

# Final Summary of the Book of Psalms

## Final Summary

We began our study of Psalms on November 26, 2017. Now, let's try to form an overall picture of the book in our minds, to provide a context when we read individual Psalms in the future.

### Overview

The Jews divide Psalms into five books, each ending with a refrain praising the Lord (chart).

Psa 41:13 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

Psa 72:18-19 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

Psa 89:52 Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

Psa 106:48 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalms 146-150 Hallelujah!

They held that these correspond to the five books of Moses. This correspondence is not always clear. But some features do differ systematically from one book to the next (Figure 1), including the dominant authors, the relative prominence of the divine names, and the kinds of Psalms.

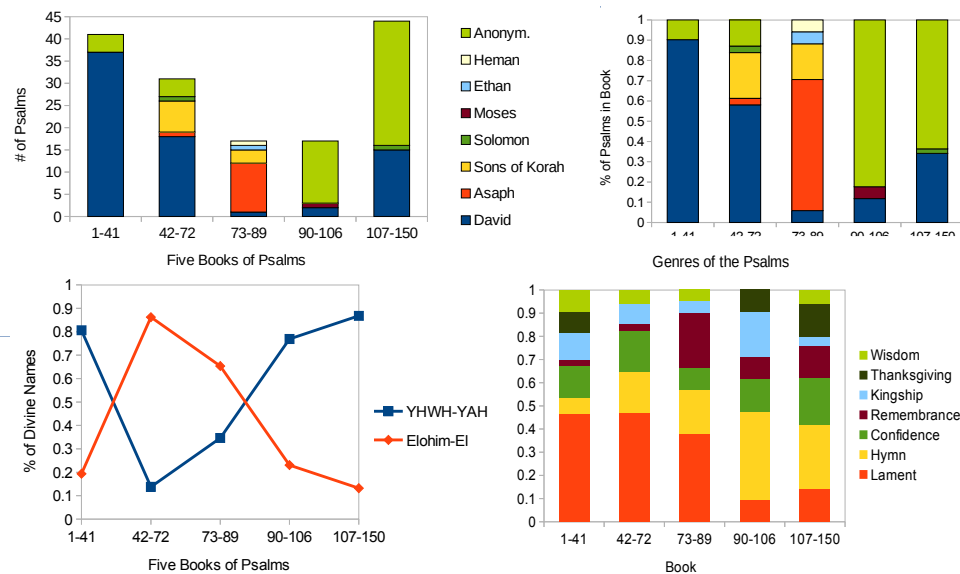


Figure 1: Features of the Five Books of Psalms

The five books reflect an ancient sense that the Psalms have an overall logic. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Bible students focused on individual Psalms, sorted them by genre, and tried to recover how they fit into the liturgy of the tabernacle and temple, but ignored their overall structure and largely discarded their titles as late and unreliable. Since Wilson's 1981 dissertation,<sup>1</sup> guided by the titles, people have recognized an overall organization, the product of

1 G.H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. SBL Dissertation Series 76. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985.

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somebody working after the return from the Babylonian captivity.<sup>2</sup>

We have largely confirmed the characterization of each of the five books by Palmer Robertson:<sup>3</sup>

- 1-41 are drawn from the conflicts of David with Saul and Absalom. The first two Psalms encourage us to see David as the Messianic king appointed by God, and these Psalms describe the *Conflict* between God’s Messiah and rival authorities.
- 42-72 is the book of *Communication*, telling everybody that they must submit to the Messiah. It declares the establishment of the Messianic dynasty and concludes by celebrating the dynasty’s international scope, historically reached during the time of Solomon.
- The nations do not accept this message without challenge. 73-89 is the book of *Devastation*, describing foreign rejection of the Messiah, and ending with Ethan’s lament that God appears to have broken his covenant promise to his Messianic king. Historically, these Psalms reflect the nation’s tumultuous history and ultimate captivity to Assyria and Babylon.
- 90-106, the book of *Maturation*, reflects that even in the absence of a physical king and capital, God is still the king, and his people can still trust in him.
- 107-150 anticipate the *Consummation*. Historically, it reflects the return from captivity, but many of its promises go far beyond to the future establishment of God’s kingdom.

