



The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary (Eerdmans Critical Commentary)

Samuel Terrien

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In this monumental work, his most ambitious undertaking, the late Samuel Terrien brings together a lifetime of scholarship on Psalms, long the wellspring of Jewish spirituality as well as the main hymnal of the Christian church.

The book's insightful and clearly written introduction treats such subjects as the longevity and ecumenicity of the psalms, their Near Eastern background, the Hebrew text and ancient versions, their music, their strophic structure, their literary genre, their theology, and their relation to the New Testament. In the commentary itself Terrien freshly elucidates the theological significance of these collected poems by putting readers in touch with the formal versatility and religious passion of the psalmists themselves. While Terrien always engages in scientific exegesis before drawing theological conclusions, he is careful to allow full expression to the theological — and, especially, the doxological — voice of these unmatched spiritual songs. The result is a commentary that provides a link between the archaic language of Psalms and the intellectual demands of modern thinking and spirituality.

Throughout his exposition Terrien shows great respect for the scribal testimony of the Jewish tradition, especially the consonants of the Masoretic text. He likewise displays great care in finding the most accurate meaning for Hebrew words of obscure origin. This meticulous work renders a translation of Psalms more reliable than those of Terrien's predecessors. He also draws on many fruitful gains of structural analysis in discerning the strophic divisions within the Hebrew text. Often he finds unity of composition where earlier critics denied it. And for readers interested in specific aspects of translation and interpretation, Terrien has appended bibliographical lists of modern works on each psalm.

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