

## The Penmen of the Psalms

As with any book of the Bible; there is the author, God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), and there are the penmen.

The book of Psalms, being the Hebrew Hymnal, has multiple penmen:

	Book 1 (1-41)	Book 2 (42-72)	Book 3 (73-89)	Book 4 (90-106)	Book 5 (107-150)	Total
David	37	18	1	2	15	73
Asaph	-	1	11	-	-	12
Korah	-	7	3	-	-	10
Moses	-	-	-	1	-	1
Solomon	-	1	-	-	1	2
Ethan	-	-	1	-	-	1
Heman	-	-	1	-	-	1
Anonymous	4	4	-	14	28	50
<b>Total</b>	41	31	17	17	44	150

## Key definitions found in the Psalms

Psalm (Mizmor) - A song with instrumental accompaniment.

Selah - It is an emphatic word that gives pause to the section at hand. "Think about that!" (Occurs 71 times in Psalms.)

Higgaion - "A Soliloquy or meditation"

Translated as "Haggaion" in Psalm 9:16; "meditation" in

Psalm 19:14 and "solemn sound" in Psalm 92:3

Maschil - "understanding or teaching" particularly in public instruction. (Psalm 32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142)

Michtam - "an engraving" This is only found in David's Psalms referring to his days of rejection. (Psalm 16, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60)

**Additional definitions found in the titles of Psalms**

***Aijeleth Shahar*** - "The day dawn" (Psalm 22)

***Al Alamoth*** - "relating to maidens" (Psalm 46) \*to be sung by sopranos.

***Al-taschith*** - "destroy not" (Psalm 57, 58, 59, 75)

***Gittith*** - "the winepresses" referencing the feast of Tabernacles. (Psalm 8, 81, 84)

***Jeduthun*** - a personal name for one of the three "chief musicians". (See 1 Chronicles 16:41-43; 25:1-6; 26:10; 2 Chronicles 5:12; 35:15) There are some that believe Ethan and Jeduthun are the same person, 1 Chronicles 15:17-19. (Psalm 39; 62; 77)

***Jonath Elim Rechokim*** - "the dove in the far off terebinth trees" (Psalm 56)

***Mahalath*** - "the great dance" (Psalm 53)

***Mahalath Leannothe*** - "the great dancing and shouting" (Psalm 88)

***Muth Labben*** - "the death of the champion" (Psalm 9)

***Neginoth*** - "smiting" (Psalm 4, 6, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76)

**Nehiloth** - "the great inheritance" (Psalm 5)

**Sheminith** - "the eighth" (Psalm 6, 12)

**Shiggaion** - "a loud cry" (Psalm 7)

**Shoshannim** - "lillies" referencing the passover feast (Psalm 45, 69)

**Shushannim Eduth** - referring to a spring festival, "testimony" (Psalm 80)

**Shushan Eduth** - same as Shushannim Eduth (Psalm 60)

### **Divisions of the Psalms**

The Psalms are divided into 5 books and it has been called by some *The Poetical Pentateuch*.

Book 1 - Psalm 1-41 ties closely to Genesis

Many of the Psalms here deal with God's Sovereignty and his counsels to men. (Psalm 2:4, 19:1, 22:28, 24:1, 33:10-11, 36:5-6)

Book 2 - Psalm 42-72 ties closely to Exodus

Many of the Psalms here deal with God's Salvation and the nation of Israel. (Psalm 46:10, 51:12, 67:2, 68:20, 72:17)

Book 3 - Psalm 73-89 ties closely to Leviticus

Many of the Psalms here deal with God's Sanctuary. (Psalm 73:17, 74:7, 77:13, 78:58)

Book 4 - Psalm 90-106 ties closely to Numbers

Many of the Psalms here deal with God's Sufficiency.  
(Psalm 90:2, 91:2, 92:1-2, 94:22, 105:1-2)

John Phillips notes that this group of Psalms, "begins with one written by Moses and ends with one that recounts Israel's rebellions in the wilderness."

Book 5 - Psalm 107-150 ties closely to Deuteronomy

Many of the Psalms here deal with God's Sayings and consists of many Psalms dealing with God's word. (Psalm 107:20)

Psalm 119 being the chief example.

### **Special Groupings found in the Psalms**

Imprecatory Psalms - Psalm 5, 10, 17, 35, 58, 59, 69, 70, 79, 83, 109, 129, 137 and 140

These are Psalms that contain prayers and/or language which calls for divine judgement on other kingdoms or individuals whom oppose God. Christ used imprecatory language as well. (Matthew 23:13, 15-16, 23-24, 27, 29 and 33)

Penitential Psalms - Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143

These are Psalms that are also called Psalms of Confession.

Hallelujah Psalms - 17 Psalms divided into 4 groupings of these Psalms

The Covenantal Hallel - Psalm 105-106

The Passover Hallel - Psalm 111-118

The Great Hallel - Psalm 135-136

The Doxological Hallel - 146-150

Songs of Degrees - Psalm 120-134

These are the Psalms that Hebrew Pilgrims would sing on their way to Jerusalem or possibly while ascending Mount Zion or the steps of the Temple.

Messianic Psalms (See the note on the Prophetical Element in lesson One.)