This outline makes sense as a summary of Israelite history through the restoration. But some references in books 4 and 5 (for example, to the coming of the Lord as king, and the subjection of all nations to him) go beyond with the subordinate position of Israel to Persia after the return. With the post-exilic prophets, they expect a future Messianic age (Table 1, chart).<sup>4</sup> Like David after his

Books of Psalms	History	Prophecy	Personal
1-41, Confrontation	David vs. Saul & Absalom	Messiah vs. Herod	The Lord vs. Us
42-72, Communication	Solomon’s rule over all the earth	Messiah’s Earthly Ministry	Sanctification & Witness
73-89, Devastation	Assyria and Babylon	Rejection of Messiah	Persecution
90-106, Maturation	Faith without Temple or Palace	Present Evil Age	Mature Faith
107-150, Consummation	Restoration by Ezra-Nehemiah	Millennium	Blessed Hope

*Table 1: The Books of Psalms as History, Prophecy, and Testimony*

anointing by Samuel, our Lord after his presentation by John the Baptist was *confronted* by hostile authorities who resented his claim of authority. Throughout his earthly ministry, he *communicated* God’s truth to his audiences, calling them to account before God’s standards. He was *devastated*, rejected and put to death by these forces, and his people now live in a pagan environment that Paul calls “this present evil age” (Gal 1:4), looking to a heavenly king, like Israel in the book of *maturation*. Our *consummation* is not the restoration of a puppet kingdom under the Persians and Romans, but the glory of the coming Messianic age.

Isaiah emphasizes that the Messiah, the Servant of the Lord, embodies Israel, so it makes sense that his life recapitulates Israel’s history. Similarly, the NT tells us that our mission is to be

2 The editor may be Ezra, to whom tradition assigns a major role in the compilation of the Jewish Bible.

3 O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015.

4 David Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter* (2003) and *The Songs of Ascents* (2015), Newton Mearns, Scotland: Campbell Publications. Compare the post-Christian Rabbinic Messianic interpretation, S.H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation*, Cincinnati, OH, Hebrew Union College Press, 1974.

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identified with our Lord, to do his work as his body, and we can expect the same five phases.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; **yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Col 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of **the afflictions of Christ in my flesh** for his body's sake, which is the church:

2Ti 2:11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, **we shall also live with him:** 12 If we suffer, **we shall also reign with him.**

We are saved in a *confrontation* between our flesh and God's claims presented by his king. The book of *communication* describes how, as believers, we must deal with sin in our flesh, as well as call others to repent and believe. The book of *devastation* reminds us that the way of the cross does not guarantee comfort. We can expect conflict with the spiritual descendants of those who attacked Israel and sought to destroy our Lord. We emulate the faith of captive Israel shown in the book of *maturation*, as we look forward to the *consummation* of our Lord's return.

## Book 1, Confrontation, 1-41

Psalms 1 and 2 introducing the law and the Messiah, key themes of the entire Psalter. The rest of Book 1 is a chiasm in two themes (Figure 2, chart).

The outermost pair (3-14, 34-41) shows the **weakness** of the Psalmist in the face of his enemies. These Psalms emphasize the *confrontation* that characterizes the entire section. Most of them come from David's history with either Saul or Absalom.

The next group tells how to  **dwell with God**  (15-24, 26-32). 15-24 identify the Messiah of Psalm 2, the King of Glory, as the only one qualified to enter the temple, while at the center, Psalm 19 repeats the emphasis on the law from Psalm 1.

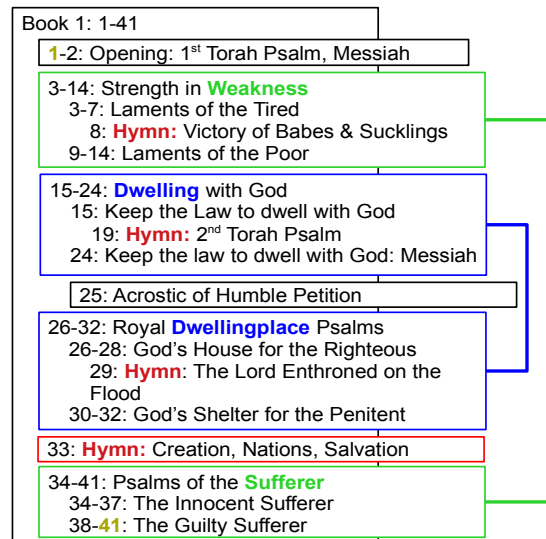


Figure 2: Structure of Book 1

The central Psalm 25 is an acrostic (like 9-10, 34, and 37), and a lament crying for God's help. It corresponds to the weakness sections.<sup>5</sup> It does mention David's adversaries, but strikingly, its three stanzas also ask for **forgiveness** from David's sins (cf. Psalms 38-41) and **guidance** in godliness (Figure 3, chart). The *confrontation* is not only between God's Messiah and his enemies, but between David's flesh and his God. Note the progression in terms for forgiveness.

- In 6-7, God will *not remember* his sins.
- In 11, God will *remove* them.
- In 16-18, God will “forgive” them, נָשָׂא (Strong 5375), literally “pick them up.” This verb also describes how a sacrifice “bears the sin” of the worshipper. Its regular use for God's forgiveness in the OT foreshadows what happened on Calvary, when God in Christ bore our sins for us.

