

# Literary Style of the Psalms

The Titles: By 200 B.C., when the Septuagint translators translated the Hebrew into Greek, the meanings of the titles were not known. However, all ancient manuscripts contain these titles. They are believed to be part of the text and inspired. They give:

- a. assignment
- b. authorship
- c. occasion for writing
- d. literary type
- e. musical instructions
- f. aim

1. **PSALM (mizmor)**: well-known tune with musical accompaniment, composed for a specific occasion. 77 occurrences: *3-6, 8-10, 12, 13, 15, 18-32, 34-41, 46-51, 61-70, 72, 73, 75-77, 79-85, 87, 88, 92, 98, 100, 101, 103, 108-110, 138-141, 143, 144*
2. **SONG (shir)**: song not necessarily accompanied with music. 15 occurrences: *18, 30, 46, 48, 65-68, 75-76, 83, 87-88, 92, 108*
3. **SONG OF ASCENTS (shir ha ma'alot)**: a group of songs sung while going to feasts in Jerusalem. 15 occurrences: *120-134*
4. **MASKIL**: didactic or meditative, intended to teach or make one wise. (Wisdom Literature). 13 occurrences: *32, 42, 44, 45, 53-55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142*
5. **MIKTAM**: “Golden Psalms” silent prayer for atonement or expiation. All laments. 6 occurrences: *16, 56-60*
6. **PRAYER** (tefillah) 5 occurrences: *17, 86, 90, 102, 142*
7. **PRAISE OR HYMN** (tehillah): 1 occurrence: *145*
8. **TESTIMONY** (edut): 1 occurrence: *80*
9. **SHIGGAION**: An expression of emotion and grief. 1 occurrence: *7*
10. **UNCLASSIFIED**: 33 occurrences: *1, 2, 11, 14, 33, 71, 91, 93-97, 99, 104-107, 111-119, 135-136, 146-150.*