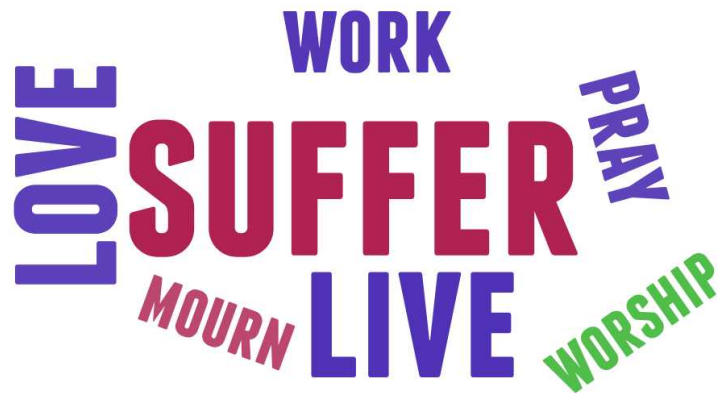


Q1. What do you know about the book of psalms? Do you have a favourite?

Q2. What key words do you associate with the wisdom in the book of Psalms?

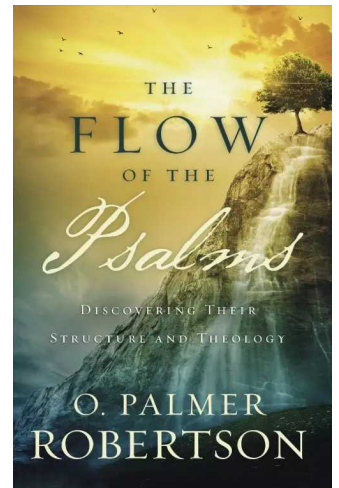
Wisdom Books: <i>How to ... wisely?</i>	
Job?	SUFFER
Psalms?	
Proverbs?	
Song of Solomon?	
Ecclesiastes?	



1. AUTHORS & CONTEXT

Charles Haddon Spurgeon famously released his thoughts on the book of Psalms gradually in his church magazine¹, the compendium finally coalescing in 1885 with the title *The Treasury of David*². And that is a fair title, since the psalms originated mainly under the Davidic covenant with the king himself being the author of at least 73, and probably many more (2 Samuel 23:1).

A number of psalms came from both before and after David's reign (around 1000 BC). For examples, Psalm 90 was by Moses (1400 BC), and Psalm 137 was clearly written by someone after 586 BC. So, a final editor must have assembled them into five books by the time the Septuagint (LXX) was translated from Hebrew into Greek in the 3rd century BC. The background to them is nevertheless David's organisation of Levitical, tabernacle and temple, worship in 1 Chronicles 25.



2. STRUCTURE

The five books of Psalms itself are almost entirely poetry, with a set of historical inscriptions. There are many, many, structural elements within each book of the psalms.³

Q3. Consider how each psalm quoted supports the division into the five books:

BOOK	PSALMS	KINGDOM ... ³
I	1 – 41	Confrontation
II	42 – 72	Communication
III	73 – 89	Devastation
IV	90–106	Maturation
V	107–150	Consummation

¹ *The Sword and the Trowel* (1865-1968)

² See <https://archive.spurgeon.org/treasury/treasury.php>, accessed 2024/10/22.

³ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms*, P&R, 2015. There are acrostics, pyramid arrangements and many others.

BOOK	PSALMS	KINGDOM ...	EXAMPLE
I	1 – 41	Confrontation	<p><i>Psalm 2:1-2 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?</i></p> <p>² <i>The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed^{fn4} ESV</i></p> <p>Q4. What big theme appears explicitly even this early?</p>
II	42 – 72	Communication	<p><i>Psalm 42:5 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?</i></p> <p><i>Put your hope in Elohim, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my Elohim. OPR⁵</i></p>
III	73 – 89	Devastation	<p><i>Psalm 77:1-3 I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me.</i></p> <p>² <i>In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted.</i></p> <p>³ <i>When I remember God, I moan; ... ESV</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p><i>God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform; he plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.⁶ (Ps 77:19)</i></p> </div> <p>Q5. What point is Cowper making in the verse above?</p>

4 מָשִׁיחַ (messiah) Anointed one

5 O. Palmer Robertson's tr. highlighting the dominance of the general magisterial plural name for God, *Elohim*, for communicating the kingdom even to foreigners.

