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One of the world's most trusted Bible scholars, N. T. Wright turns his attention to the central collection of prayers that Jesus and Paul knew best: the book of Psalms. Wright points out that the Psalms have served as the central prayer and hymnbook for the church since its beginning--until now. In *The Case for the Psalms*, Wright calls us to return to the Psalms as a steady, vital component of healthy Christian living.

Reading, studying, and praying the Psalms is God's means for teaching us what it means to be human: how to express our emotions and yearnings, how to reconcile our anger and our compassion, how to see our story in light of God's sweeping narrative of salvation. Wright provides the tools for understanding and incorporating these crucial verses into our own lives. His conclusion is simple: all Christians need to read, pray, sing, and live the Psalms.

The Case for the Psalms: Why They Are Essential Details

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Amy Neftzger says

This is a short but meaningful book that discusses the importance of the psalms for Christians. The author explains how the psalms add to the richness of spiritual life by showing us how to relate to God, especially when these works of poetry are viewed within context of one another. Too often only portions of psalms are used in personal reading or worship. The author makes a great case for viewing these works collectively as one unit and describing how these pieces were designed to transform and enrich the reader.

Ethan says

A book that grew out of a lecture Wright gave on the Psalms (accessible on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/aSb62xG9om0>).

Wright investigates the Psalms as one who has meditated and sung them throughout his life (in the afterword he gets unusually personal with the role the Psalms played in his life) and as a scholar of Second Temple Judaism and the development of Christianity.

His case for the Psalms rests in three matters: time, space, and matter. He argues that the Psalms are where God's time and ours intersect, His space and ours interlock, and matter is infused with His power and glory. He describes Israel's covenantal monotheism and contrasts that with modern views heavily influenced by Epicureanism masquerading as scientism and Platonic deism.

In terms of time he shows how the Psalms anchor their understanding of the present in terms of the good things God has done in Creation and for Israel while looking forward to the fullness of God's rule and judgment. He expects the reader to return to a more concrete understanding of space in the Psalms and the claim that the Creator God, for a time, dwelt on a hill in Jerusalem called Zion, and all that implies. He speaks of a progression from the idea of God based in the Temple to access to God in the Torah; the Temple as a micro-cosmos and thus the creation as a Temple itself; he then shows how all of this leads quite nicely into first Jesus as the Temple and then Christians and the church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit. He also intends for the reader to consider a view of creation quite different than the one most have today, one in which God is not so far away but very much infusing everything with life and power, that as the Psalms say, all created things do praise God, and do so by functioning as God intended. Here again is the praise of things as they are but also the looking forward to the judgment in which all will be put to right and God's purposes for the creation restored to what He intended before the corruption of sin and death. All of this is "resurrection" in movement if not in word; as Hebrews saturated in the Psalms both Peter's and Paul's theologies do not seem as far out or strange but very much continuous with all that God clearly intended from the beginning. He also introduces the idea that God's instruction, Torah, is intended to transform a person even on a physical level, to lead to righteousness and a full life (Psalm 19, among others).

He concludes with concerns about the over-emphasis in modern Christianity on hymnody to the neglect of psalmody, and encourages believers to draw strength, growth, and transformation through meditation upon and singing and praying of the Psalms.

Very worthy of consideration.

Peter Davids says

This was another great book from N. T. Wright. He admits that he is not a Psalms specialist, although he consulted with one, but he is indeed a faith specialist who has been singing the Psalms since at least age 7 (when he started as a choirboy), although he admits to times when the Psalms were dry for him. He sees in the Psalms the great themes of God's story, of creation and redemption, and he sees the dimensions of time and matter included in the story. So he sees the Psalms as transformative, as helping us to see with different eyes, not so much because of an intellectual change, but because of an inner change, a worldview change, a spiritual change. Wright reads the Psalms as a Christian, so he is not afraid to indicate what a Psalm meant at a given time and then indicate what it means for the Christian who carries the story of God further through the life of Jesus. Thus I would class this as spiritual literature rather than pure biblical studies. From that point of view this is an amazing book. It appeals to the church and to individual believers to read the Psalms more, to incorporate them into one's lifestyle, and yet it is a personal book, indicating how the Psalms spoke to him at this or that point in his own life. I read or chant Psalms daily on a four week cycle, so I am familiar with them. Still, this book opened up new vistas. I can highly recommend it as a way to refresh both mind and soul.

