

An INTRODUCTION to the Book of Psalms (part II)

The following is a Table depicting the authorship, dedication and collection of the Psalms taken from Bullock, 119.

Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5
Psalms 1-41	42-72	73-89	90-106	107-150
<u>David</u>				
3-9;11-32;	51-65; 68-70	86	101; 103;	122; 124
34-41			108-110	131; 133
				138-45
sub-total				
(37)	(18)	(1)	(2)	(15) = 73
<u>Asaph</u>				
	50	73-83		
sub-total	(1)	(11)		= 12
<u>Sons of Korah</u>				
	42; 44-49;	84-85; 87-88		
sub-total	(7)	(4)		= 11
<u>Solomon</u>				
	72			127
sub-total	(1)			(1) = 2
<u>Moses</u>				
			90	
sub-total			(1)	= 1
<u>Heman the Ezrahite</u>				
		88		
sub-total		(1)		= 1
<u>Ethan the Ezrahite</u>				
		89		
sub-total		(1)		= 1

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1. *The contrasting character of the first two divisions* -- The first book is primarily Yahwistic (the LORD) whereas the second is Elohist (God).¹ The statistical analysis indicates that --

Book 1 has 272 "Yahweh's" and 15 "Elohiym's"

Book 2 has 30 "Yahweh's" and 164 "Elohiym's"

The contrast becomes more apparent when we compare the duplicate psalms. We find that the word *Yahweh* in Psalms 14 and 40: 13-17 has been replaced by *Elohim* in Psalms 53 and 70:1-5 respectively.² This is not to be interpreted as a mistake in or correction to God's Word. These were psalms written separately with different contexts.

2. *The earlier collections of these Psalms were probably arranged differently from what it is today.* The evidences are:

- * **Psalm 72:20**, "*The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*" But there are 15 more Davidic psalms after Psalm 72.
- * **2 Chron. 29:30**, "*Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.*" This verse tells us that in the days of Hezekiah he had at least some of the songs of David and Asaph compiled so that he could command the Levites to sing their songs.
- * **The superscriptions of Psalms 120-134** have the phrase "songs of degrees" or "songs of ascent" which are pilgrimage psalms. These represent an early collection of Psalms for they were probably composed as the Jews went up Mount Zion. Mount Zion or Jerusalem was captured by David in about 1002 B.C. (about 8 years into his 40 year reign).

The conclusion on the compilation of the Book of Psalms is that there was probably an initial composition of individual poems followed by an earlier collection of psalms which, in the course of time, increased to its present number of 150 psalms.

Someone or maybe more than one person rearranged them into its present order as found in our Hebrew and Protestant Bible today.

¹This Yahwistic and Elohist observation is not based upon the JEDP theory of Wellhausen's high critical analysis of the text, which we reject thoroughly. The JEDP theory is a modernistic approach to the Bible that is based upon man's ideas and baseless assumptions. It must be rejected entirely.

²The Jewish explanation for the five-book divisions was that it was a mirror image of the Pentateuch. The critique is that this is an arbitrary deduction that sees no real correspondence between the two. Herbert C. Leupold's explanation is more probable in that the division was due to a chronological development based upon a gradual process of accretion. This also explains the Yahwistic and Elohist emphasis between Books 1 and 2. The chronological development mirrors the Jewish avoidance of the usage of the proper name, *Yahweh*.

AUTHORSHIP-- More often than not, the superscription of most of the psalms has the Hebrew word *lamedh* (preposition for "of," "to," or "for") prefixed to the names of the person. Sometimes it refers to authorship, "of," and other times it could mean "for the use of" or "dedication to." Out of the 73 Davidic psalms, it is not impossible to believe that David wrote all seventy-three of them. David's musical ability and activity are too generally attested and well known in the Old Testament to deny him the role in the composition of the Psalms. In 2 Sam. 23:1 David was known as the sweet psalmist of Israel, the inventor of musical instruments in Amos 6:5, the organizer of the Temple musicology in 1 Chron. 15:16-24; 16:7, 31; Ezra 3:10; and Neh. 12:24 and the composer of psalms in 2 Sam. 1:19-27; 22:1-51; 23:2-7; 1 Chron. 16:8-36.

Other authors mentioned in the Book of Psalms include Asaph (one of David's chief musicians -- 1 Chron. 6:39; 15:17), the sons of Korah, Solomon, Moses, Heman, and Ethan (1 Ki. 4:30-32).