

SLOW FOOD: PSALMS 61-90 (33 studies)

Slow Food studies explore a single point of interest in each section rather than attempting a full analysis. The first person singular is normally used, in order to encourage personal application; for group study, it can be personalised. Cross-references chase up one or two ideas in the section. Studies may be combined as desired... For devotional purposes it is assumed that David is the author of the Psalms that bear his name. The name of God is found in different forms in these Psalms; for instance in Ps 68 'God', 'the LORD', 'the Almighty', 'the LORD God', 'God our Saviour' and 'my God and King' tumble over one another. Christians have always found the Psalms to be directly applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ and to our life of faith in him by the Holy Spirit. These studies therefore tend to employ the term 'God' as a kind of shorthand. For earlier sets of studies on the Psalms see: April 2003 (Psalms 1-15); May 2004 (Psalms 16-30); October 2006 (Psalms 31-60) [These can be downloaded easily from the TISCA website: www.tisca.info]. Recommended commentaries include Derek **Kidner** *Psalms 1-72* and *Psalms 73-150* (Tyndale/IVP 1973 and 1975); Michael **Wilcock** *The Message of Psalms 1-72* and *The Message of Psalms 73-150* (BST 2001); the Word Biblical Commentary (no. 20, *Psalms 1-50*, **Craigie** 1983; no. 21, *Psalms 51-100*, **Tate** 1990). As for translations, everyone will have their own preference; despite its eccentricity, Eugene Peterson's *The Message* often catches the flavour better than staid versions (see esp. Ps 68).

Psalm 61 Contrast David's present experience with his eternal longings. Where do I look for strength when 'my heart is faint'? *Ps 18:28; 2 Tim 4:7; Rev 3:21.*

Psalm 62 How human is God? *Ps 50:21; Lam 3:22-23; Heb 2:10-18.*

Psalm 63 How far away is David's God? And mine? *Dt 31:6; Ps 139:7-10; Acts 27:23.*

Psalm 64 When people are showing implacable enmity, how should I react? *Lk 6:27-28; Rom 12:14-21.*

Psalm 65 'I can't believe in a God who permits all the evil in the world.' What can be said on the other side of this question? *Rom 2:4, 9; 8:21; 9:22-23.*

Psalm 66 Are answered prayer and gratitude to God a feature of my present experience? If not, why not? *Phil 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Jn 3:19-22.*

Psalm 67 What does God really want with my life? *Jn 15:16; Eph 2:10; Jas 4:6a.*

Psalm 68 This Psalm has been called 'the most difficult of all the Psalms'. We shall spend two sessions on it. If possible, get hold of Kidner, Wilcock and/or *The Message* (see above).

(A) Why is this 'a Psalm for Pentecost' (Kidner)? *Acts 2:33; Eph 4:7-16.*

(B) What is there in this depiction of God that I can set against my current frustrations? *Gen 49:23ff; Ps 29:11; Rom 8:37.*

Psalm 69 Is there anything in 'this most desperate of prayers' (Kidner) that resonates

with my present situation? Can I find Christ here? *Mt 27:34; Jn 19:28f; Rom 15:3.*

Psalm 70 Does the urgency of my prayer determine how quickly God will act? *1 Kings 18:43; Hab 2:3; Lk 18:7; Jn 11:5f.*

Psalm 71 How do past, present and future (however old I am) contribute to my view of God's faithfulness? *Dt 32:4; Isa 46:3-4; 2 Cor 1:9-10.*

Psalm 72 In praying for my school or community, what kind of leadership should I ask for? *2 Sam 23:3-4; 1 Kings 3:7-9; Isa 11:1-5.*

Psalm 73 When faced with the reality of arrogant unbelief, can I find any comfort in the Psalmist's hard-won insights? *Ps 16:8-11; Ps 37:1, 4; Heb 12:2-3.*

Psalm 74 Why does God allow his people to go through times of acute suffering and loss? This Ps reflects on the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. *Ps 22:1, 30-31; Ps 46:5, 10; Lam 2:5-9; Rom 11:1, 29.*