Ragan Sutterfield says

A good, short book on the Psalms. It is clearly a sort of "after thought" book that brings together some lectures and personal reflections. That doesn't detract from its value, but it is not as systematic or wholistic in its approach as the work of someone like Brueggemann. I found Wright's framework of time, space, and matter a helpful tool for teaching on the Psalms. Overall it is a useful, easy read.

Zack Clemmons says

A delightful little book, considering the Psalms through the lenses of time, space, and matter. I like Wright's attention to the continuity of Torah, Temple, and New Testament theology, and his ability to read each in the Psalter. I know something of the intellectual firepower he wields, and am thus more impressed with his ability to write clearly and simply, to hold back and dive in as needed. His personal account of living with the Psalms was endearing, and an encouragement to engage more deeply and habitually with the church's great hymnbook. I'm particularly eager to find great musical setting of the Psalms, and would welcome recommendations.

Jeff says

This little book is an outstanding read in a couple of ways. Wright, for those who don't already know, is one of the world's most compelling and surely that most recognized New Testament scholar. In this he has written a book on the Psalms that draws upon the biblical worldview that he has articulated so well for his readers in his various volumes on Jesus, Paul and NT origins. In its own understated way the book makes clear how the ongoing life of the Church in worship is enriched and best understood by recognizing and rejoicing in its place in God's story even now still being worked out as we move hopefully into the future.

Wright shares personal stories in a few spots and gives an entire chapter to such stories which provide great illustration of how various Psalms can speak into our lives at various points in time. This makes a book the most personal of the many that Wright has written and perhaps a good one to read before plunging into his upcoming multi-volume work on Paul.

Ellen says

Although he discussed some beautiful theological ideas, they did not in any way seem to support his thesis. He has a beautiful love for the psalms and that is clearly conveyed, but overall, the book read as a boomer trying to prove something was important because he thought it was important first, and then tried to assign meaning to it after, to prove the kids these days are doing it wrong.

As well, I was surprised at how little evidence he offered for the claims he made about the psalms and their order because I had been anticipating a more academic style of work.

James says

About 10 years ago I read an article on N.T. Wright on the Christianity Today site. The article, was published when Wright was dean of Lichfield Cathedral, and I remember Wright making a comment that if you want to understand his theology, you have to see him at worship.

This is Wright at worship. In this book he commends the Psalms as a prayer book and as something that gives shape and depth to corporate worship. His context as an Anglican theologian has meant that he is part of a communion that regularly reads the Psalms. He also reads the Psalms daily as part of his devotional practice. So while the title suggests that Wright is 'making the case for the Psalms' for churches and Christians who have let them fall into disuse, I found this book to be a personal account of his devotional life.

Wright argues that inhabiting the Psalms means marking time, space, and matter differently than our post-enlightenment culture does. Of course as a NT guy, N.T. has a lot to say about how Christ fits into the story, and hopes that are sketched in the Psalms (so does the New Testament), but he opens up a way to reorient ourselves around the Psalms and hear their cumulative message.

I especially appreciated the later chapters where Wright has talked about the joy he's experienced in his life reading various Psalms and hearing God speak to him through them. Great stuff!

Willem says

wonderbaarlijk!

Becky Pliego says

I really wanted to love it, but I only liked it. I loved, however, the Introduction, and chapters 1-2

Arni says

This was a fast, but edifying read. It's not an academic book, but more of a sustained spiritual reflection on the general themes of the psalms. Ok, I made it sound boring. It's not. This is N.T. Wright, after all, and these are the spiritual reflections of one of the leading Bible experts of our time. So these are incredible rich reflections. The reflections, which revolve around the tension between divine and human space, time and matter as expressed in the Psalms, have a decidedly eschatological bent, which Wright fans will recognise and appreciate. The book is written in clear, easily read, mostly non-academic language and will prove, I think, a rewarding read for both regular folk and those with more theological training.

