

Slow Food Bible Studies

Psalms 31-60 (32 studies)

The Psalms, being highly personal, do not tend to yield their riches to the student with purely academic interests. Teachers are no more immune than other humans to swings of mood: from exhilaration to depression, from certainty to doubt and from anger to anxiety. They may even be tempted to identify the Psalmist's 'wicked' with pupils or colleagues (but see Eph 6:12)!

The idea behind the *Slow Food* studies is to explore a single point of interest in the passage rather than to embark upon an exhaustive exposition. The questions below may be used as a jumping-off point for personal meditations of whatever kind. The first person singular is normally used but can be pluralised for group study. Cross-references, normally three per study, are added as optional extras, in Biblical order (for abbreviations, see the front of any Bible). Studies may be combined at will. For the purposes of devotional application it is assumed that David is the author of the Psalms that bear his name.

Recommended commentaries include: Derek Kidner *Psalms 1-72* (Tyndale/IVP 1973); Michael Wilcox *Psalms 1-72* (BST 2001); Word Biblical Commentary (no. 20, *Psalms 1-50*, Craigie 1983; no. 21, *Psalms 51-100*, Tate 1990).

- Psalm 31** If I am facing a barrage of criticism, opposition etc, can I expect the Lord to hear me? *Ps 23:5; Jonah 2:2; Acts 18:9-10.*
- Psalm 32** Can I be a happy sinner? *Ps 51:14; Hosea 14:2; Heb 11:25-26.*
- Psalm 33** Do I trust God for today? *Ps 119:140; Rom 5:8; 1 Pet 1:3-9.*
- Psalm 34** As a Christian, do I complain if I don't get a trouble-free existence? *Ps 66:10-12; 2 Cor 6:4-5; 2 Tim 3:12.*
- Psalm 35** If I have enemies like David's, do I also have a Lord like his? *Isa 50:7-9; Jn 15:25; 1 Pet 5:8.*
- Psalm 36** Why have those who don't fear God got it wrong? *Jer 17:9; Lk 12:20; Rom 3:18-19.*
- Psalm 37:1-11** How can I maintain a quiet spirit when wickedness apparently flourishes? *Ps 73:3; Prov 16:3; Isa 26:3.*
- Psalm 37:12-26** What difference does knowing the Lord make on a Monday morning? *Lam 3:22-23; Mt 6:34; Rom 14:4.*
- Psalm 37:27-40** In the end, is it worth being a Christian? *Lk 10:38-42; Rom 8:36-37; Jude 24.*
- Psalm 38** In his physical illness, are David's outpourings spiritually healthy? *Job 5:17-18; Phil 2:27; Heb 12:11.*
- Psalm 39** What is my life? *Ps 90:10; Jas 4:14; 1 Pet 1:3-4.*

- Psalm 40** Has the Lord saved me, or hasn't he (yet)? *Jer 38:6-13; Mic 7:7-8; Eph 4:30.*
- Psalm 41** When I am troubled (eg by personal ill-health, moral failure or human duplicity), how can David's attitude help? *Exod 23:4, 5; Mt 26:49; Rom 12:20.*
- Psalm 42** Is asking questions the same as having fundamental doubts? *Job 13:15; Mk 15:34; 2 Cor 1:8-11.*
- Psalm 43** 'The believer is called to live in eternity, but also in time' (Kidner). So? *Rom 8:18; Rom 15:13; 2 Cor 4:18.*
- Psalm 44** If my situation is pretty disastrous, is it worth praying to a God who has allowed it to get that way? *Ps 121:4; Isa 50:10; Mt 14:30.*
- Psalm 45** Do I love Christ this much? *Song 2:14; Jn 21:16; 1 Pet 1:8.*
- Psalm 46** How can I 'be still' when external events are apparently out of control? *2 Ki 19:34-35; Ps 131:2; Mk 4:39.*
- Psalm 47** When God is in his rightful place, what is the effect on everyone? *2 Sam 6:15; Gal 3:7-9; Phil 2:10-11.*
- Psalm 48** If I occasionally feel insecure, how much hope should I place (a) in 'mundane precautions, (b) in God's 'miraculous help' (Kidner's phrases)? *Ps 127:1-2; Prov 3:5-6; Jn 15:5.*
- Psalm 49** In my teaching, do I reinforce the view that worldly success (wealth etc) will bring happiness? *Ps 73:24; Eccl 11:9; 1 Tim 6:17.*
- Psalm 50** Have I forgotten that my dealings are with the living God? *Acts 14:15; 2 Cor 6:16; Heb 9:15.*
- Psalm 51** Confronted with what I am really like, how can I carry on as a Christian? *Isa 1:18; Lk 22:32; Rom 12:1. For the situation see 2 Sam 11:1-12:14.*
- Psalm 52** If I have experienced evil at the hands of a fellow human being, to what extent is this Psalm a guide to my attitude? *Gen 50:20; Jn 15:20; Rom 16:20.*
- Psalm 53** Why do I find it so difficult to learn wisdom? *Jas 1:5; 3:13-18; 4:2.*
- Psalm 54** If false (or not quite true) things are being said about me, what action should I take? *Ps 120:1-2; Mt 5:11; Rom 12:17-21. For the situation see 1 Sam 26.*

- Psalm 55** How could this Psalm help someone locked into an undesirable situation? *Ps 37:7; Acts 22:18, 21; Acts 23:11.*
- Psalm 56** Are 'tears' (v8) consistent with 'trust' (vv3, 4, 11)? *Ps 126:5; Jn 11:35; Heb 5:7. For the situation see 1 Sam 21:10ff.*
- Psalm 57** Whether or not my current experience is anything like David's, how important is God in my assessment of it? *Ruth 2:12; Ps 36:7; Lk 13:31ff. For the original situation see 1 Sam 22:1-24:15.*
- Psalm 58** Power-crazy? Me? *1 Ki 12:14; Jas 1:23-24; 1 Pet 5:3.*
- Psalm 59** If I am being unfairly treated, what should I do about it? *1 Ki 18:36; Prov 18:10; 1 Pet 2:18-23. For the situation see 1 Sam 19:11-17.*
- Psalm 60** Is God in my disasters as well as in my triumphs? *Ps 31:22; 2 Cor 1:8-10; Heb 12:11.*