

Psalms Roadmap

THE FIVE BOOKS OF THE PSALTER



	BOOK 1	BOOK 2	BOOK 3	BOOK 4	BOOK 5
PSALMS	1-41	42-72	73-89	90-106	107-150
TORAH PARALLEL	Genesis	Exodus	Leviticus	Numbers	Deuteronomy
THEME	God + Man	Deliverance + Kingship	Worship + Sanctuary	God's Reign + Sovereignty	Praise and the Word
THEME EXPANDED	The most personal book. David's journal of faith: trust, fear, repentance, gratitude. The "I" psalms. Opens with Psalms 1-2 as the double doorway (wisdom + kingship.) Like Genesis, it traces one person's walk with their Creator. Psalm 1's tree-by-water imagery echoes Eden.	The voice shifts from "I" to "we." Deep longing for God's presence, exile, oppression, and the cry for deliverance — echoing Israel's cry in Egypt. Builds toward Psalm 72's vision of the ideal king, echoing God's promises to Abraham fulfilled through Exodus.	The darkest and shortest book. The sanctuary is in ruins, enemies are inside the gates, and God's people ask how worship is possible when the place of worship is destroyed. Parallels Leviticus's concern for the temple and priestly worship. Ends in unresolved crisis (Ps 89.)	The theological answer to Book 3's crisis. Opens with Moses (Ps 90), reaching back before the monarchy to say God has always been the true king. Enthronement psalms (93-99) declare "The LORD reigns!" Parallels Numbers: the wandering people learning God himself is their home.	The longest and most diverse book. Builds steadily upward: thanksgiving (107), Torah devotion (119), pilgrimage (120-134), David's return (138-145), and the five-psalm Hallelujah finale (146-150.) Parallels Deuteronomy: rehearsing God's Word before entering the promised land of praise.
PRIMARY AUTHORS	Anonymous: 1, 2, 10, 33 David: all the others	Sons of Korah: 42-49 Asaph: 50 David: 51-65, 68-70 Solomon: 72 Anonymous: 43, 66, 67, 71	Asaph: 73-83 Sons of Korah: 84-85, 87 David: 86 Heman the Ezrahite: 88 Ethan the Ezrahite: 89	Moses: 90 David: 101, 103 Anonymous: 91-100, 102, 104-106	David: 108-110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138-145 Solomon: 127 Anonymous: 107, 111-121, 123, 125, 126, 128-130, 132, 134-137, 146-150
DOMINANT NAME FOR GOD	Yahweh ("the LORD") — the personal, covenantal name. Used 272 times in Book 1.	Elohim ("God") — the universal, transcendent name. Used 200+ times vs. ~30 for Yahweh.	Mixed — Both Yahweh and Elohim. The Asaph psalms continue Elohistic usage; Korah psalms use both.	Yahweh returns as the dominant name. The covenantal God reasserts himself after Book 3's crisis.	Yahweh throughout. The final "Hallelujah" ("Praise Yah") psalms use the abbreviated form of Yahweh. The personal God is praised to the end.
EMOTIONAL ARC	Trust and intimacy with tension. David cries out but always returns to confidence. The default posture is "The LORD is my shepherd."	Longing and ache. "As the deer pants for water." A deep desire for God's presence mingled with the weight of exile and betrayal.	Darkness and crisis. "How long, O God?" The emotional low point of the entire Psalter. Psalm 88 ends with no resolution — just pain.	Relief and reorientation. The tone shifts dramatically. Praise replaces lament. "Bless the LORD, O my soul" (103.) Confidence is restored.	Crescendo of joy. Energy builds from quiet devotion (119) through pilgrimage (120-134) to the full-volume, five-psalm Hallelujah explosion (146-150.)
DOXOLOGY (CLOSING)	"Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen." (41:13)	"Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever." (72:18-19)	"Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and Amen." (89:52)	"Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, 'Amen!' Praise the LORD!" (106:48)	Psalm 150 in its entirety serves as the doxology — not just for Book 5 but for the whole Psalter. Every instrument, every breath: "Praise the LORD!"