I found the title a bit weird. I guess Wright couldn't publish one more C.S. Lewis-y book title, but "a case for", this is not. He laments, shortly, how the Psalms don't have a central place in the worship of many churches today, and how in those where they are still recited, only a select, "inspirational" are allowed. And he ends the book with anecdotes about how the Psalms have formed and influenced his life. Which is fine. But if you're looking for a critical analysis of how the Psalms have fallen out of favour in modern churches and how to recover an appropriate place for them, you'll be disappointed. As much as I liked this one, I kind of wish that Wright had written such a book. Someone should, especially for the liturgically challenged among us (like yours truly).

All in all, a nice, short book of rich theological reflection on the Psalms written for a popular audience, but still eminently palatable to more educated readers, by one of the best Biblical scholars out there today.

Tim Baumgartner says

Since the time I heard about N.T. Wright, I've been able to observe his production as a Bible scholar. This guy gets things done! And done well (as far as I have read)! Once I read in the Table of Contents that his final chapter of this book was how he has directly benefited from the Psalms, I wanted to skip right to the end. But, I've been good and held out. Here's my synopsis:

Introduction (Ch. 1):

When I read "The Psalms represent the Bible's own spiritual root system for the great tree we call Christianity. You don't have to be a horticultural genius to know what will happen to the fruit on the tree if the roots are not in good condition" (5) I was certainly drawn in. Then I came across a major challenge from him on the next page "The Psalms offer us a way of joining in a chorus of praise and prayer that has been going on for millennia and across all cultures. Not to try to inhabit them, while continuing to invent non-psalmsic 'worship' based on our own feelings of the moment, risks being like a spoiled child who, taken to the summit of Table Mountain with the city and the ocean spread out before him, refuses to gaze at the view because he is playing with his Game Boy." I've been encouraged to worship to songs like "Catch Me at the Brook" by Sho Baraka feat. Lecrae (based on Psalm 42), "Joyful Noise" by Flame feat. Lecrae (Psalm 95), "Get That" by Cross Movement (Psalm 150), and Fred Hammond's "Blessings and Honor" (Psalm 45).

Ch. 2 (Pray and Live):

The next chapter Wright uses a comparison between two ancient philosophies: that of the Psalms (that God is both transcendent AND immanent) and that from Epicurus (used in Enlightenment era), which "offered liberation from any fear of the gods or of what terrors might be in store for people after their deaths. But by the same stroke, it cut off any long-term or ultimate hope. At a popular level, the message was this: shrug

your shoulders and enjoy life as best you can. Sounds familiar? This is the philosophy that our modern Western world has largely adopted as the norm" (17-18). Then a quick line of hope: "when the Psalms do their work in us and through us, they should equip us the better to live by and promote that alternative [biblical] worldview."

As we "pray and live," God uses the Psalms to speak A LOT about the intersection of time, space, and matter. He goes on to add this about each of them: "First, 'time.' All music and all poetry regularly have the capacity to transcend ordinary time. They call to the depths of memory and imagination, bringing the past forward into the present (memory) and envisaging the future as well (imagination).

Second, 'space.' The designers of Gothic cathedrals built them as great vaulted spaces, soaring high above ordinary human capacities. They knew perfectly well that these huge echoing arches made no sense as human habitations; unlike ordinary houses or shops, they were not built, as it were, 'to our scale.' That is because they were designed to evoke the mysterious heavens, which are normally inaccessible to us—except precisely when we make music. When we sing, the sound made even by small-scale earthbound creatures such as us rings around the rafters that we cannot otherwise reach.

