

# PSALMS 51—72

## TWENTY-TWO PSALMS OF BOOK II

---

Psalm 51, the psalm with which this study begins, lies in the early part of Book II. This second book of the Book of Psalms is a collection of thirty-one psalms (42—72) that possesses two dominant characteristics. These traits are noticeable through even a casual reading of it. First, David and Solomon appear to be the only authors who are named in the superscriptions. Second, the name Elohim is the name most often used for God in them. Elohim (אֱלֹהִים, *’elohim*) is used 198 times, while Yahweh (יהוה, *YHWH*) is used 32 times. For this reason, the book has been called the “Elohistic Psalms.”

Within the twenty-two psalms that make up the remaining part of Book II (51—72) are found eighteen psalms that contain the Davidic superscriptions (51—65; 68—70). These titles have “of David” (לְדָוִד, *l’dawid*) in them and suggest a Davidic authorship or subject. Book I may contain the first collection of his psalms, while the ones found in Book II may come from the additional psalms he wrote, which were added later as the editor(s) brought together the final form of the Book of Psalms. Also, out of these eighteen psalms, eight have historical indications concerning the life and reign of David. They propose a possible biblical background for the psalms to which they are attached.

The four other psalms of Book II (66; 67; 71; 72) are variously described. Two only have superscriptions for “the choir director” (66; 67). Psalm 66 can be designated a hymn of praise, while Psalm 67 is more of a missionary hymn. One is an anonymous psalm (71). Having no superscription, we would label it, along with thirty-three others in the Book of Psalms, an “orphan psalm.” The final psalm has “of Solomon” (72) as its title. The phrase may indicate that this psalm was a prayer composed by Solomon to be used by the people in their intercession to God on behalf of their king.

1. Describe the variety of psalms that are in Book II.
2. Why has Book II been called the “Elohistic Psalms”?