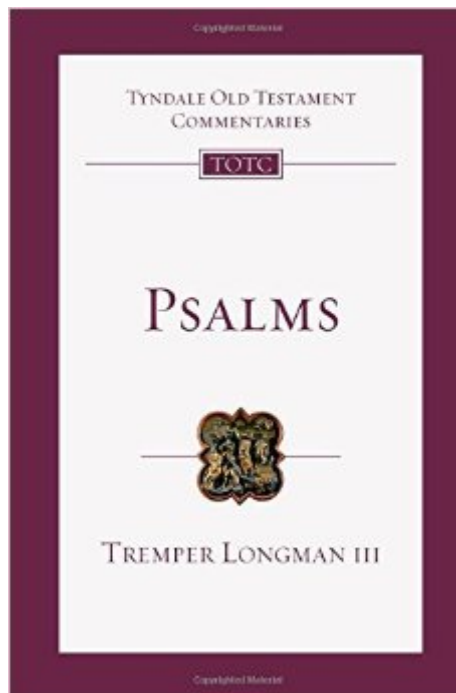


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Psalms: An Introduction And Commentary (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)



Synopsis

The book of Psalms is the heart of the Old Testament, the libretto of the most vibrant worship imaginable. It informs our intellect, stimulates our imagination, arouses our emotions and stirs us to holy thoughts and actions. It is also a pivotal witness to, and anticipation of, Jesus Christ. Tremper Longman's commentary on Psalms is the mature fruit of scholarship and sensibilities developed over a career of exploring Old Testament poetry and wisdom. The commentary interprets each psalm in its Old Testament setting, summarizes its message and reflects on its significance from a New Testament perspective, providing a christological reading. The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries have long been a trusted resource for Bible study. Written by some of the world's most distinguished evangelical scholars, these twenty-eight volumes offer clear, reliable and relevant explanations of every book in the Old Testament, aiming to get at the true meaning of the Bible and to make its message plain to readers today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The venerable Tyndale commentary series is in the process of updating the OT volumes. Coming up to the Psalms volume, IVP had a dilemma. Derek Kidner's volume in the series is one of the best succinct commentaries written on a book of the Bible ever. How do you retire such an author with his winning entry in your commentary set? So what did IVP do? Some staffer came up with the masterstroke publishing idea for the quandary. Reprint the Kidner's titles as "Classic

Commentaries (a quick search on IVP and you can find them as they are available now) and pull out one of the most prolific commentators on Wisdom Literature today, Tremper Longman, and let him do the new Tyndale volume. I may not always agree with Mr. Longman, but I have always been impressed by his prodigious output. Does he ever lay down his pen? He gives us a near 500 page offering on the 150 Psalms. His introduction is short, but sufficiently overviews the issues involved in studying the Psalms. Then he gives a short paragraph on context to help orient us followed by commentary in chunks that make sense. He ends with a "meaning" section that helps us think about directions for application. He does a fine job. I checked some on the Psalms in this volume against the new massive volumes by Allen Ross and the old Kidner volumes. I feel Longman well addresses, in a more compressed format as called for in this series, issues that Mr. Ross handles deeply and masterfully. Did he excel Mr. Kidner? Probably not, but the solution for me is to possess them both and use them often. I have loved and used the entire Tyndale Commentary for years. We need commentaries of this style to go along with our larger exegetical ones to help not lose sight of the forest in looking at the trees.

"The book of Psalms is not a theological textbook," writes Tremper Longman III in his author's preface for his new book Psalms, which is volume 15 and 16 of the new version in Tyndale's Old Testament Commentary (TOTC) now available from IVP Press. But rather, Longman writes: it is "the libretto of the most vibrant worship imaginable." He claims that the Psalms "not only want to inform our intellect, but to stimulate our imagination, arouse our emotions and stir us on to holy thoughts and actions." Is he right? Could 150 poetic hymns and songs, with laments firmly imbedded in their contents, do that for us? I wonder..... Longman, who is Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA, quickly tells us that "even though the laments outnumber the hymns, the predominant note is praise" O.K., that caught my attention and he goes on to explain that each one has a title. Many of the titles include the name of the author, but some titles refer to historical events or liturgy or tunes, or for teaching. The 150 are offered as 5 books, each book having its title and purpose. Longman refers to Psalms 1 and 2 as the beginning or introduction with the closing 5 of the 150 in a doxology. He thinks that stepping back and looking at the way it begins with laments but ends with the last 5 poems in praise may bring us to think that God is "turning our wailing into dancing." Longman studies each Psalm under the headings of Context, Comment, and Meaning. Readers may follow him through their favorite, maybe Ps 117, the shortest, or the longest, Ps. 119, or perhaps Ps. 22 with its special application to the death of Christ, often remembered during Lent.

It caught me by surprise! Someone I knew to be a Christian for many years spoke about The Psalms in the Bible as though they were a riddle that needed to be solved. "What do they mean?" In hindsight it's not so startling. What does a New Testament believer make of verses like, "Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!" (Psalm 137:9). Similarly, Christians today may balk at using swords in worship: "Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the judgment written! This is the honor for all his godly ones. Praise the Lord!" (Psalm 149:5-9). The typical modern worship service looks tame in comparison. After reading some of the psalms, a non-Christian friend was somewhat shocked by the irreverent expressions. I guess he figured the Bible contained only pious sentiments, not people expressing grief, turmoil and complaint as you find in this Hebrew poetry. So what does it all mean? This complete revision of the original two volume set (now one book) in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series goes a long way towards answering that question. In trying to provide an update that conforms to modern standards, the format is updated to reflect a key emphasis from linguistics, which is that texts communicate in larger blocks rather than in shorter segments such as individual verses (8). The upside is a concise analysis of texts that are naturally grouped together as a unit. The downside, if there is one; readers don't get exposition of every verse.

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