<sup>5</sup> Nils Lund's third law: *Chiasmus in the New Testament*. Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina, 1942, p. 41.

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Each of these descriptions of forgiveness also recalls a set of words from Ex 34:6: compassion רחם, loyal love חסד, truth אמת, and mercy חנן. Exodus 34 explains why God forgave Israel after the golden calf. Throughout the Psalter they are the basis of pleas for God’s forgiveness.

### Book 2, Communication, 42-72

Books 2 and 3 use the divine name Jehovah much less than Elohim, “God” (Figure 1). In Book 2, the focus shifts from establishing Messiah’s kingdom in the face of internal adversaries (Saul and Absalom) to communicating his rule to pagans who do not know the Covenant God of Israel.

Both these books also have many Psalms written by Levitical authors. Book 2 has eight Psalms by Korah and one by Asaph, while Book 3 has eleven by Asaph and three by Korah. Korah was a cousin of Moses who led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, described in Numbers 16, joined by Dathan, Abiram, and On, Reubenites. God slew these men, but Num 26:11 records that “the children of Korah perished not.” In spite of their father’s sin, they were allowed to serve as doorkeepers in the sanctuary, doing servile work (1 Chr 9:19). Even as the janitors of tabernacle and temple, they loved the Lord, and their devotion shows through their Psalms.

Book 2 begins (Figure 4, chart) with laments by the sons of Korah during David’s exile from Absalom, mourning his separation from God’s sanctuary (42-43). Psalm 44 is a group lament, probably in response to an Edomite attack on Jerusalem while David was out of the country warring with Syria and Ammon (2 Samuel 8, cf. Psalm 60). So the confrontation that David faced internally in Book 1 expands to external foes, but Psalm 45 announces the founding of Messiah’s dynasty with the marriage of the king to his bride, the nation, and 46-48 promise God’s support to this throne.

The Messiah reigns but as God’s representative. God calls him “my king” in 2:6. So in 49-50 God summons first all