Third, 'matter.' All singers discover that to use the human body as a musical instrument is physically, emotionally, and mentally transformative in a way nothing else quite is. What's more, people who learn the serious business of prayer often discover something that therapists in other traditions sometimes stumble upon as well: that prayer encourages a rhythm of breathing that facilitates a calmer and wiser bodily approach to life than might otherwise be the case. (I am not, of course, suggesting that all people who pray, including me, are always calm or wise, but the point is to make progress along the way.) To sing prayerfully, then is to invite a physical transformation as well as to stand at the borderlands of time and space" (27-28).

Ch. 3 (At the Threshold of God's Time):

This chapter delves right into different Psalms (i.e. praise, wisdom, imprecatory, etc.) that were written as a result of what the people were experiencing and feeling at the time. Psalm 137 is famous for its violent prayers towards enemies. Wright adds, "It may be impossible to 'sing YHWH's song' in this foreign land, but this particular psalmist turns this impossibility itself into yet another one of 'YHWH's songs,' thus making a psalm out of the fact that one can't sing psalms here. If that reminds us of Israel's greatest prophet sensing himself utterly abandoned by God and yet still able to ask God why he has abandoned him, that is probably part of the point" (43-44). *The Case for the Psalms* goes on to talk about how God created us 'in His image' to function in part as assistant rulers over his creation. Additionally, "Here is the ecstasy and the agony of the Old Testament: the rich, breathtaking vocation of Israel and the dark, tragic fact that this vocation, this rescue mission, was to be undertaken by a people who were themselves in sore need of the very same rescue" (52-53). Then, there comes a section that displays the progression of biblical history (using small sections of the Psalms of course). Finally, a summation: "We are called, then, to stretch out the arms of our minds and hearts, and to find ourselves, Christ shaped, cross shaped, at the intersection of the past, present, and future of God's time and our own time. This is a place of intense pain and intense joy, the sort that perhaps only music and poetry can express or embody. The Psalms are gifts that help us not only to think wisely about the overlaps and paradoxes of time, but to live within them, to reach out in the day of trouble and remind ourselves—and not only ourselves, but also the mysterious one whom the Psalms call 'you'—of the story in which we live. Past, present, and future belong to him. We are called to live, joyfully and painfully, in the story that is both his and ours. Our times are in his hand" (74-75).

Ch. 4 (Where God Dwells):

The emphasis on God dwelling in Zion (Jerusalem) is paramount here. Parts of psalm after psalm are given until "the great crescendo of praise that moves through the collection between Psalms 95 and 100 ["This, of course, is why the pilgrim psalms, the Songs of Ascents, traditionally known as the songs to be sung by pilgrims on their way up to Jerusalem for the great festivals, are what they are. Jerusalem and the Temple itself are not just a convenient gathering point: they are the place of promise, the place of presence, the place out of all the earth where the living God has chosen to live) (86-87). Then he gives an example of the benefits of knowing the Hebrew "in a lovely piece of poetic alliteration, the poet exploits the verbal link between 'Jeru-salem' and the words for 'pray' (sha'al) and for 'peace' (shalom). 'Pray for the peace of

Jerusalem,' he says (Sha'alu shalom Yerushalaim): [See Ps 122:6-9]" (88). By the middle of this chapter, I was actually getting a bit bored as I was like "yea, God is dwelling in Jerusalem. I know, I know." But then it hit me like an unnecessary roughness penalty of a "late hit." Wright then makes one of the most beautifully reasoned arguments to demonstrate how the Psalms demonstrate how God has been striving for millenia to dwell in people all over the world. "The psalms themselves, even while continuing to celebrate the Zion promises and the coming Davidic kingship that goes with them, already sing about, and by singing help to bring about, an implicit personal version of Temple theology. Devout worshipers, individually or corporately, can themselves become, as it were, an extension of sacred space.

The notion of YHWH dwelling in the Temple has not been abandoned, but it is translated into the notion of his dwelling with his people—within his people, wherever they are—through their study and heartfelt practice of the Torah. Through that same Torah, his people discover not only that he can be their 'refuge,' the 'place' where they are at home, but that he will make his home with them, within them.

This will, of course, require—and effect!—a radical transformation. If the Temple theology is being democratized and personalized in this fashion, it loses none of its demand for holiness in the process—rather, the reverse.

