

## THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Text: Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:32-35

### I. TITLE.

A. The book of Psalms was the hymn book of Israel. It was left untitled in the ancient Hebrew manuscript, though many of the individual songs were titled.

B. The term "Psalms" as a title for this book of the Bible comes from the Septuagint (LXX).

### II. NUMBER AND ARRANGEMENT.

A. The book of Psalms in the Hebrew Bible contains 150 psalms. It is divided into five divisions or "books", probably corresponding to the five books of Moses.

B. The LXX contains one additional psalm not found in any available Hebrew manuscript. Also, the 150 psalms of the Hebrew Scriptures are not divided in the same places as they are in the Hebrew manuscripts, though there is basic correspondence. For instance, in the LXX, Psalm 9 is divided into two psalms, thus Psalm 10 is called Psalm 11 in the LXX, etc. In the area of Psalm 146/147, the two numbering systems begin to correspond again.

C. In 1956, a leather scroll of some psalms was found in the Dead Sea scrolls. The scroll contained 36 of the psalms that are in our Bibles, plus seven other similar psalms, of which four were previously undiscovered. There was evidence that Israel had many other psalms in addition to the 150 inspired songs found in our Scriptures. In fact, information in the Dead Sea scrolls indicate that David alone had written 4,050 songs.

D. There are, of course, other poetical psalm-type writings in a few of the other Old Testament books, notably Job, Song of Solomon and Lamentations.

### III. DATE AND AUTHORSHIP.

A. Probably the oldest of the Psalms is Psalm 90, attributed to Moses about 1450 b.c.

B. The majority of the Psalms were written by David, about 1,000 b.c. The "titles" of the Psalms in the Hebrew manuscripts, though not a part of the inspired text, are believed to be generally accurate. They attribute 73 of the psalms to David. Inspired New Testament writers attribute to him at least two others, and the LXX attributes as many as 88 to him. It is likely, that he also wrote some of the Psalms not attributed to any particular writer.

C. At least two Psalms were written by Solomon. The LXX attributes one Psalm to Jeremiah and four to Haggai-Zechariah. Several other writers are credited with one or more Psalms.

### IV. MATTERS OF EMPHASIS.

A. God is praised as Creator of the universe. More is said about the creation in the book of Psalms than in the book of Genesis. 8:3-5; 24:1-2; 74:12-17

B. Israel's chosen-ness as a nation. Their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, etc. 105:6-15. See also 33:12; 106:5; 135:4, etc.

C. The righteousness of God and His laws. 119:97-112.

D. The sinfulness of man and his need to acknowledge his guilt and seek God's mercy. 51:1-2; Psalm 14.

E. The Messiah and His coming kingdom. 14 Psalms are either partly or entirely Messianic: 2, 8, 16, 22, 34, 41, 45, 69, 72, 89, 109, 110, 118, 132.

### V. USE OF THE PSALMS.

A. They constituted the hymn book of Israel from the time of David to the end of the Old Testament period. Praise, Worship, Thanksgiving.

- B. They also were used in teaching for the history contained in many of them. For instance, Psalm 18 found its way into the historical record of 1 Samuel 22, and Psalms 96 and 105 are recorded in 1 Chronicles 16.
- C. They were accepted by the Hebrews as inspired Scripture. Satan used Psalm 91:11-12 in seeking to entice Jesus to sin, Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:10-11.
- D. Psalm 118 was almost certainly the "hymn" Jesus and His apostles sang after the institution of the Lord's supper. Jesus quoted from Psalm 22:1 while He was hanging on the cross.
- E. The early Christians sang *Psalms*, hymns, and spiritual songs in public worship and in private devotions, Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; James 5:13.
- F. Perhaps most significant of all, there are more quotations from the Psalms in the New Testament than from any other Old Testament book--at least 116.

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, April 29, 1994  
Shippensburg, PA, July 17, 1995 (meeting)  
South Loop, Taylor, TX, June 16, 1996 (meeting)  
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, June 3, 2001