

## Psalms: Poetry and Prayers of the People of God

*Who wrote them?* Most of the Psalms are \_\_\_\_\_. Of the attributed authors, most belong to \_\_\_\_\_. Solomon and \_\_\_\_\_ are other notable authors.

*True or False:* The Psalms are randomly organized groups of writings.

Introduction: Psalms \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Book 1: Psalms \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ : David's dealings with \_\_\_\_\_.

Book 2: Psalms \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ : David's \_\_\_\_\_.

Book 3: Psalms \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ : Babylonian \_\_\_\_\_.

Book 4: Psalms \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ on the exile.

Book 5: Psalms \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ : Hopeful \_\_\_\_\_.

Conclusion: Psalms \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ Psalms.

The Psalms are a continual movement from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. The collection as a whole, the "5 Books" themselves, and even individual Psalms reflect this movement.

### **Genres** (*Adapted from Dr. Reed Lessing's Syllabus for "Psalms and Writings"*)

There are too many genres of Psalms to list, and many of them overlap, but they can give us context to help guide our reading and reflection. Here are a few significant ones:

\_\_\_\_\_ psalms: 1, 19, 37, 73, 111, 119, 127, 133, 139

- These Psalms reflect on the wisdom found in God's word, the gifts of wisdom, a desire for wisdom, or frustration with foolishness.

\_\_\_\_\_ psalms: 2, 21, 45, 89, 101, 132, 144. Enthronement Psalms: 47, 93, 96-99

- These psalms celebrate the kings, especially David and the King of kings – the Messiah. They thank God for wise rulers, they celebrate victory and the coming Messiah.

Psalms of \_\_\_\_\_: 3-7, 10-14, 16, 17, 22, 23, 25-28, 31, 35, 36, 38-43, 51-59, 61-64, 69, 73, 86, 88, 102, 109, 130. Community Laments: 44, 60, 74, 77, 79, 83, 89, 94, 123, 126, 129, 137

- These psalms are cries of anguish and pain over defeat, sin, death, pain, depression, and anything else that troubles the Christian heart.

\_\_\_\_\_ psalms: 35, 69, 79, 109

- These psalms are violent cries to God for justice. While offensive to many of our sensibilities, they are reflections of the deep hurts that afflict the human heart. Also worth noting: These psalms ultimately leave the judgment in God's hands – God curses in the active, the psalms curse in the passive. Truly vengeance belongs to the Lord, even in the imprecatory psalms.

Psalms of \_\_\_\_\_: 9, 18, 30-32, 40, 66, 92, 116, 138. Community praise: 106, 124, 129. Hymns: 8, 19, 29, 33, 57, 65, 66, 89, 100, 100, 103, 104, 111, 113, 117, 134-136, 139, 145-150

- These psalms rejoice in God's manifold graciousness and power.

Psalms of \_\_\_\_\_: 8, 19, 104, 139

\_\_\_\_\_ psalms: 24, 66, 107, 118, 121, 122. Psalms of Ascent: 120-134 (When traveling up to Jerusalem). Hallel psalms: 113-118 (Sung at the Passover meal (Mt. 26:30) and other festivals).

- These psalms were used in the "Church" life of God's people.

**How to read the Psalms:** Pastor Pay's three step-process:

1. **Find any historical or literary context you can.** Do we know who wrote it? What events is it in reaction to? What genre(s) is it? Let these questions guide you into the heart / mindset of the reader so we can ask: When have Christians of all time and place found solidarity in this psalm?
2. **Find the poetry.** What is repeated with intensity? What images are put forward? How does this offer a window into the writer's heart?
3. **Find the Prayer.** How is their relationship with God being used or expressed? What comfort (or anguish!) do they find in God?

Example: Psalm 1

*Context: It is a wisdom psalm, be alert for how God's Word and wisdom is held in high regard. It is the beginning of book 1 and of the entire psalter, how can it frame how we think of all the psalms?*

1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

*Note the repetition with intensity! This is Hebrew **poetry**. To walk with fools is bad enough, let alone to sit down with them... May we guard ourselves from foolishness and seek God's Wisdom.*

2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

*Here is a **poetic** contrast and the exaltation of the Word of God. Night and day the child of God can find wisdom in His Word – we **pray** His Word would dwell richly among us!*

3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

*A **poetic** image of tranquility, peace, and production.*

4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; 6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

*In a world that is often so un-just we have a prayer of confidence to the Lord that He will ultimately remember those who seek wisdom in the Lord - much like the next 149 psalms will exemplify.*

**Conclusion:** Don't just *read* the psalms - meditate on them, pray them. Find solidarity with the people of God who have also lived in this broken world and find hope in the Wisdom of God made flesh, the Royal Son of David, Jesus our Lord! He is the source and fulfillment of the Christian life and salvation!