

Questions on Ps 70

This Psalm has a very tidy structure that you should be able to discern. The following questions help you first to see the structure and then to understand its implications for interpreting the Psalm. You might like to try to discover the structure on your own before reading the questions.

Understanding the Structure

Biblical structure is built on repetition and similarity. So we should keep our eyes open for verses that are similar to one another.

v.1. This verse is very similar to another verse in the Psalm.

- To which verse is it most similar?
- How many points of similarity can you find?
- This Psalm is almost identical to the last five verses of Ps 40. Compare these two verses to their counterparts in Ps 40. Do the differences from Ps 40 strengthen or weaken the similarity that you have found?
- How are these two similar verses different from one another?

Now consider the verses that remain after setting aside these two similar verses. What do they all have in common?

In spite of this similarity, there is a distinction among these verses. What is it?

Using letters to represent similar verses or consecutive groups of verses, how would you represent the overall structure of the Psalm? Possible examples might be ABCBC, ABAB, ABCBA, ABBA, ABABC, AABBC, etc.

Some Interpretive Implications

Structure is important, not for its own sake, but because it helps us interpret and apply Scripture accurately. These questions help you meditate on some of the implications of the structure. Perhaps you can find others as well.

Prayer can be Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, or Supplication (remember—prayer ACTS).

- How many of the clauses in this psalm are prayers?
- Please classify each clause as Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, or Supplication.
- How is the distribution of prayer types different from Ps 40 (consider the entire psalm), or most other psalms that we have seen?
- How does this difference illustrate Luke 18:1 and 1 Pet 5:7?

The last question emphasized a similarity across all five verses of the psalm. In spite of this similarity, your structural analysis should have led you to a key distinction among these prayers. What is it, and how can it enrich your prayer life? (Hint: for whom does David pray in each verse?)

Your analysis should have found an expansion in moving from v. 1 to v. 5.

- What is the added material in v.5, compared with v.1?
- What contrast does it bring to our attention?
- What does this contrast teach us about how we should think about ourselves? See if you can think of some related contrasts.