



*Lesson 1*  
**Introduction to  
the Book of  
Psalms**



# Introduction to the Book of Psalms



- 150 Psalms
- Of 219 OT quotations, 116 are from the Psalms
- Speak of Jesus – *Luke 24:44*
- Written over 1,000 years.
- Different from Greek poetry – *“Greek poets, as Adam Clarke has noted, had subjects that ‘were either a fabulous theology, a false and ridiculous religion, chimerical wars, absurd heroism, impure love, agriculture, national sports, or hymns in honor of gods more corrupt than the most profligate of men.’” (pg. 5)*



# Why Study the Psalms Today?

- Value of the OT – *Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Acts 2:25-28, 34-35 (Psalm 16; 110)*
- For our own worship in song – *Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13*

## **A Hymn and Prayer Book**

- Used as Israel's songbook and prayer book.
  - Teaches us to pray and express our emotions.
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# The Poetic Nature of Psalms



- *“Poetry is designed, not to convey facts alone, but to formulate a concentrated, imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound, and rhythm.” (pg. 6-7)*
- *“John Goldingay has written that, ‘The Psalms make it possible to say things that are otherwise ‘unsayable.’” (pg. 7)*
- The Psalms help us avoid mere intellectualism. Loving God involves the intellect and the will, but it is an emotion – *Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37-40*





## Designed for Use with Stringed Instruments



- *Psalmos* – a set piece of music, i.e. a sacred ode (accompanied with the voice, harp or other instrument; a “psalm”); collectively, the book of the Psalms (STRONG)
  - “a striking, twanging” (THAYER)
  - Hebrew – *zamar* – “to pluck”
- New Testament command – *Ephesians 5:19* – “*singing and making melody in your heart*”
  - “*making melody*” – *psallō* – to twitch or twang, i.e. to play on a stringed instrument (STRONG)
    - The instrument is the heart.



## Designed for Use with Stringed Instruments



- Noted at the beginning of some Psalms – *Psalms 4:0; 5:0; 6:0; 8:0 (Instrument of Gath?); 12:0; 54:0; 55:0; 61:0; etc.*
  - SANG – *Psalms 7:0*
  - SPOKE – *Psalms 18:0*
  - *Psalms 150* – trumpet, lute, harp, timbrel, stringed instruments, flutes, cymbals.
- What about the musical accompaniment? Why did God not reveal and preserve the musical notes, but He did the content?
  - *Psalms 9:0* – to the tune of? What is the tune?
  - *Psalms 22:0; 45:0; 53:0; 56:0; 57:0; 58:0; 59:0; 60:0; etc.*



## Designed for Use with Stringed Instruments



- New Testament speaks of singing – *Matthew 26:30* (“sung”); *Mark 14:26* (“sung”); *Acts 16:25* (“sang”); *Romans 15:9* (“sing”); *1 Corinthians 14:15* (“sing”); *Hebrews 2:12* (“sing”); *James 5:13* (“sing”)
- Silence does not authorize – *Hebrews 7:12-14*



# Authorship



- **David** (*2 Samuel 23:1*) – many, but not all.
  - 73 identified; 48 anonymous, but David is possibility.
  - *Psalms 2, 95* attributed by HS to **David**. (*Acts 4:25-26; Heb. 4:6-7*)
- **Asaph** – 12
- **Korah** – 12
- **Solomon** – *Psalms 72, 127* (*cf. 1 Kings 4:32*)
- **Moses** – *Psalms 90*
- **Heman** – *Psalms 88*
- **Ethan** – *Psalms 89*





# Authenticity and Place in the Canon



- “For Christians, however, it suffices that the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament was accepted as divinely authoritative by our Lord and his apostles.” (Bruce, F.F., Books and the Parchments, e-book, Kingsley Books, 2017)
- “We may, however, follow our Lord, who placed the imprimatur of His infallible authority upon the books of the Old Testament.” (E.J. Young, “The Canon of the Old Testament,” in Revelation and the Bible, 168) (Archer, Gleason L., A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, 85)



# Authenticity and Place in the Canon



- “Jesus is not only the key to the divine nature of the Old Testament, He is also the key to the extent of the Old Testament. The ‘extent’ of the Old Testament refers to the question of which books belong in it.” (Geisler, Norman L., A Popular Survey of the Old Testament, 15)



# Themes/Practical Value



## **Themes**

- The portrayal of God.
- A picture of man.
- The need to practice righteousness.

## **Practical Value**

- Presents models of faith and devotion to God.
  - Presents truth in terms of human experience.
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