

## PSALMS SUPERSCRIPTS

The majority of the Psalms have what is called a superscript (title). Theologians are divided as to the source and reliability of these titles. Regardless of our conclusion on this matter, these superscripts are obviously ancient and thus more accurate than the speculations of modern critics.

The Superscripts usually accomplish several objectives –

1. They give \_\_\_\_\_ to songs.

“A dove on distant oaks.” “Do not destroy”. “The doe of the morning”. “The lilies of the covenant.”

2. They designate \_\_\_\_\_ to be used with that particular Psalm.

stringed instruments, flutes, musical guilds, singers

3. They specify \_\_\_\_\_ of Psalms.

- a. Victory Psalms – Ps. 68
- b. Processional hymns – Ps. 24
- c. Zion Songs – Ps. 48
- d. Songs of the Lord’s reign – Ps. 99
- e. Antiphonal (Chants) – Ps. 136 (Let’s try it)
- f. Hallelujah Hymns – Ps. 146
- g. Wedding Songs – Ps. 45
- h. Coronations – Ps. 72

4. They give \_\_\_\_\_ for specific Psalms.

alamoth – “maiden” (soprano voices). See Ps 68:11, 1 Chr 15:20

sehminith – Male choir Ps 6, 12

ascents – sung on journeys to feasts. Ps 120-134

nehiloth – “wind instruments” Ps 5

Selah – “musical interlude”

Lammenasseah – “for the choir leader”

Matthew Henry – “As to many of the musical and liturgical titles, the best learning of Hebrew and Christian scholars are unable to recover the original meanings.

One commentator suggests asking several questions before embarking on the study of a Psalm.

1. Was it sung by an individual or the congregation?
2. What was the Psalm’s purpose?
3. Does it mention any special themes?