



Psalms

The Book of Prayer

The Name of the Book

- Hebrew
 - Sefer Tehillim – book of praises (tehillah – praise)
 - Tillim
- Greek
 - Psalmos – LXX title
 - Greek for Hebrew mizmor – verses of praise
 - Literally a twanging of a harp string – thus an accompanied song
 - Psalmoi - plural

Challenges in Translation

- Poetry often uses uncommon words whose meaning may be lost
- Many superscription words are unknown
 - Maskil, Miktam, Nehiloth, Shiggaion, Muthlabben, Gittith
 - Musical instruction, instrumentation, melody titles, usage instructions?
 - Selah
- Problem for LXX translators thus the meanings lost long ago
- Hebrew is much more literal and practical than English
 - Love and Hate are more about actions than feelings
 - God loves Israel because He does good things for them
 - God hates Edom because He does bad things to them

Challenges in Spiritual Understanding

- Time setting is still God working within a nation
 - God's purpose and scope for Israel was different than for the Church
 - Very different culture and circumstances – e.g., warfare close to home
- Inspiration includes being inspired for and through the people at the time
 - Sometimes, the perspective is theirs and not God's
- The Bible COMMUNICATES the Word of God but not every word is God's
 - Job 2:9, I Kings 19:4, Jer 20:7-9, 14-18, Ps 137:7-9

Differences in Numbering

- LXX and Syriac versions have Ps 151
- LXX divides Psalms as in DV
- MT (Masoretic Text) divides Psalms as in AV
- LXX 9 = MT 9 & 10
- LXX 113 = MT 114 & 115
- MT 116 = LXX 114 & 115
- MT 147 = LXX 146 & 147
- Textual criticism sometimes favors LXX, MT or neither

Organization

- 5 books of Psalms mirror 5 books of Torah
- Each book ends with “Amen and Amen” - Ps 41, 72, 89, 106, 150 (no Amen)
- The books were edited from earlier collections
 - Psalms of David after 72 which says the prayers of David are ended
 - Duplication – 14 & 53, 40:14-18 & 70, et al.
 - Even outside the Psalter – Ps 18 and II Sam 22
 - Books 1, 4, 5 – Yahwist, Book 2 – Elohist, Book 3 – both
 - Refers to the prominent way of naming God – YHVH or Elohim
 - Ps 14 is Yahwist while Ps 53 is an Elohist version of the same Psalm

The Earlier Collections

- Psalms of David
 - “of” does not necessarily mean “composed by”
 - Could be “concerning” or “in the style of” David
- Korahite Psalms: 42 – 49
- Asaph Psalms: 73 – 83
- Songs of Ascents – Gradual Psalms: 120 – 134
 - Possibly sung on the way to Feasts or on 14 steps of the temple
- Hallel Psalms – Hymns of Praise: 111 – 118
 - Possibly sung during the Feasts
- Ps 1 – 119 (Torah psalms) may have surrounded an earlier collection

Authorship and Dates

A large, faint background graphic in the center of the slide. It depicts a red heart with a golden cross above it and a crown of thorns around it. Below the heart is an open book with red pages and a dark cover. The entire graphic is set against a circular, light-brown background.

- Variety of authors
 - Ps 90 – Moses
 - David
 - Solomon
 - Asaph, Korah
 - Ps 137 attributed to Jeremiah in LXX
- Variety of Dates
 - Moses to Exile
- Edits within individual psalms, e.g., Ps 51:18-19