An Introduction to the Psalms

Compiled by

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An Introduction to the Psalms Studying the Psalms

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V. Types of Psalms

- A. <u>Individual and communal lament psalms, or prayers for God's deliverance</u> (3-7; 12; 13; 22; 25-28; 35; 38-40; 42-44; 51; 54-57; 59-61; 63; 64; 69-71; 74; 79; 80; 83; 85; 86; 88; 90; 102; 109; 120; 123; 130; and 140-143).
- B. <u>Thanksgiving psalms</u> consisting of praise to God for His gracious acts (8; 18; 19; 29; 30; 32-34; 36; 40; 41; 66; 103-106; 111; 113; 116; 117; 124; 129; 135; 136; 138; 139; 146-148; and 150).
- Enthronement psalms which describe God's sovereign rule (47; 93; and 96-99).
- D. <u>Pilgrimage psalms</u> which were sung by worshipers as they traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish festivals (43; 46; 48; 76; 84; 87: and 120-134).

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- E. Royal psalms which portray the reign of the earthly king as well as of the heavenly king of Israel (2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 89; 101; 110; 132; and 144).
- F. Wisdom psalms which instruct the worshiper in the way of wisdom and righteousness (1; 37; and 119)
- G. Imprecatory psalms in which the worshiper invokes God's wrath and judgment against His enemies (7; 35; 40; 55; 58; 59; 69; 79; 109; 137; 139; and 144).

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V. Types of Psalms

- H. Messianic psalms.
 - Many of the psalms specifically anticipate the life and ministry of Jesus who came centuries later as the promised Messiah.
 - 2. "Next to Isaiah, the Book of Psalms is the most expressive of the Messianic prophecies and message in the Old Testament. The light of the covenant, to be fulfilled in the coming Messiah, here shines with an extra brilliance" (Deal, page 147).

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V. Types of Psalms

H. Messianic psalms.

- <u>Typical Messianic</u>. The subject of the psalm is in some respects a type of Christ (34:20; 69:4, 9).
- Typical Prophetic. Language is used which describes the psalmist's present experience but which points beyond his own life and becomes historically true only in Christ (22).
- 3. <u>Indirectly Messianic</u>. At the time of the psalm's composition, it referred to a king or the house of David in general but it awaited final fulfillment in Christ (2; 45; 72).
- Purely Prophetic. Refers solely to Christ without reference to any other son of David (110).
- Enthronement. Anticipates the coming of God and the consummation of His kingdom in the person of Jesus Christ (96-99).

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VI. The Uses of the Book of Psalms

A. The Jews.

- The psalms were originally designed to be a hymnal for use in the temple and synagogue worship.
 - a. Musicians were provided to worship God in the temple and the psalms were composed to be used there.
 - b. The book of Psalms became a manual and guide for the devotional life of the Jews.

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VI. The Uses of the Book of Psalms

A. The Jews.

- 2. According to the Mishnah, certain psalms were recited on certain days of the week in the temple: "The following are the Psalms that were chanted in the Temple.
- "On the first day, they used to say, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein' (Psalm 24).
- "On the second day, they used to say, 'Great is the Lord and highly to be praised, in the city of our God. His Holy mountain' (Psalm 48).
- city of our God, His Holy mountain' (Psalm 48).

 "On the third day, they used to say, 'God standeth in the congregation of God, in the midst of the judges He judgeth' (Psalm 82).
- "On the fourth day, they used to say, 'O Lord, Thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth' (Psalm 94).
- "On the fifth day, they used to say, 'Sing aloud unto God our strength, shout aloud to the God of Jacob' (Psalm 81).
- "On the sixth day, they used to say, 'A Psalm. A song for the sabbath day (Psalm 92). A
 Psalm, a song for the time to come, for the day that will be all sabbath and rest for
 everlasting life" (via "interesting Facts About The Book Of Psalms," Stuart Dauermann, Jews for
 Jesus Newsletter).

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VI. The Uses of the Book of Psalms

B. First century Christians.

- The early church recognized the value of the psalms in praising God and expressing their faith and trust in Him and used them in their public worship (cf. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; James 5:13).
- 2. "After Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper, he and the Twelve sang a hymn (Matthew 26:30). This consisted of the latter half of the Hallel (or Hallelujah) psalms (Psalms 115-118), which the Jews sang after eating the Passover meal" (John T. Willis, The Way of Life Series: Insights from the Psalms, Volume I, page 1).
- 3. "Christ's favorite Old Testament section must have been Psalms because He quoted from it more often than any other book!" (Ramsey, 3).

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VI. The Uses of the Book of Psalms

B. First century Christians.

4. "That Psalms was a favorite book of the first-century believers is shown by the fact that of the New Testament's 283 direct quotations from the Old Testament, 116 are from Psalms" (Irving L. Jensen, Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament, page 272).

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