

SING PRAISES WITH A PSALM!

Introduction to the Psalms

The Psalter is read more often in the Church, because it contains the whole of Scripture...Therefore the *material* of this work is clear, that it is about every work of the Lord. The *mode*, that it is deprecative and laudative. The *end purpose*, that we are raised to be joined to the most High and Holy One. The *author*; that he is the Holy Spirit that reveals this (St. Thomas Aquinas).

The prayer of the psalms is always sustained by praise; that is why the title of this collection as handed down to us is so fitting: "The Praises." Collected for the assembly's worship, the Psalter both sounds the call to prayer and sings the response to that call: *Hallelu-Yah!* ("Alleluia"), "Praise the Lord!" (CCC 2589)

The division of the Psalter:

The psalms were gradually collected into the five books of the Psalter (or "Praises"), the masterwork of prayer in the Old Testament (CCC 2585).

- I. Psalms 1-41
- II. Psalms 42-72
- III. Psalms 73-89
- IV. Psalms 90-106
- V. Psalms 107-150

The Numbering of the Psalms

Greek Numbering	Hebrew Numbering
1-8	
9	9-10
10-112	11-113
113	114-115
114-115	116
116-145	117-146
146-147	147
148-150	

The Psalms in Ancient Israel

Jewish tradition has given many Psalms specific names, attributing most of them to King David...The connection of the Psalms with this outstanding King of Israel is...important because he is a messianic figure, an Anointed One of the Lord, in whom, in a certain way, the mystery of Christ is foreshadowed (Pope Benedict XVI).

The Psalms both nourished and expressed the prayer of the People of God gathered during the great feasts at Jerusalem and each Sabbath in the synagogues (CCC 2586).

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Different Kinds of Psalms

- Songs of Ascents (120-134)
- Hallel (104-106, 113-118, 135, 146-150)
- Penitential Psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143)
- Imprecatory Psalms (35, 52, 54-59, 64, 69, 83, 109, 137)
- Historical Psalms (78, 105, 106, 136)

Elements of the Psalms

This Book expresses the entire human experience with its multiple facets and the whole range of sentiments that accompany human existence...In the Psalms are expressed and interwoven with joy and suffering, the longing for God and the perception of our own unworthiness, happiness and the feeling of abandonment, trust in God and sorrowful loneliness, fullness of life and fear of death. The whole reality of the believer converges in these prayers...[T]he whole complexity of human life is distilled in the complexity of the different literary forms of the various Psalms: hymns, laments, individual entreaties and collective supplications, hymns of thanksgiving, penitential psalms, sapiential psalms...Despite this multiplicity of expression, two great areas that sum up the prayer of the Psalter may be identified: supplication, connected to lamentation, and praise (Pope Benedict XVI).

Fulfilled in Christ

Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44).

The Psalms as Christian Prayer

Prayed and fulfilled in Christ, the Psalms are an essential and permanent element of the prayer of the Church. They are suitable for men of every condition and time (CCC 2597).

The Formative Power of the Psalms

The words of the Psalmist, sung for God, both express and acclaim the Lord's saving works; the same Spirit inspires both God's work and man's response. Christ will unite the two. In him, the psalms continue to teach us how to pray (CCC 2587).

- *Mens nostra concordet voci nostrae...*

May our mind be in accord with our voice (St. Benedict).

PSALM 1

[1] Blessed is the man

who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,

nor stands in the way of sinners,

nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

[2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD,

and on his law he meditates day and night.

[3] He is like a tree

planted by streams of water,

that yields its fruit in its season,

and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

[4] The wicked are not so,

but are like chaff which the wind drives away.

[5] Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

[6] for the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

but the way of the wicked will perish.