The psalms are here pointing to the double intention of the creator: that the Temple in Jerusalem should be a sign not only of God's purpose to flood the whole of creation with his glorious presence, but also of his longing to fill the hearts, minds, imaginations, and wills of his people with that same glory. (107-108)

This I will definitely be "chewing on" for a while.

Ch. 5 (All the Trees of the Forest Sing for Joy):

"What some had experienced, or might hope to experience, in the tabernacle or Temple (the tent or house being filled with the glory of YHWH) was now to be hoped for in terms of the whole creation. That, we may assume, is part, at least, of what Jesus taught his followers to pray for when they were to say, 'Thy kingdom come, on earth as in heaven'" (127). Wright goes on to emphasize some of his favorites (103 & 104) and emphasizes how the scriptures speak of the creation being created in wisdom. This phrase 'in wisdom,' as Wright tells, is what Proverbs 8:22, and later Paul, uses in Colossians 1:15-20.

I found these long quotes to be very helpful as well: "God creates 'that which is not God' out of generous love in order that he may then, in the end, fill it, flood it, drench it, with his love and his glory" (136). Here is the paradox at the heart of the ancient biblical vision of creation, a paradox that reaches its height in the person of Jesus himself and then in the lives of all who are indwelt by his Spirit. God creates us to be precisely other than God because that is what love—the divine love—is like. God has taken great delight in the whale and the anteater, in the cedar tree and the rose bush, in the wild asses and the slimy, creepy things of the sea, in the lions roaring for their food and the little furry animals scurrying around the mountain rocks. All that is already there in Psalm 104 and elsewhere. This is the sheer matter of the world. (136)

So, as with time and space, we are invited to stand at the intersection of original created matter and the matter of new creation, the original matter that reveals God's power and glory and the new creation that will be flooded, saturated, with God's presence and glory. And we do not, of course, stand there as mere outside observers. We, being ourselves part of that extraordinary picture, find our own stories within the larger narrative of creation—our own small but significant stories of wine and bread, of work and rest, of death and new life, and, through it all, of praise. [See also Ps 145; 29; 33:6-9]. (136-137)

"The now-and-not-yet of God's inaugurated new time is expressed in terms of the to-and-fro between Temple space and cosmic space, with humans, God's people, straddling the gap. Because all of this is creational theology, it is expressed, too, in terms of matter: the matter of creation and the renewed, glory-soaked matter of new creation" (155).

Ch. 6 (At Home in the Psalms):

This chapter is MUCH shorter. Wright says, "The Psalms speak of change, but more importantly they are agents of change: change within the humans who sing them, and change through those humans, as their transformed lives bring God's kindness and justice into the world. The Psalms do much more than inform the singer and the listener of the truth of Israel's worldview, in which past, present and future, heaven and earth, creation and new creation all overlap. They are part of the means by which this happens. I find it impossible,

therefore, to imagine a growing and maturing church or individual Christian doing without the Psalms" (164-5).

He then challenges the reader to figure out what it means to read the Psalms "as a complete set" within one's Christian community and shares some examples of what some groups have chosen to do.

Afterword: My Life with the Psalms:

This is the chapter I was especially interested in--to see the spiritual transformation that has specifically taken place in his life. Sometimes I wonder if some people get into the Biblical Studies field because they are just really smart. Honestly, I wonder how much they experience God. Here was an opportunity to catch some glimpses. I won't spoil it here, but they were REALLY cool. I rejoice in what God has done in Wright's life and how God has used him to impact countless others. It gives me encouragement and motivation to not grow weary in doing good and to utilize Psalm 126, as Wright regularly does, in helping others, along with himself. That builds a pretty strong case for the Psalms, if you ask my opinion.

Jacob Aitken says

In many ways this might be Wright's best work ever. I had always suspected something like his thesis when I read the Psalms (more on that below) but I couldn't articulate it. The psalms give us a musical ontology. Wright says the Psalms transform the reader (better yet, the chanter and singer) because they place him or her at the intersection of Space, Time, and Matter--the very place where Jesus of Nazareth is.

