

Authors of the Psalms

This chart shows the huge influence of David in the Psalms, and his role in shaping the worship of ancient Israel. Books IV and V show an increase in the number of anonymous compositions, but even in those books David's works are still important. We might think of early Judaism as a rigid, legalistic system which saw God as an accountant who totaled up good deeds and let people into heaven on merit. The Psalms remind us that is not the whole story. Love for God, the celebration of His grace, and an unshakable sense of personal relationship with Him, were essential to an Old Testament faith – just as they are to New Testament Christianity.

Authors of the Psalms						
Name	Book I 1-41	Book II 42-72	Book III 73-89	Book IV 90-106	Book V 107-150	Total
<i>David</i>	37	18	1	2	15	73
<i>Asaph</i>		1	11			12
<i>Korah</i>		7	3			10
<i>Moses</i>				1		1
<i>Solomon</i>		1			1	2
<i>Ethan</i>			1			1
<i>Heman</i>			1			1
<i>Anonymous</i>	4	4		14	28	50
TOTAL	41	31	17	17	44	150

Classification of the Psalms

Types of Psalms	
Messianic Psalms	Speak of the Person and the work of Jesus Christ.
Lament Psalms	Cry to God for help in a time of trouble.
Testimonial Psalms	Tell others about what God has done.
Pilgrim Psalms (Songs of Ascents)	Were sung during pilgrimage to the holy city of Jerusalem.
Imprecatory Psalms	Ask for judgment on the ungodly and wicked.
Penitential Psalms	Are those in which the author expresses his sorrow over sin.
Wisdom Psalms	Offer guidelines for godly people.
Historical Psalms	Look back on God's dealings with the nation of Israel.
Nature Psalms	Focus on the creativity of God in His as seen in the natural world.
Praise Psalms	Simply praise the Lord or encourage us to do the same.

More Simply: Some people, opting for fewer, less distinct categories, go to a mere three labels, based mostly on mood. Messianic or other topical label will now will be distributed among the mood-based categories:

1. Praise
2. Lament
3. Wisdom

Parallelism in Biblical Poetry

1. Synonymity =

Proverbs 19:5

*A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who breathes out lies will not escape.*

Psalms 2:3

*Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.*

The two lines in each verse say the same thing in different words.

2. Complementarity { }

Proverbs 15:1-2

*A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.
The tongue of the wise commends knowledge,
but the mouths of fools pour out folly.*

The two lines reveal a contrast, but each supports the idea of the other.

3. Focusing, heightening, intensification, specification >

Psalms 1:1

*Blessed is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;*

The ideas keep moving forward, often becoming more specific or expressive as they go.

4. Consequentiality →

Psalms 1:3

*He is like a tree planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.*

The lines reveal a cause and effect relationship.