

**A LOOK AT THE BOOK
PSALMS
THE PEOPLE OF GOD SING PRAISE TO THEIR GOD**

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How do godly people deal with their emotions?

Many people think that godliness and emotionalism are opposites.

Godly people are emotional people.

God made us so that ALL people are emotional.

Godly people have transformed emotions—but they DO feel!

AUTHOR AND DATE

The superscriptions identify a number of different authors, ranging from 1450 to 430 B.C.

73 (at least) were written by David

12 were written by Asaph (50, 73-83)

2 were written by Solomon (72, 127)

1 was written by Heman the Ezrahite (88)

1 was written by Ethan the Ezrahite (89)

1 was written by Moses (90)

11 are identified with the sons of Korah, though it's not clear whether they were the authors or the performers.

50-60 psalms do not identify their authors.

Some of these are attributed by tradition to Ezra; others to David.

The dates vary considerably because of the different authors.

They range from about 1450 to 430 B.C.

The psalms are a loose collection of the writings of many authors, written over a period of hundreds of years and later gathered together in five collections which were eventually united as an instrument for the collective praise of Yahweh by Israel.

PURPOSE AND THEME

The psalms reveal the heart of the man of God.

Negatively, they contain an expression of his deepest feelings of sadness, affliction, discouragement and indignation.

Positively, they express his joy, contentment and worship.

They were never intended to be a theology book.

They are a guide to worship.

They speak from the heart, not from the head, though they are never disconnected from the head.

In the psalms, we see the man of God in intimate communion with God.

His deepest desires and petitions to God are revealed.

We can observe the man who recognizes God's right to rule in his life, and His right to rule over the universe, face-to-face with his God.

By observing carefully their message, we can learn from them.

They present an example of how the great men of God throughout the ages have enjoyed the fellowship of their God.

From them we are able to develop an idea of what our fellowship with God should be like.

They frequently serve as a guide in our worship, as we echo the sentiments of their authors before the living God.

ORGANIZATION

The book of Psalms is composed of five books of psalms: Book 1, 1-41; Book 2, 42-72; Book 3, 73-89; Book 4, 90-106; Book 5, 107-150.

Each of the books concludes with a doxology (41:13; 72:19-20; 89:52; 106:48; 150:1-6).

Jewish tradition, and numerous expositors, compare the division into five books with the Pentateuch. The parallel is not clearly supported by parallel content within the psalms themselves.

It seems more likely that the organization of the books is based on the collection process they used. They were gathered in the following order:

As the authors wrote, they were used as individual psalms, with the possible exception of some which may have been written together for a common purpose.

As they became better known, they were gathered into collections of songs that circulated together

These smaller collections were probably united into the form we find now, as larger books, and then finally united into one book and organized by an editor, under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

These last two steps may have been handled over a period of time by different individuals, which would explain the existence of five books, or all in one step by one individual at about the time of Ezra.

HEBREW POETIC PARALLELISM

Hebrew poetry does not emphasize rhyme, rhythm, nor technical form.

It emphasizes thought, which is frequently marked by parallelism.

1. **Synonymous Parallelism**—Close similarity between two consecutive lines. The second line repeats the idea of the first in order to emphasize the message

Ps. 3:1 *“O Lord, how my adversaries have increased!
Many are rising up against me.”*

2. **Synthetic Parallelism**—The second line takes up the idea of the first and develops it further.

Ps. 95:3 *“For the Lord is a great God,
And a great King above all gods.”*

3. **Antithetic Parallelism**—The second line contrasts with the first to make the idea more forceful and vivid