People who pray the psalms will be learning to live in God's time, space, and "matter" (the stuff we are made of) as well as our own (Wright 27). The psalms resonate with Jesus because he was the one who stood at the intersection of God's time/space/matter and ours (30).

The threshold of God's Time:

The ebb and flow in the Psalms teach us an eschatological balance. The theme of time helps us with those instances where we are called to sing of the enthronement of Yahweh's king (44). And we shouldn't shrink back from the royalist overtones in our democratic age, for we are called to be his vice-regents.

More specifically, Yahweh also called Israel to care for the world (Genesis 12:3). But given Israel's failure, God narrows his focus to the House of David. Therefore, the intersection of God's time with our time--and always with the Davidic King in the foreground--comes into focus in Psalm 89.

Where God Dwells

The "Temple" is where God's space and our space intersect. If the world's Creator lives in Jerusalem, then it stands to reason (Ps. 2) that he will rule from Jerusalem.

"The temple turns out to be an advance foretaste of Yahweh's claim on the whole of creation...It is a sign that the creator God is desiring...to recreate the world from within" (91).

1. The temple is a heaven-and-earth reality, a microcosm of creation.
2. Psalm 24: Yahweh takes up residence in his temple.
3. Temple and Torah are connected and both point ahead to God's new place.
4. Temple Psalms and Pneumatology: the new Temple is indwelt by the Spirit.
5. Covenant renewal generates fresh idea of sacred space.

All the trees of the forest sing for joy

Western modernity sees matter as lifeless matter. The Psalms, however, see creation throbbing with the potential glory of God. God's glory either already fills the whole earth or it will fill the earth (124).

This ties in with Covenant and Kingship: the true King will bring justice and peace to the earth, which will renew creation (Psalm 72).

Wisdom and Creation

Psalm 104:19-24 combines themes from Genesis 1 and Proverbs 8. Paul picks up this Wisdom-Creation tradition and places it in Jesus (Colossians 1:15-20, 2.2-3).

Summary of Theme

Time: the past of creation, the future of Judgment, and the present of celebration are drawn together.

Space: what was promised for the Temple is now promised for the whole world.

Matter: we are standing at the fault line of the original material of creation and the glory-filled material of the new creation (144).

Conclusion and Nota Bene:

The book is simply magnificent. I honestly can't think of a single flaw.

Nota Bene

Wright says at one time in his life when he was witnessing to Gaia-worshipping pantheists, he felt an oppressive darkness and Yahweh gave him deliverance by bringing Psalm 97 (which happened to be the next Psalm in the prayerbook reading) to mind, "Yahweh is King. Let the Earth rejoice!" p. 175

Logan says

Despite a few minor areas (in this volume at least) where I disagree with Wright's thoughts, I found this book to be very helpful and beneficial in showing how vital the Psalms are to a Christian's life. They aren't merely a collection of ancient poetry, but capture the entirety of Man---emotions, body, and soul---his relation to God, and the complex interactions we have with the world. Wright outlines it as relating to Time, Space, and Matter and one of the sections I found particularly engaging spoke about how Christians shouldn't be afraid of matter or think of this world as a bad thing. We should glory in creation and the Creator, and be amazed at the splendor of it all. After all, it will be not simply done away with but renewed one day.

This was given to me with the recommendation of my pastor, otherwise I probably would haven't read anything by Wright :)

Erin says

Psalm 119 (really the last section of the psalm) changed the focus of my faith; it became my confession, my

prayer, and my hope more than 20 years ago. And when I was done meditating on this passage, I began looking more closely at the collection of poetry and songs found in the middle of our Bibles. I was blown away by what I found and marveled that this book had been largely ignored in my Christian experience.

Oh, we read snippets here and there, but for the most part, we skimmed over this section of Scripture.

Wright argues that this is a loss. He concedes that they can be difficult to navigate sometimes. After all, we are uncomfortable with praying that God will avenge us or whole peoples. We aren't sure if it's okay to be angry with God. Or we just don't feel that joyful (or depressed).