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STANDOUT PSALMS	Ps 1: The blessed life. Ps 2: The anointed king. Ps 8: Human dignity. Ps 19: Heavens + Torah. Ps 22: "My God, why have you forsaken me." Ps 23: The shepherd. Ps 34: "Taste and see." Ps 37: "Delight yourself in the LORD."	Ps 42-43: "As the deer pants." Ps 46: "Be still and know." Ps 51: David's repentance. Ps 63: "Earnestly I seek you." Ps 69: Messianic suffering. Ps 72: The coming king.	Ps 73: "My feet almost slipped." Ps 84: "How lovely is your dwelling place." Ps 86: David's lone prayer. Ps 88: The darkest psalm (no resolution.) Ps 89: "Where are your former mercies?"	Ps 90: "Teach us to number our days." Ps 91: Refuge and protection. Ps 95: "Come let us sing." Ps 100: "Make a joyful noise." Ps 103: "Bless the LORD, O my soul."	Ps 110: Most quoted psalm in the NT. Ps 118: "This is the day." Ps 119: The great acrostic (176 v.) Ps 121: "I lift my eyes." Ps 137: "By the rivers of Babylon." Ps 139: "Fearfully and wonderfully made." Ps 150: The grand finale.
PSALM TYPES	Individual lament and trust. Also: royal psalms (2, 18, 20-21), wisdom (1, 37), hymns (8, 19), thanksgiving (30, 34.) The personal voice dominates.	Community and individual lament, royal/messianic psalms. Korah psalms introduce communal worship. Imprecatory psalms appear (58, 69). Ends with royal hope (72.)	Communal lament dominates (74, 77, 79-80, 82-83, 85-86, 88.) Historical recitation (78.) Trust psalms are rare. This is the Psalter's valley.	Enthronement hymns ("The LORD reigns"), praise, historical recitation (105-106.) Lament nearly disappears. The shift from Books 1-3 to Books 4-5 is dramatic.	Praise and thanksgiving dominate. Also: Torah meditation (119), pilgrimage songs (120-134), lament (137), wisdom (127-128.) The volume rises steadily to 150.
NEW TESTAMENT LINKS	Ps 2:1-2 → Acts 4:25-26 Ps 2:7 → Acts 13:33, Heb 1:5 Ps 2:8 → Rev 2:26-27 Ps 8:4-6 → Heb 2:6-8 Ps 16:8-11 → Acts 2:25-28 (Peter at Pentecost) Ps 22:1 → Matt 27:46 (Jesus on the cross) Ps 22:18 → John 19:24 Ps 31:5 → Luke 23:46 Ps 34:8 → 1 Pet 2:3	Ps 45:6-7 → Heb 1:8-9 (Christ's throne) Ps 68:18 → Eph 4:8 Ps 69:9 → John 2:17 (Zeal for God's house) Ps 69:25 → Acts 1:20 (Judas) Ps 72 → Messianic imagery echoed across Gospels	Ps 78:2 → Matt 13:35 (Jesus' parables) Ps 78:24 → John 6:31 (Bread from heaven)	Ps 91:11-12 → Matt 4:6, Luke 4:10-11 (Satan's temptation of Jesus) Ps 95:7-11 → Heb 3:7-11, 4:3-7 (Rest and faithfulness) Ps 102:25-27 → Heb 1:10-12.	Ps 110:1 → Most quoted OT verse in the NT (Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Acts 2:34-35; Heb 1:13, and many more) Ps 110:4 → Heb 5:6, 7:17-21 (Melchizedek priesthood) Ps 118:22-23 → Matt 21:42, Acts 4:11, 1 Pet 2:7 (Cornerstone) Ps 118:26 → Matt 21:9 (Palm Sunday)