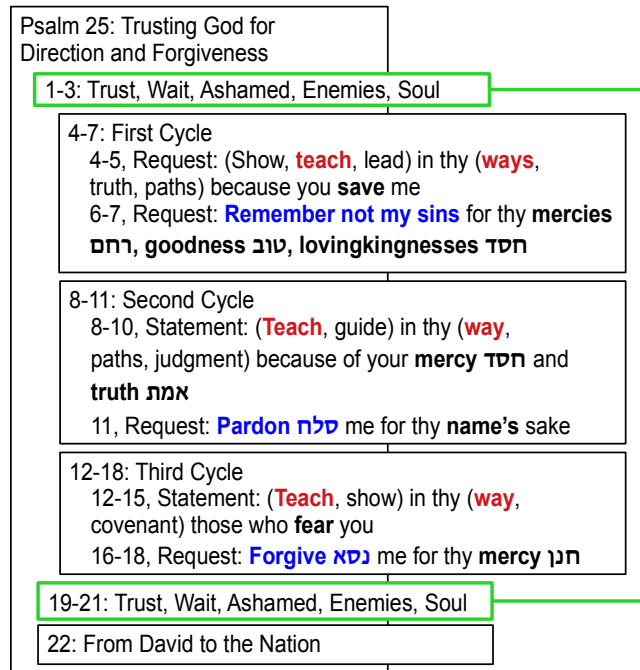


Figure 3: Structure of Psalm 25

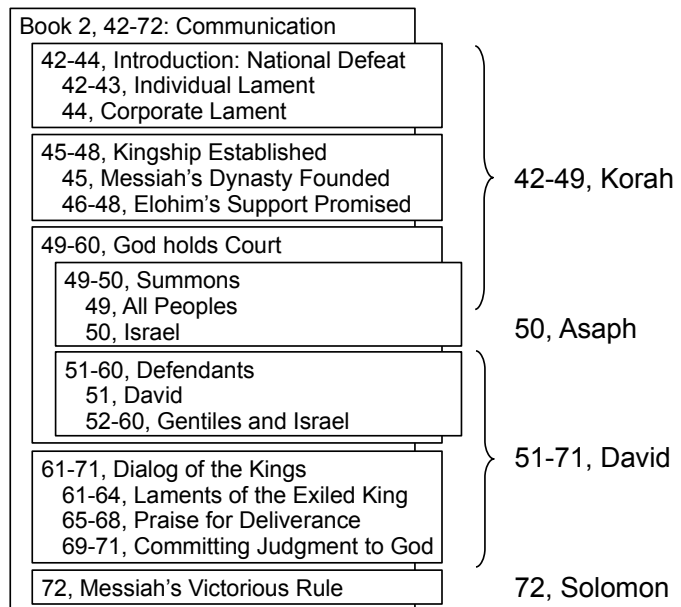


Figure 4: Structure of Book 2, Psalms 42-72

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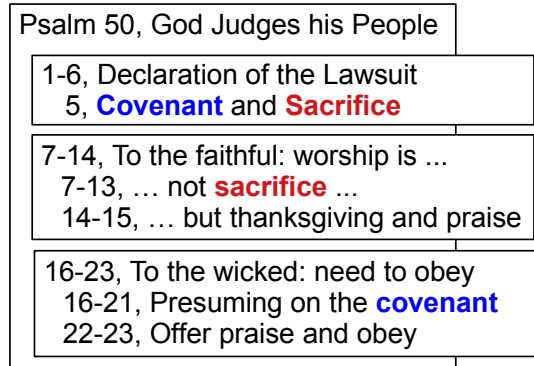
nations, then Israel itself, to stand before him in judgment. In response, ten defendants appear.

The very first defendant is David, in Psalm 51 confessing his sin with Bathsheba. It may seem a radical change that in the NT Gentiles are drawn in together with Israel to enjoy God's salvation, but already in the Psalms, Israel was drawn in with the Gentiles to stand condemned before God.

Psalms 61-71 begin and end with laments of the struggles of the anointed king and his people like Psalms 42-44. But at the center, four song-psalms (65-68) offer praise in the sanctuary and celebrate God's victory. Psalm 72, by Solomon, envisions the glories of the Messianic age.

The overall message of this book is that all nations must answer to God's rule, and his own people are not exempt from this requirement. Recall Psalm 50 (Figure 5, chart). It begins with stereotyped legal language, the *rib*, calling heaven and earth to witness as a king challenges his subjects for breaking covenant. The *rib* appears often throughout the OT, and assumes a covenant relation between the judge and the subject. So Peter reminds us,

1Pe 4:17 For the time is come that **judgment must begin at the house of God**: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?



*Figure 5: Structure of Psalm 50*

Even the heavenly witnesses appear in the NT:

Eph 3:10 To the intent that now **unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places** might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

The body of the Psalm addresses two kinds of people that one finds in congregations of God's people. First (7-14), the true believers are warned against superficiality in worship. Then (16-23) the wicked are uncovered, the professors who are not possessors, and David exhorts them not only to offer praise with their lips but to order their conversation aright (v. 23).

God requires right conduct as well as right confession from his people. This principle is essential to the life of a healthy church. Paul's instructions to Corinth deal with someone who falls in the category of vv. 16-23, a man in the fellowship guilty of fornication (chart).

1Co 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one **no not to eat**. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

He expects them to recognize the sinner, and exclude him from the fellowship of the church. In this context, the command "not to eat" with such a one certainly includes the Lord's table, reflected in Paul's instructions in chapter 11. Twice he warns against unworthy participation. The first condition for worthiness is that we examine ourselves, taking our stand with those in Ps

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50:7-14 to be sure that we are not simply performing an outward ritual:

1Co 11:27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

But there is more. We are also required to “discern the Lord’s body,” which in view of the previous discussion in chapter 5 and the coming context in ch. 12, refers to the local fellowship:

1Co 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning (διακρινω Strong 1252) the Lord's body.

Their tolerance of the fornicator in chapter 5 is an example of unworthy participation. And the consequences are severe, as Paul goes on to emphasize:

1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge (διακρινω) ourselves, we should not be judged κρινω. 32 But when we are judged κρινω, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned κατακρινω with the world.

The message of Book 2 for us as believers is that we must communicate the gospel of repentance and submission to our king to those around us, while recognizing that left to ourselves, we are as sinful as they, and need constantly to watch our own conduct and be accountable to one another.

### Book 3, Devastation, 73-89

In Book 3 (Figure 6, chart), the reduction in the divine name is because the persecution that