Wright offers a way to navigate and view these psalms. At points, this book is brilliant and opens up the songs and poems found here. At other times, the book moves slowly and I found myself wanting him to get to the point or to make the point more clearly.

That being said, I have begun taking the things I learned here, about how to understand and read the psalms, even the ones that don't resonate with me at that moment, and I am re-reading the psalms with these thoughts in mind.

I highly recommend this book. If you get to parts that you don't quite understand or are bored with, skim them and read on. Or message me and we can sort them out together.

Jeff says

While there are a few nuggets to be found in this book, most of the book attempts to cram the Psalms into three categories: time, space, and matter. This seems to be forced and muddles the beauty of the Psalms. It is also a bit confusing and at times I wondered exactly what the author was trying to communicate. One thing that annoyed me about this book is the regular references to the author's other books--it was like having a stream of advertisements in-line while reading. Footnoting them would have been much better. The last chapter regarding the author's experiences with the Psalms was the best part of the book.

Concise Reader says

A decent book that doesn't offer anything new.

Here is how Wright summarizes the goal of his book:

In particular, I propose in this book that regular praying and singing of the Psalms is transformative. It changes the way we understand some of the deepest elements of who we are, or rather, who, where, when, and what we are... I hope my exposition of these themes will help to explain and communicate my own enthusiasm for the Psalms, but I hope even more than they will encourage those churches that have lost touch with the Psalms to go back to them as soon as possible, and those that use them but with little grasp of what they're about to get inside them in a new way.

I think Wright somewhat succeeds. If a person interested in reading the Psalms picks up this book, I can see

that person being persuaded to spend more time in the Psalms. However, if you are looking to understand the Psalms themselves, you'll have to keep looking.

Joshua Parks says

Definitely the best part of this book is the afterword, titled "My Life With the Psalms." Wright tells of times in his life when particular Psalms brought him hope, comfort, and wisdom. I believe one of the most powerful ways God sustains our faith—or at least mine—is through the lives and stories of other believers, and this book fits the bill.

Thailer Jimerson says

Though a small book, it packs a punch for the worldview-shaping power of the psalms. Wright's simple point is to call for a rediscovery and reintegration of the psalms into a church world overladen with contemporary worship songs and suffering from a deep poverty of the church's original hymnal. His main point, beautifully summarized from Ephesians 2.10 is that we are God's "poiema" (Gk. for 'poem') and by accepting the invitation to inhabit the time, space and matter - i.e., the world of - the psalms, we'll be transformed into a walking, talking, praising psalm, if you will, declaring his praises in the world. The way he elaborates that point is by going through a hodgepodge of psalms that depict the time-, space-, and matter-altering power, respectively.

Jesse Slimak says

This was a great gem of a book: small but beautiful. Wright approaches the Psalms as a life long Anglican who has prayed, read and sung them for years. He also definitely approaches them through the lens and trajectory of the New Testament, but this is to be expected since that is his primary area of study.

Wright looks at the Psalms through the categories of time, space and matter and sees much that the Psalms point to fulfilled in the New Testament. He especially makes a compelling case for a christocentric trajectory and fulfillment regarding matter and Christ being the ushering in of New Creation which the Psalmists speak about when they talk about the beauty of creation and also long for redemption.

Wright argues that the reason the Psalms' worldview seems often strange to us is not because it is ancient and we are modern. Instead it's because so many are working with an Epicurean (which is ancient as well!) worldview that doesn't see beyond materialism. Hence the Psalms truly have a different worldview than most people functionally operate from.

Wright make a compelling case that in praying the the Psalms one doesn't just talk about redemption but one actually enacts redemption in some way. Through my own experience of trying to pray the Psalms every day this resonated greatly with me. The Psalms are not just statements about transformation they actually transform; or better put God transforms through them.

I would highly recommend this book to every Christian, but especially to those who have yet to experience transformation through becoming regular friends with the Psalms. Day in and day out the Psalms should be used as the most wonderful prayer book that God has provided.

