

An overview of the Book of Psalms

General Thoughts

The Book of Psalms contain two general types of poems:

- **Poems of Lament** – Describe and emote what is wrong in the world: the pain, confusion, and anger. They are crying out to God to hear our voice and to act in the world. Don't miss this fact: *lament* is a *proper response* to life in our world.
- **Poems of Praise** – Describe and emote what is good in the world: the joy, the blessings, and happiness. The emphasis on praise comes out in Books 4 and 5.

The Messianic Promise is for us to grapple with. As we do, there WILL BE TENSION. The Psalms are our guide to leaning into this tension WITH HOPE - with a FORWARD looking attitude, looking FORWARD to the Messianic Kingdom promise.

Five Books

There are FIVE “books” contained in Psalms:

Ps. 1-2 (anonymous)

Chapter 1 – Torah: How blessed is the person who mediates on and obeys Torah. Torah is defined as BOTH the books of Moshe, AND instruction/teaching. So the five “books” of Psalms are constructed on top of the foundation of the books of Moshe (Torah). Psalms then, is instruction on how to *sh'ma* (hear and obey / live out) “Torah” through prayer.

Chapter 2 – Messiah: Messianic Promise of the Davidic line, from Sh'mu'el Beit (2 Samuel) 7: one day the Messianic King will come. Psalm 2 ends with “how blessed are those who take refuge in The King.

What then follows is the “prayer book” for any who desire to draw near to God in faithfulness to Torah as we wait for the messianic kingdom to fully arrive.

Book 1 3-41:13

- Ps. 15 Covenant faithfulness (begins/ends with this)
- Ps 16-18 David as the model - calling out to God, and God appointing him king.
- Ps 19 High praise to God for giving the Torah
- Ps 20-23 David as the forerunner/image of the Messianic King to come; who will also call out to God who will be delivered and crowned king of all nations
- Ps. 41:13(14) Blessed be ADONAI the God of Israel, from eternity past to eternity future

Book 2 42-72:16-19

- Ps 42-43 Hope for the future temple worship in Zion
- Ps 72 The Future Reign of the Messianic King over the Nations (Isa 11, 45, 60; Zec 9) The Fulfillment of God's promise to Avraham to bring blessing to all nations.
- Ps 72:18-19 Blessed be ADONAI, God, the God of Israel

Book 3 73-89:51

- Ps 89 Messianic Hope in light of the Exile of David's Kingdom;

Book 4 90-106:48

- Ps 90 Response to Crisis of Exile - Moshe's call for mercy on his people
- Ps 93-99 God reigns as the true king of All Creation
- Ps 106:48 Blessed be ADONAI, the God of Israel from eternity past to eternity future...

Book 5 107-145

- Ps 107-110 Affirmation that God hears the cries of his people and will send the Messianic King to conquer Evil and usher in God's Kingdom
- Ps 111-118 Hallel
- Ps 119 TORAH
- Ps 120-136 Songs of Ascent (Ps 118 and Ps 132 Hope for future "Exodus" and redemption of God's people - Messianic Kingdom
- (May the Lord God of Israel be Blessed forever – Amen

- Ps. 145 Ashrei (Happy)

Concluding Praise

- Ps. 146-150 Halleluyah - command to praise "yah"
- Ps 148:14 1Sa 2 (hannah's song) and Ps 132:17 The "horn" that is raised up is symbolic of the future Messianic King through his people, and over all creation

The Horn of his People

- Ps 148:14 and he exalts *the horn of his people*, the praise of all his saints, of the sons of Israel, a people near him. Praise Yah.
- 1Sa 2:1-10 And hannah prayed and said: My heart has exulted in ADONAI, my horn has been high in ADONAI, my mouth has been large over my enemies. (hannah's song) and
- Ps 132:17 "there I cause to spring up a horn for David, I have arranged a lamp for my anointed." The "horn" that is raised up is symbolic of the future messianic King