; the sons of Korah wrote 9; Solomon wrote 2; Heman, Ethan, and Moses each wrote one; and 51 psalms are anonymous. The New Testament ascribes two of the anonymous psalms to David (2, 95; see *Acts 4:25; Hebrews 4:7*).

Setting

For the most part, the psalms were not intended to be narrations of events. However, they often parallel events in history, such as David's flight from Saul and his sin with Bathsheba.

Key Verse

"Let everything that lives sing praises to the Lord!"
Psalms 150:6

Special Features

This book is the largest in the Bible with 150 chapters. It also has the longest chapter in the Bible, which is *Psalms 119*. *Psalms* is the most quoted book from the Old Testament.

An Overview (150 Chapters)

- **Book I (1:1-41:13)** *mainly written by David*
Like *Genesis*, it discusses creation, human sin, and redemption by God
- **Book II (42:1-72:20)** *by David, sons of Korah*
Like *Exodus*, it portrays Israel as ruined and, then, recovered
- **Book III (73:1-89:52)** *by Asaph or descendants*
Like *Leviticus*, it discusses the Temple and holiness
- **Book IV (90:1-106:48)** *by unknown authors*
Like *Numbers*, it discusses Israel's relationship with other nations
- **Book V (107:1-150:6)** *mainly written by David*
Like *Deuteronomy*, it praises God and His Word

Major Themes

- **Praise:** Psalms are songs of praise to God. Praise is recognizing, appreciating, and expressing God's greatness. Focusing our thoughts on God moves us to praise Him.
- **Forgiveness:** Many psalms are intense prayers asking God for forgiveness. God forgives us when we confess our sin and turn from it. When we receive His forgiveness, we move from alienation to intimacy, from guilt to love.
- **Thankfulness:** We are grateful to God for His personal concern, help, and mercy. Not only does He protect, guide, and forgive us, but His creation provides everything that we need. By thanking Him often, we develop spontaneity in our prayer life.