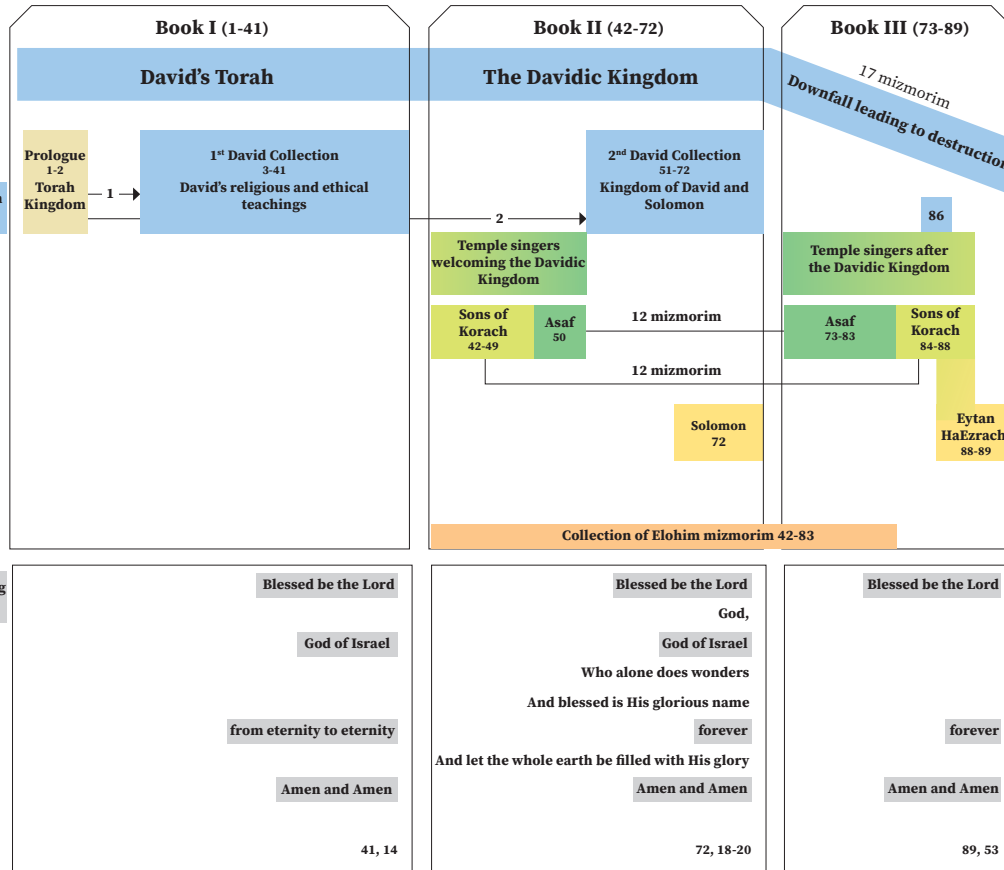


# The Book of Tehillim as a Book · Contents, Structure and Meaning

## Part I (1-89) – the Davidic Kingdom during the 1<sup>st</sup> Temple Period

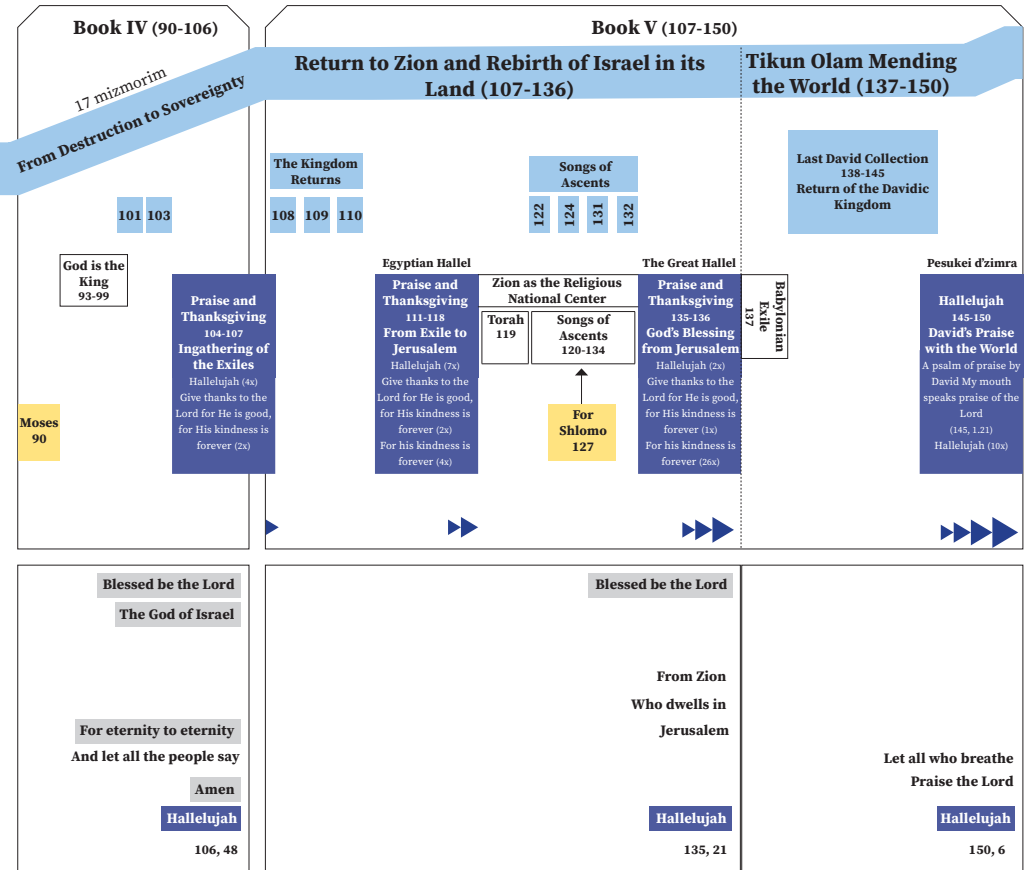


### LEGEND

- The Prologue (1-2) at the start of the book establishes commitment to the Torah (1) integrated with the Jewish Kingdom in Zion (2). The first David collection details David's teachings, and the second collection, the kingdom of David and Solomon.
- The second David collection opens with the rebuke of Nathan the Prophet after David's sin with Bat Sheva. David prays: "do not cast me away from Your presence" (51,13). At the end of the collection, the elderly David prays with the same phrase: "do not cast me away in the time of old age" (71, 9) and thus transfers his kingdom to his son, Solomon (72, 1). This framework matches the story in the book of Samuel: after being rebuked by Nathan the Prophet, David repents from his sin with Bat Sheva and their son Solomon, heir to the throne, is born (II Samuel 14, 24-25).

- In the collection of the Elohim mizmorim (42-83), the name of Elohim is more frequently used than other names of God, since this section focuses on the general aspect of divine justice as God's manifestation in the world and in the description of the Jewish kingdom and its destruction.
- From the end of Book IV, the mizmorim of praise and thanksgiving serve as the central axis in the organization of the book and describe in a gradual crescendo the redemption of Israel during the return to Zion and in the future: ingathering of the exiles (106, 47; 107, 3), the return to Jerusalem (116, 18-19; 118, 19-27); the covenant of the Torah (119) and the rebuilding of Zion (120-134) leading to praise and thanksgiving to God for redemption of the children of Zion, together with all creatures (135-136). In light of the dirge of the exiles (137), the book ends with the promise for the restoration of the Kingdom of David and God's kingship (138-145) leading to the vision of national and universal redemption (145-150).

## Part II (90-150) Return to Zion, Restoration of the Davidic Kingdom and Redemption of the World



### LEGEND

- The mizmorim of David are the blueprint for the book of Tehillim since David is the inspiration for the generation which returns to Zion: the majority of the mizmorim and biographical references that appear in the first two books describe his life, however "David the King of Israel lives" and as a messianic prophetic figure, the number of references to David gradually increase in the subsequent books to 18 (1+2+3+4+8); at the end of the book, the double title, "A psalm of praise by David" (145) connects the final David collection (138-145) to the last Hallelujah mizmorim which conclude the entire book of Tehillim (145-150).

- The concluding verses divide the book of Tehillim into five books. Book I presents the religious teachings of David, Book II, his kingdom; the conclusion of Book II, "Here end the prayers of David, son of Yishai" (72, 20) designate the end of the description of the kingdom of the historical David. The conclusion of Book III is shortened due to the destruction described in its last mizmor (89). In the concluding sentence to Book IV, the entire nation gathers to add the words of Hallelujah in face of the ingathering of the exiles and the rebirth of the Jewish people in its land during the return to Zion, as described throughout Book V.