

## **Key to PSALMS**

### **1. STATISTICS:**

Writers were David (73), Asaph (12), Sons of Korah (12), Solomon (2), Heman (1), Ethan (1), Moses (1), Anonymous (48). Time of composition, over 1000 years from Moses (1500 B.C.) to Ezra (450 B.C.) The title "Psalm" means a composition set to music; key word, worship; key thought, GOD is near; key psalm, 23.

### **2. THEME:**

This collection of musical poems, divinely inspired and covering the complete range of human emotion and experience, was and is the praise book of Israel and the core of their religious worship. It is the book of the heart as well as the songbook of the redeemed today. Without doubt, it is the most widely known and used book of world's literature.

### **3. OUTLINE:**

There are five groups of psalms corresponding somewhat to the five books of the Pentateuch (divisions are approximate):

David's songs (1-41)  
Devotional group (42-72)  
Liturgical group (73-89)  
Anonymous group (90-106)  
Psalms written late (107-150)

Each group closes with a glorious doxology.

### **4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

The psalms were written largely with a view to musical accompaniment, especially instrumental. Many instruments were used including the winds, such as the shofar, or ram's horn; stringed, harp; percussion, timbrel and cymbals. Many were acrostics (initial letter of each succeeding verse was alphabetized) such as 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145.

Imprecatory psalms called forth the wrath of GOD upon the enemies of GOD and His people. These include: 52, 58, 59, 69, 109, 140.

An important theme is the person and work of CHRIST. Our LORD suggested this in Luke 24:44.

Psalms are quoted 90 times in the New Testament. They teach morality, history and appreciation of prophecy.

### **5. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:**

GOD's omnipotence (107:25-29); His omniscience (147:4, 5); His holiness (99:9); His justice (11:4-7); His mercy (86:15); His faithfulness (119:90).

Israel and Jerusalem are the subject of many psalms showing GOD's great affection for the city of the great King.

No other book in the Bible so magnifies the Word of GOD. There is much evidence substantiating the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Many psalms were produced under great crises. Psalm 51 was the occasion of David's great sin; Psalm 18, David's deliverance.

Psalms 22, 23, 24 form a trilogy about the theme of the Shepherd representing the cross, the crook and the crown.

## 6. INTERESTING FEATURES:

The word "Selah" evidently means a musical pause; it is therefore not to be spoken.

Psalm 136 has all of its 26 verses ending with the same words: "**for his mercy endureth forever.**"

The following psalms are prophetic of Christ: 2, 8, 9, 16, 22, 24, 31, 41, 45, 46, 67, 69, 72, 89, 93, 110, 118, 132.

The Septuagint credited Psalms 1 and 119 to Ezra the priest, and that they were the last to be added to the canon of the Psalms.

The psalms of "ascent" were generally sung when pilgrimages were being made to temple feasts.

The last five psalms are called the "hallelujah psalms" as they begin and end with the expression, "**Praise ye the LORD.**"

There are 21 psalms which refer to the history of Israel from the time of the Exodus to the days of restoration.

## 7. KEY TO UNDERSTANDING:

The book of Psalms deals with life - your life. You will find the cause and the cure of every problem in this remarkable book. No matter where else you read in the Bible, also continue to read the Psalms. The key is to read, study, memorize, love them.

~ end of Psalms ~

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