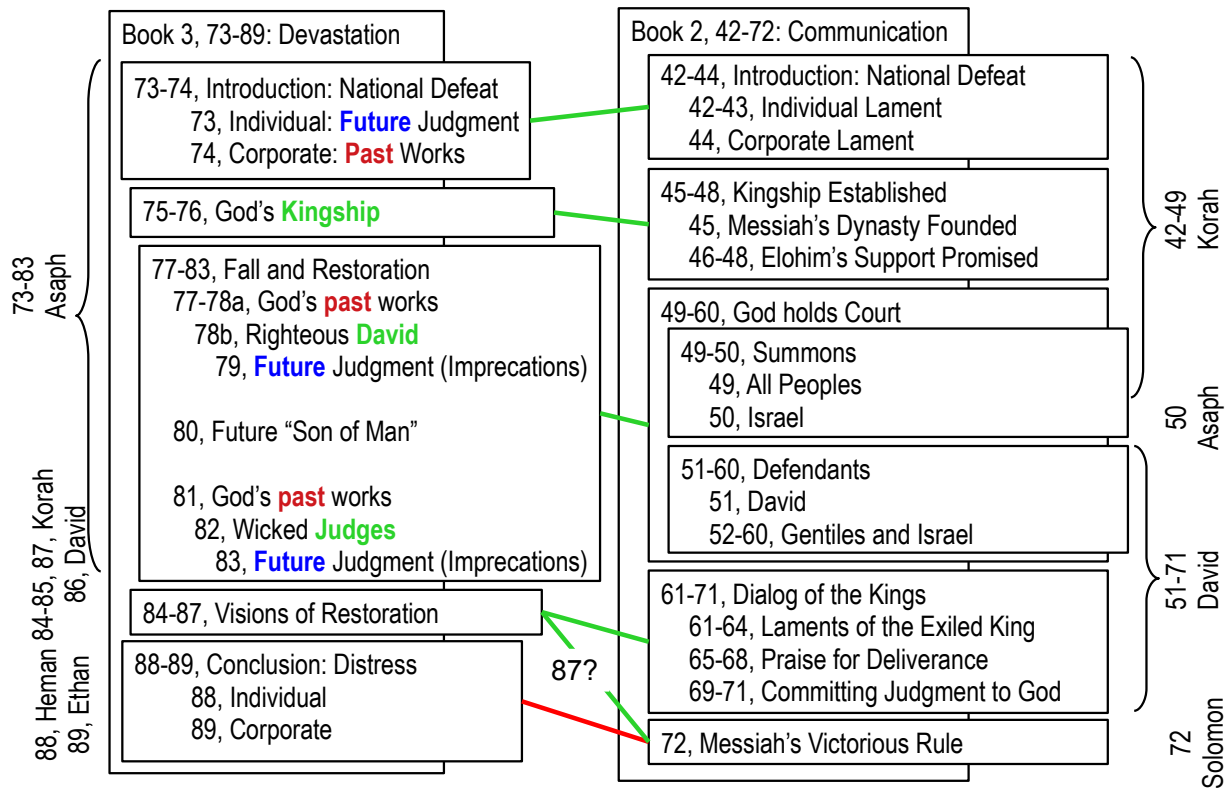


Figure 6: Structure of Book 3

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Israel faces leads her to question whether God has forsaken her. As in Book 2, the Gentiles are in focus, but now as Israel’s oppressors rather than as subjects to her rule.

The book shares many of the themes of Book 2,<sup>6</sup> including

- Priestly authorship
- Initial lament, both individual and corporate
- Emphasis on God’s kingship
- A central section featuring God’s judgment (focused on a future “son of man”)
- The promise of restoration after suffering.

The great contrast is in the final sections. Book 2 ends with Solomon’s triumphant vision of Messiah’s worldwide kingdom, But Book 3 ends with Psalm 89, which begins by recalling God’s God’s promises to David’s dynasty, but ends expressing the fear that God has overthrown his covenant with David.

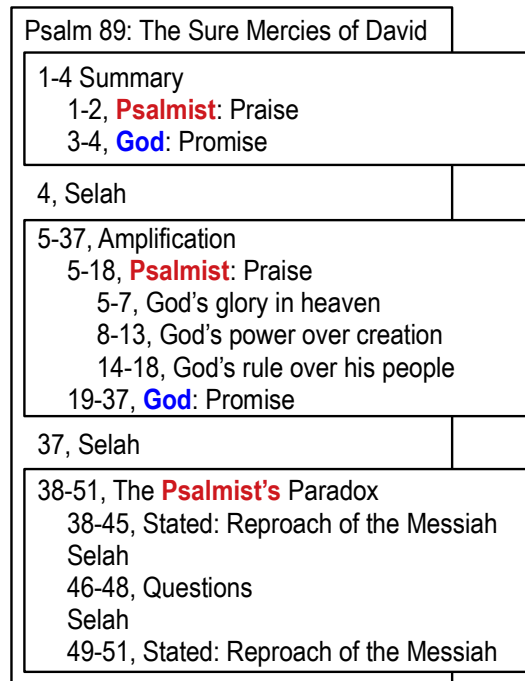
The authors of the last two Psalms are named Heman and Ethan. It is tempting to equate them with two people of the same names who were Levites in the worship team in the temple (1 Chr 15:19), along with Asaph and the sons of Korah. But the title “Ezrahite” suggests that they are descendants of Judah, not Levi, cousins of the Davidic dynasty and thus especially sensitive to its apparent failure with the captivities.<sup>7</sup>

Recall the finale of this book, Psalm 89 (Figure 7, chart). Vv. 19-37 recall God’s promise to David. Note in particular vv. 28-37, with their twin themes of God’s loyal covenant love and its everlasting duration.