Psalm 75 Who is in charge? *Job 9:4, 10; Isa 33:6; Rom 11:33-36.*

Psalm 76 Is it my chief concern that God's name should be known as 'great' (a) where I find myself (b) in the world? The ref. in vv5-6 is possibly to the extraordinary defeat of the Assyrian army in 2 Kings 19. *Jn 12:27-28; Phil 2:9-11; Rev 15:3-4.*

Psalm 77 How can I turn 'distress at night' (v2) to 'songs in the night' (v6)? *Ps 42:8; Isa 50:10-11; Lk 22:44; Acts 16:23, 25.*

Psalm 78 In the light of vv1-8 and 70-72, what special responsibility is laid upon parents, teachers and leaders with regard to the present and succeeding generations?

Deut 6:6-9. For those who wish to read the whole Ps (only Ps 119 is longer), Kidner's comment 'It reviews the turbulent adolescence of Israel' may provide a line of thought to pursue.

Psalm 79 Is my faith shaken when disasters happen to the church here or elsewhere?

Prov 24:10-11; Dan 9:17; Rev 14:2. This Ps, like Ps 74, is concerned with the siege and sacking of Jerusalem in 587 BC.

Psalm 80 Do I stop praying when the enemy has apparently triumphed? The context seems to be the invasion and destruction of the Northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 722 BC.

Ps 37:24; Mic 7:8; Jn 16:33.

Psalm 81 'If only...!' (vv 8, 13). Do my longings coincide with God's?

1 Chron 4:10; Isa 48:18; Lk 19:42.

Psalm 82 If I have to make decisions from a position of authority, to whom am I really responsible? Kidner and Wilcock arrive at different conclusions on this Ps. For Jesus' allusion to it see Jn 10:34-36, with Carson's commentary.

Prov 18:5; Rom 14:10-12; 2 Cor 5:10.

Psalm 83 Is the Lord bigger than today's bad news? 2 Chr 20 may or may not give us the occasion of this Psalm. Wilcock thinks it is a survey of all Israel's enemies over the centuries.

Ps 112:7; Mk 13:7; 2 Th 2:2.

Psalm 84 Whether or not I am cut off from Christian fellowship, what is my heart set upon? *Ps 63:1; Jn 21:15; Phil 3:8-11.*

Psalm 85 If I can detect few signs of the Lord being powerfully at work in my neck of the woods, does that mean he has withdrawn his blessing for some reason?

Ps 126:4-6; Isa 26:18b-19; Rom 5:1-5.

Psalm 86 Am I desperate enough for the Lord's help?

2 Chr 20:12; Col 4:12; Jas 5:16b-18.

Psalm 87 In what sense have I been 'born in Zion'? *Isa 12:6; 2 Tim 1:5; Jn 1:13; 1 Jn 5:18.*

Psalm 88 What is the use of praying in a situation of unrelieved darkness and even terror? 'No other prayer in the Psalter is quite as desperate as this one' (Wilcock). *Gen 32:24-31; Ps 61:2; Lam 3:25, 1-3; 1 Cor 15:55-57.*

Psalm 89:1-18 Will the Lord ever renege on his covenant? If not, why not? *2 Sam 7:8-16; Isa 55:3; Heb 13:20-21.*

Psalm 89:19-37 How does the Lord Jesus Christ fulfil what is said about David in these verses? *Ezek 37:24-28; Heb 10:5-18.*

Psalm 89: 38-52 If God allows his 'servants' (v50) and his 'anointed' (v51) to suffer shameful defeat, is it because he has forsaken them (v39)? *Isa 49:14-18; Mt 27:39-43; 1 Cor 4:9-13.*

Psalm 90 Have I lost my sense of proportion? *Isa 55:8-9; 1 Cor 15:58; Heb 11:13-16; Jas 4:14b-15; 2 Pet 3:8-13.*

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