

"Of David" or "A Psalm of David", etc. If they are accurate they solve the question of authorship, and therefore of date, for over half the psalms.

Those who support their authority point to their presence in the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament made in the third and second centuries BC) as evidence of their antiquity. The Septuagint translators mistranslated many of the titles, thus showing that considerable time had passed for the meaning of the words to have been so completely forgotten. The titles are also present in every manuscript of the Hebrew Bible, including those from Qumran (the site of the Dead Sea Scrolls), and they are present as an integral part of the biblical text, forming in many cases the first verse of the psalm in question.

Those who object to this alleged "authority" of the titles usually cite two problems. If the phrase translated "of David" means "belonging to David as author" then this is a unique meaning of this preposition (which is not impossible, but should cause us to pause before accepting the theory). Second, some of the Psalm titles are at odds with the history of the book of Samuel (two at least) as in Ps. 34 speaking of David "feigned insanity before Abimelech" whereas 1 Samuel 21:10 ff calls the King Achish. Psalm 56 implies that David had been captured but 1 Samuel 21:10 says he escaped to Gath. These questions and others, especially our lack of knowledge regarding many of the technical terms in the titles, serve to lessen the importance which should be attached to these titles. Some of them may indeed preserve accurate information, but at this late date we have no way to determine which ones do so.

The second important factor in background study of the Psalter concerns its compilation. There are four main pieces of evidence which seem to indicate the book was compiled and edited over a period of time rather than all at once. 1) Psalms 14 and 53 are the same except for the use of the divine name (which reflects the tendency of Psalms 3-41 to use Yahweh and of Psalms 42-72 to use Elohim for God); 2) Psalm 72:20 seems to be an editorial addition accurate as far as was known at the time it was written. 3) the "hallelujah" psalms (111-113; 116-118; 135-136; 146-150) are not gathered as a group; 4) the musical or liturgical instructions are not evenly distributed (for example selah occurs sixty seven times in Psalms 1-89, but only four times in the rest of the psalter). These evidences, among others, point to a gradual process of editing the Psalter by various persons over a rather long period of time.

When we come to outlining the Psalms we discover it cannot be done for the Psalter is a collection of 150 individual poetic works. A five-fold division already incorporated into the book's structure is usually noted in modern versions of the Bible (each of the sections ends with a doxology except the fifth, which uses the entirety of Psalm 150).

- I. Book One ps. 1-41
- II. Book Two 42-72
- III. Book Three 73-89
- IV. Book Four 96-106
- V. Book Five 107-150

These divisions may reflect an arrangement in harmony with the five books of Moses: Five books of Law and five books of Praise.

Regarding the history of Redemption, strictly speaking the history of redemption is not present in the Psalter because it is not an historical book. Many of the great doctrinal truths of the Bible and the redemptive plan are found in it: the faithfulness of God toward His covenant people, Israel (Ps. 18; 40; 47); his sovereign rule over all things (Pss. 1; 19;