But things did not seem to go as God promised. Solomon departed from the Lord, marrying Gentiles and sponsoring their idols in Jerusalem, and as a result God brought judgment on the nation. The first blows, and probably the occasion for the Psalm, were the rebellion of the northern tribes under Rehoboam in 931 BC (1 Kings 12), and the invasion by Pharaoh Shishak<sup>8</sup> five years later (1 Kings 14). The Psalm would be meaningful to the captives in Babylon, and the editor uses it to conclude this section about national judgment.

The argument has three parts, demarcated by Selah.

- In 38-45, Ethan describes the disaster that has befallen the royal line.
- Then, in a series of questions in 46-48, he highlights the incompatibility of the disaster with God’s חסד ואמונה, the characteristics from Exodus 34 that have dominated the Psalm.



*Figure 7: Structure of Psalm 89*

<sup>6</sup> Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, p. 71, discerns a chiasmic unity between these two books.

<sup>7</sup> See full discussion in [https://www.cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/notes/Ps\\_84thru89.pdf](https://www.cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/notes/Ps_84thru89.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Jeroboam’s patron when he fled from Solomon, 1 Ki 10:40.

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- Finally, in 49-51, he asks for God’s deliverance, motivated by a concern for God’s honor.

This is a dark Psalm, but it is not atypical. All five books contain laments. The life of God’s people has never been carefree. Sometimes they are called to stand against the enemies of God, sometimes (as here) God chastens them for their own sin. The editor of the Psalms would remind us, as Paul and Barnabas reminded the first churches in Asia Minor, that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). The biblical title for the period in which we live is not “the age of grace” (God has been gracious in every age) or “the church age” (neither one a biblical title), but “this present evil world [age],” Gal 1:4. The Psalms remind us of this necessary characteristic of our earthly condition. They also give us models of godly attitudes with which to handle such dark times.

### Book 4, Maturation, 90-106

Book 4 introduces several changes. The Levitical authors disappear, and along with them the choir instruction *Selah*, dedications to the chief musician, indications of musical tunes or instruments, and *Maskil* Psalms (“for instruction,” most naturally connected with the Levites as teachers, see Notes). Israel is in captivity, without city, king, or temple. Yet surprisingly (Figure 1), laments form a smaller proportion of this book than of any other. Israel finds comfort in the Lord as her habitation and her king, and looks forward to a restoration of David’s dynasty (Figure 8, chart).

The largest part of the book (92-100, 9 out of 17 Psalms) presents the Lord as Israel’s king (Figure 9). Five themes recur throughout this section, the first four symmetrically arranged, the last one concentrated in the second half. Psalm 96 covers all five themes.

This Psalm introduces the declaration of God’s universal sovereignty that runs through Psalm 100 and the end of the book. Along with 105 and 106 (which also emphasize the nations), it is part of 1 Chronicles 16, celebrating the taking of the Ark to Zion.<sup>9</sup> It expands the version in 1 Chronicles by emphasizing God’s judgment in vv. 10 and 13.

Psalm 96 alternates between call to worship and cause for worship (Figure 10, chart). In the first half, we are to carry the message of God’s salvation to the heathen, while in the second, the nations are invited to join in worship in God’s sanctuary, enlarging the circle of *who* will worship. V. 6 marks the transition between the two halves.

90-91, No **City** → God as Habitation  
 92-100, No **King** → The LORD reigns now, and will come.  
 101-103, **David** will reign in **Zion**  
**104-106, Hallelu-Yah**