6 Isaac Watts based on *God moves in a mysterious way* by the poet William Cowper 1773.

BOOK	PSALMS	KINGDOM ...	EXAMPLE
IV	90 – 106	Maturation	<p><i>Psalm 90:14-17 (by Moses):</i> <i>Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,</i> <i>that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.</i> ¹⁵ <i>Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,</i> <i>and for as many years as we have seen evil.</i> ¹⁶ <i>Let your work be shown to your servants,</i> <i>and your glorious power to their children.</i> ¹⁷ <i>Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us,</i> <i>and establish the work of our hands upon us;</i> <i>yes, establish the work of our hands! ESV</i></p>
V	107 – 150	Consummation	<p><i>Psalm 136:1,26 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,</i> <i>for his steadfast love endures for ever. ...</i> ²⁶ <i>Give thanks to the God of heaven,</i> <i>for his steadfast love endures for ever. ESV</i></p> <p>Q6. What is the main emphasis of Psalm 136?</p> <p>Q7. How might you go about singing it antiphonally⁷?</p>

3. MULTIPLE RELATED THEMES ADDING UP TO: ***'WORSHIPPING WISELY'***

The LORD, his messianic king and kingdom, his word (Torah=law).

4. KEY VERSES

Psalm 119:1,176 Blessed are those whose ways are blameless,
who walk according to the law of the LORD. ...

¹⁷⁶ *I have strayed like a lost sheep.*

Seek your servant,
for I have not forgotten your commands. NIV

5. KEY GROUPS OF PEOPLE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The LORD God (Psalm 51:4) | 3. The messianic king (Psalm 2, 45, etc.) |
| 2. The righteous, the wicked, the nations | 4. Priests, Levites, enemies, etc. |

6. GREAT EVENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Creation (Psalm 104) | 4. The temple dedication (Psalm 30) |
| 2. The exodus from Egypt (Psalm 77) | 5. Going up to the temple to worship
(Songs of Ascents Psalms 120–134) |
| 3. Conflicts, wars, exile (Psalm 137:1) | 6. Eternity (Psalm 23:6; 103:17) |

⁷ Two choirs singing opposite each other, or a precentor and a choir.

7. PSALMS IN PRACTICE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q8. Why do the psalms contains so many questions?

e.g. Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?" ESV

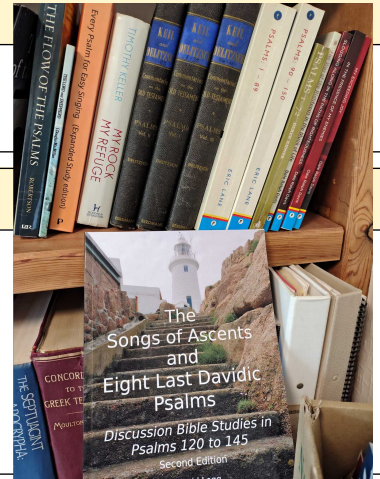
*Psalm 37:25 I have been young, and now am old,
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken
or his children begging for bread. ESV*

Q9. Why do we need to study the psalms when we are young?

Q10. Which is the most miserable psalm, and how might it help us?

e.g. 'darkness is my closest friend. NIV'⁸

Q11. What are the main purposes of the psalms?



Q12. How important are the psalms, according to your previous answer?

8. HOMEWORK

Read, sing, study, pray, repent, and find wise comfort in Psalms.

Web: www.trinitychurch.tc

Contact: www.trinitychurch.tc/contact

Scripture: ESV UK, NIV UK used by permission. CCLI Licence 962635

Analysis above: © D.W. Legg 2026, used by permission. 1991 UK Copyright etc. Act Section 30 'fair dealing'. Cover © P&R

Created in LibreOffice Community 26.2.4.2 with open source software on Fedora™ 44 Linux™