

The Psalms: God's Treasury of Prayers and Songs

The Five Books (Divisions) of the Psalms

Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5
Psalms 1-41	Psalms 42-72	Psalms 73-89	Psalms 90-106	Psalms 107-150
This phrase ends the first four books: <i>Blessed be the Lord God of Israel</i> (41:13, 72:18-19, 89:52, 106:48)				111-117 Hallelujah collection 120-134 Songs of Ascent

Calvin on the Psalms

“Whatever may serve to encourage us when we pray to God is taught in this book. Calling upon God is one of the principal means of securing our safety, and in proportion to the proficiency, which a man shall have attained in understanding the Psalms, will be his knowledge of their celestial doctrine. Through them, we find that we have permission and freedom granted to lay open before God the infirmities we would be ashamed to confess to men. They are also our infallible rule for directing the sacrifice of our praise to God, praise which he declares to be most precious in his sight. The Psalms are replete with all the precepts which serve to frame our life in holiness, piety, and righteousness; yet they principally teach and train us to bear our crosses. By their instruction, we humbly renounce the guidance of our own affections and submit ourselves entirely to the Lord, leaving him to govern us, so that the afflictions which are bitterest to our nature become sweet because they proceed from him.” – John Calvin

The Poetic Character of the Psalms

Parallelism: Two or more symmetrically constructed phrases or sentences occurring one after another

- Semantic Parallelism – Synonyms (Psalm 2:3), Antonyms (1:6), Similar Pairs (2:8)
- Progressive Parallelism – Cause and Effect (6:7), Sequence (1:1), Deduction (4:3) Explanation (5:10b)
- Grammatical Parallelism – Parts of Speech (18:25-26), Ellipsis: a piece of the parallel missing (18:41)

Meter: The basic rhythmic structure of a poetic line or a verse (seldom regular in the Hebrew language)

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises. Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of a psalm. — Psalm 98:4-5 NKJV

The Authors of the Psalms

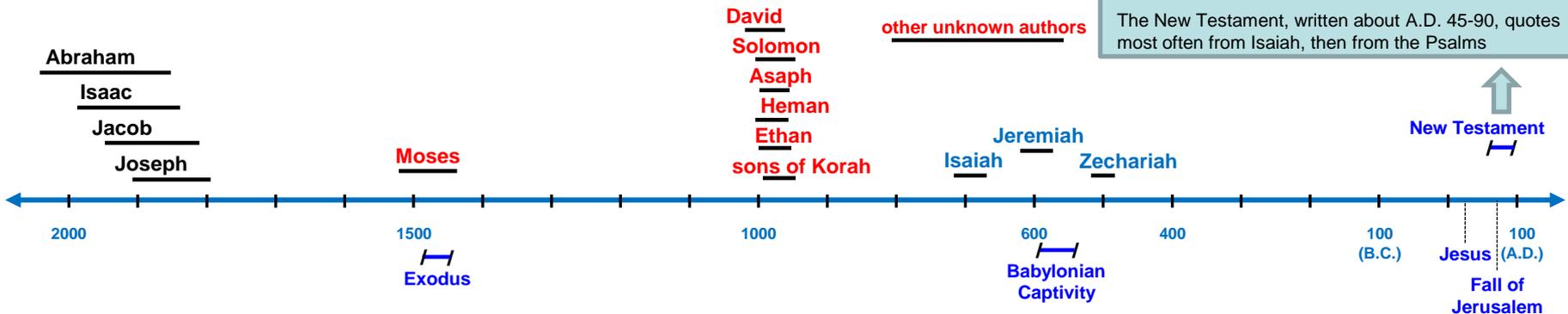
Moses, writer of one psalm (Psalm 90)	David, writer of 80 psalms	Solomon, writer of two psalms
Asaph (“collector”), a Levite, a leader of David’s choir; writer of Psalm 50 and 73-83 (1 Chron. 6:39)	Heman (“faithful”), Psalm 88; Ethan (“enduring”), Psalm 89	Levites, Ezrahites (derived from the name Zerah, 1 Chron. 2:6)
the sons of Korah (“baldness”), Levites perhaps 10 psalms, per subtitles (1 Chron. 9:19)	others (anonymous), writing as late as 500 B.C.	note: psalm subtitles are not inspired, but very ancient

New Testament Scriptures

Though divided into five sections by his day, Jesus speaks of the Psalms as just one book — Luke 20:42

The Lord says they testify of him, just as does the rest of “the Law and the Prophets” — Luke 24:44

The New Testament, written about A.D. 45-90, quotes most often from Isaiah, then from the Psalms



Empires that ruled the land of Palestine