Figure 8: Structure of Book 4

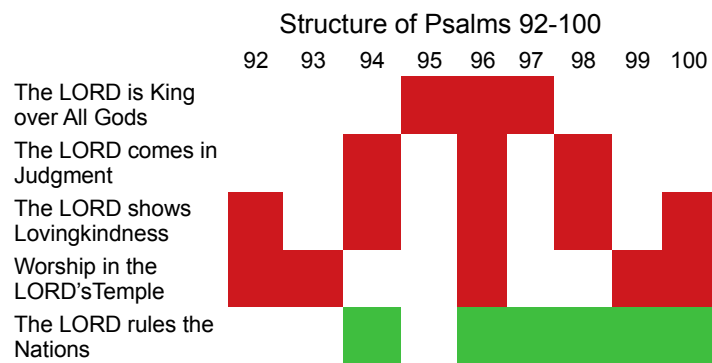


Figure 9: Themes in the Royal Psalms

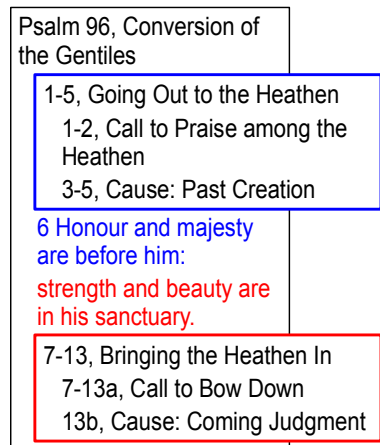


Figure 10: Structure of Psalm 96

<sup>9</sup> See notes to [https://www.cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/notes/Ps\\_92thru100.pdf](https://www.cyber-chapel.org/sermons/psalms/notes/Ps_92thru100.pdf) for details.



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As the central Psalm in 92-100, this Psalm brings together all of the themes that are arranged around it in the other Psalms in this section (Figure 9):

The Lord is **King over all gods**

96:4 For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared **above all gods**. 5 For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens. ... 10 Say among the heathen that **the LORD reigneth**: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved:

People should worship at **his temple**

96:8 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into **his courts**.

The Lord **comes** to earth to exercise **judgment**

96:12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice  
13 Before the LORD: for he cometh, for **he cometh** to **judge** the earth: he shall **judge** the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

the Lord shows **lovingkindness** דסד and **faithfulness** אמנה (in 96, “righteousness” takes the place of “lovingkindness”).<sup>10</sup>

96:13 he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his **truth**.

In addition, it emphasizes the theme of Gentile salvation, hinted at in 94, that runs through the end of this section. In fact, it is one of the high points in the Psalter for the Lord’s engagement with the Gentiles (Figure 11, chart). The last such peak, Psalm 79, was Asaph’s dark vision of how the heathen defiled the temple, destroyed Jerusalem, and slew her people. But now they bow before the Lord. As we saw in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision in Daniel 2, in the darkest hour of their national life, God gives his people a vision of the ultimate triumph of the Messianic kingdom over all the earth.

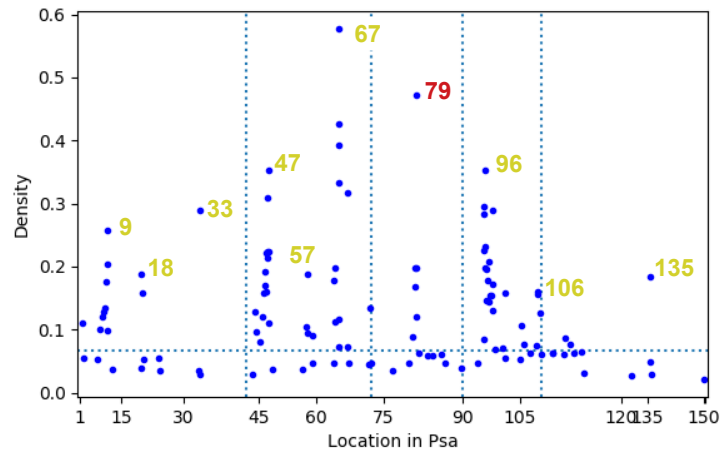


Figure 11: *Gentiles/Nations* גוים, *Peoples* עמים, *Kingdoms* ממלכות, or "All the Earth" כל הָרֶץ in Psalms (79 is the fall of Jerusalem before the heathen)

The faith of the fourth book is the hope to which God’s people cling today. Like Israel in exile, we belong to a kingdom that today is “not of this world” (John 18:36), dominated by the forces of evil, serving a heavenly king. But Israel’s hope was that this king would one day return:

Psa 96:13 for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

And that is our hope as well:

Tit 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our

<sup>10</sup> See discussion in notes on Ps. 119:121-144.

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Saviour Jesus Christ;

### Book 5, Consummation, 107-150

Book 4 ends with the confident expectation that David’s rule will be restored (101-103), followed by the first time in the Bible that we encounter the expression, “Hallelujah,” “Praise ye the Lord” (104-106). Psalms 105 and 106, drawn from 1 Chronicles 16, also bring in the exhortation, “O give thanks to the Lord,” הודו ליהוה, previously seen in the Psalms only in Psalm 33:2). Psalms 105-106 focus on the deliverance of Israel from her enemies (Egypt) and her entry into the promised land, while 104 focuses more generally on God’s works.

