

THE MANY FACES OF THE

Psalms

Most of us enjoy different types of music, depending on what kind of mood we find ourselves in. Switching play lists, we tune in to the sound that best matches our particular emotional level.

That's something like the variety you will find in the Book of Psalms. As you journey through the psalms each day, it helps if you can put a label on each one as you go. Then you'll know what kind of mood or feeling to expect in each type of psalm you will encounter.

I. LAMENT PSALMS: These are not as pessimistic as the title may imply. They represent praises offered to the Lord either by a single individual or by a community of worshipers in a time when God seems absent. Nevertheless, they are uttered with the reassuring confidence that God can and will deliver His people.

II. THANKS PSALMS: This grouping of songs, offered publicly by one or more worshipers, acknowledges God's faithful actions on behalf of His people in a specific time of distress.

III. PRAISE PSALMS: Less specific than psalms of thanks, these hymns of praise shout joyful adoration for God's greatness. God is extolled as the One who created the universe, guides its history, and lovingly shepherds His people.

IV. ISRAEL PSALMS: This broad category denotes psalms of festive praise that acknowledge God's overall program for His chosen nation. Four different types may be highlighted:

- A. Covenant Psalms**—praising God for His trustworthy covenants with Israel.
- B. Royal Psalms**—praising the coming King.
- C. Jerusalem Psalms**—praising the holy city.
- D. Throne Psalms**—praising God's universal rule.

V. TRUST PSALMS: These psalms embody a deep knowledge of God's presence and power—a comforting thought in any situation.

VI. WISDOM PSALMS: Wisdom is not limited to books. Indeed, the highest path of wisdom may be found in lifting honor and praise to the Holy One.