These same features mark three successive panels of Book 5 (Table 2, chart). In addition, each panel of Book 5 has one or two acrostic Psalms, a feature not seen since Book 1, dealing either with God’s works toward his people (111, 112, 145) or his word (119). This latter acrostic is paired with the dramatic vision of Messiah, delivered from death and entering the temple, in 118, a pairing that recalls the coupling of law and Messiah in Psalms 1-2. The message of Book 5 is that God is to be praised (“O give thanks ...,” “Hallelujah”) for bringing his people back to the land and temple and restoring the Messianic king.

	Book 4	Book 5		
O give thanks ...	105:1, 106:1	107:1 and refrain	118:1-4, 29	136:1 and refrain
Deliverance from Enemies, Coming to Jerusalem / Temple	105-106, from Egypt	107, from afar to the land and city	118, Messiah comes to the temple after suffering	136, from Egypt 137, judgment on oppressors
Acrostic: God’s word			119 God’s revelation	
Psalms with Authors (David, Solomon)--the covenant	101-103	108-110 Facing adversaries, promise of victory	120-134 (some) Relation to Jerusalem and the Temple	138-145 Struggle with enemies, confidence and praise
Acrostics: God’s works	104 (not acrostic) God’s works	111, God’s works & word 112, blessings of godliness		145 Praise to God—his works
Hallelujah	104-106	111-117	135	146-150

*Table 2: Structure of Book 5*

Even in this book of consummation, there is still struggle with wickedness. The first and last of the Davidic collections, 108-110 and 138-145, contain laments and imprecation. Once again we are reminded that suffering is an integral part of life in this world. Even the account of the Millennium in Revelation 20 ends with Satan’s final uprising and judgment in the lake of fire.

Let’s briefly review the opening Psalm of this section, 107 (Figure 12, chart). The first three verses confess God’s loyal love, a theme that recurs in the refrain to each of the four central stanzas. In Hebrew, the introduction lists the places from which God delivers his people as the East, West, North, and the Sea. A desire for symmetry has led many translators (including those of the AV, following the agreement of the Bishop’s and Geneva Bible) to emend “sea” ים to “south” מִיָּם, but the unanimous reading of the Hebrew mss, followed by the versions, is for “sea,” which makes v. 3 an introductory summary of the four stanzas.

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The four studies are arranged chiastically. The first and last describe the destination to which people are delivered (7 “a city of habitation,” 30 “their desired haven”), while the center two emphasize the moral culpability of the sufferers (11, 17) and name death as the adversary.

The refrain praises God for two things: his loyal love חסד, and his wonderful works. (This is the same pairing of his character and his action that we see in the verbs ידה and ברך when used to describe our praise of God.) The conclusion to the Psalm recaps both of these. His wonderful works are seen (33-41) in his ability to humble the proud and raise up the lowly; his loyal love brings joy to his people but silences those who reject it (42-43).

Psalm 107, God's Everlasting Mercy
1-3, Introduction <b>Thanks</b> ידה for God's <b>Mercy</b> חסד East, West, North, the Sea (!)
4-32, Who should <b>Thank</b> God for his <b>Mercy</b> ? 4-9, East: Desert Wanderers 10-16, West: In Death's Prison 17-22, North: Foolish Sinners 23-32, Sea: Storm-Tossed Sailors
33-43, The General Principle 33-41, God's Wonderful Works 42-43, God's Loyal Love

*Figure 12: Structure of Psalm 107*

The Jews who had returned from Babylon rejoiced in their rebuilt temple, but it was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, and they were once again without city and king. Yet the structure of Book 5, building as it does on the end of Book 4, reminds us that the rejoicing and praise that will characterize the consummation is already accessible to God's people during the time of maturation. We should treasure the opportunities we have to worship our King now, to strengthen us in this present evil world, and quicken our anticipation for the kingdom to come.

The overall message of the Psalms is the story of the Messianic king—his anointing by God, his opposition by his enemies, and his ultimate triumph. That kingship started with David, who needed to recognize his own sin. The book traces not only Messiah but his people, through their sin, chastisement, and restoration, bringing us finally to a vision of the final consummation when Gentiles together with Jews assemble in Jerusalem to confess Jehovah's loyal love and exhort one another to praise him with Hallelujahs.

# Final Summary of the Book of Psalms

## Notes

### ***Levitical Teachers***

Book 4 has no *maskil* Psalms, those intended to instruct. This feature may, like the lack of *Selahs* and dedications to the chief musician, reflect the nation's situation in captivity, with the temple in ruins, since instruction of the people was a responsibility of the Levites.

Lev 10:8 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, 9 Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: 10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; 11 And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

2Ch 15:1 And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: 2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3 Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

(Jehoshaphat) 2Ch 17:7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. 8 And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests. 9 And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.