The Psalms Restored

Their Titles, Their Structure, and Their Sense — All 150 Psalms Presented One by One

All five Books of the Psalter, Psalm by Psalm, with Part One, Part Three and the appendices.

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The Psalms at a Glance

All one hundred and fifty Psalms, by number, in three blocks of fifty. The Psalter was divided into "three fifties" in the early and medieval church, and the division is kept here as an aid to finding a Psalm. The first Psalm of each of the five Books (1, 42, 73, 90, 107) is shaded.

In the PDF, click a number to go to that Psalm. At the head of every Psalm, click the heading to come back to this page.

Psalms 1–50

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	**42**	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50

Psalms 51–100

51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	**73**	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	**90**
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

Psalms 101–150

101	102	103	104	105	106	**107**	108	109	110
111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130
131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140
141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150

Shaded: the first Psalm of each Book — Book I (1), Book II (42), Book III (73), Book IV (90), Book V (107).

The Purpose of This Study

> **Nehemiah 8:5, 8** *And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up. . . . So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*
>
> **Luke 24:44** *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*

When Ezra opened the book, the people stood up. They wanted to hear it, and they wanted to understand it. The Levites did three things: they read it *distinctly*, they *gave the sense*, and they *caused the people to understand*. That is the whole purpose of this study.

The Psalms are the best-loved book of the Old Testament, and in one sense the least understood. Most readers know a few of them by heart and pass over the rest. The Titles at the head of the Psalms are read, if at all, as puzzles. The way each Psalm is built is seldom seen. And the Psalms are usually read one at a time, as if they had been gathered at random, when in fact they stand in an order and in groups that carry their own meaning.

This study sets out to restore what has been lost:

- **The Titles**, put back in the places where they belong, so that each Psalm begins and ends as it was first written and sung.
- **The structure**, shown at the head of every Psalm, so that the reader can see how its parts answer one another.
- **The sense**, given verse by verse, so that every word is understood and every line is seen in its place.

All one hundred and fifty Psalms are presented, one by one, in the order and groups of the Psalter itself. Nothing is skipped.

How to Use This Study

The parts. Part One (the twelve chapters that follow) opens the book: what the Psalms are, who wrote them, to whom, how the book is divided, how the Titles are read, how a Psalm is built, and how the Names of God are printed. Read it first. Part Two presents the Psalms themselves, Book by Book. Part Three closes the study with a Conclusion and a chapter called *What We Have Learned*, followed by the appendices.

This edition. All five Books of the Psalter are presented in this one volume, with Part One before them and Part Three and the appendices after them. Right after the Contents, *The Psalms at a Glance* lists all

150 Psalms by number, in three blocks of fifty. In the PDF, click any number to go straight to that Psalm; at any Psalm, click its heading to come back to the list.

The text. The Scripture text is the King James Version, printed exactly as it stands. Where the King James Version prints LORD or GOD in capitals, the Hebrew has the Name of God, and this study adds that Name after it in green brackets: "The LORD [Jehovah] is my shepherd." Green is used throughout for anything added to the text of Scripture, so that the reader can always tell the two apart.

The Titles. Each Psalm is printed with its Title in its restored place. The words "To the chief Musician," and the words that go with them, are printed at the *end* of the Psalm to which they belong, with a small note giving the place where the King James Version prints them. Chapter 5 explains why.

Each Psalm. For every Psalm the reader will find, in order: its heading (its place in its Book and group, its author, and its occasion); a short introduction; its structure; the whole Psalm; the verse-by-verse commentary; its closing words; and a short paragraph tying it to its group. Chapter 12 shows the layout in full.

Questions that are disputed. Where a verse has been read in more than one way, the commentary gives the answer this study has reached, plainly, and points to Appendix J, where the case is set out and weighed.

Part One — Opening the Psalms

Before a single Psalm is read, the reader needs to know what kind of book this is. A man who opens a hymn-book expecting a history will be puzzled; a man who opens it knowing what it is will sing. These twelve chapters are short, and each prepares the ground for what follows.

Chapter 1 — What the Psalms Are

A. The Book of Praises

The Hebrew name of the book is *Sēpher Tehillîm*, "the Book of Praises." *Tehillîm* comes from the verb *hālal*, "to praise," the same verb we hear in *Hallelu-jah*, "Praise ye Jah." The name is worth noticing, because most of the Psalms do not begin in praise. They begin in trouble, in fear, in sin, in sorrow, in danger of death. But nearly all of them end in praise, and the whole book ends in five Psalms that begin and end with "Hallelujah." That is the movement of the book: from the cry of distress to the song of praise. Its name tells us where it is going.

Our English word "Psalm" comes from the Greek *psalmos*, used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament made before the time of Christ). A *psalmos* was a song sung to the playing of stringed instruments. The Lord Jesus Christ used the name: "the book of Psalms" (Luke 20:42), and so did Peter (Acts 1:20).

B. The song-book of the House of Jehovah

The Psalms were not written to be read silently. They were written to be sung, in the worship of Jehovah, first at the Tabernacle and then at the Temple in Jerusalem. David appointed singers and players and set them in courses (1 Chron. 15:16–22; 16:4–7; 25:1–7). Hezekiah, when he restored the worship of the Temple, "set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David" and commanded them "to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer" (2 Chron. 29:25, 30).

So the Psalms are Israel's song-book. That is why so many of them have musical words in their Titles, and why their language is the language of song: lines that answer one another, refrains that return, words repeated for emphasis.

C. The kinds of song

The Titles themselves name several kinds of composition. Each is explained more fully in Chapter 6 and Appendix C, but the reader should know them from the start:

- **A Psalm** (*mizmôr*) — a song sung with instruments.
- **A Song** (*shîr*) — a song for the voice.
- **A Prayer** (*tephillāh*) — Psalms 17, 86, 90, 102, 142.
- **Praise** (*tehillāh*) — Psalm 145, the only Psalm so titled.
- **Michtam** — six Psalms (16, 56–60), concerning death and resurrection.
- **Maschil** — "instruction," thirteen Psalms that teach.
- **Shiggaion** — a loud cry (Psalm 7; compare Hab. 3:1).

D. One hundred and fifty Psalms

The book holds 150 Psalms and 2,461 verses in the King James Version. The longest is Psalm 119, with 176 verses; the shortest is Psalm 117, with two. The middle of the book falls in Book III, the Book of the Sanctuary.

The Psalms are not loose leaves. They are gathered into five Books (Chapter 4), and within each Book into groups that carry a single subject forward. A Psalm read on its own can be understood; a Psalm read in its place is understood better. That is why this study presents them in their groups and explains each group before its Psalms.

Chapter 2 — Who Wrote Them, and When

A. What the Titles tell us

Most of the Psalms name their writer in the Title. The Hebrew says *l°dāwid*, "to David," or "of David," in the sense of "belonging to David." The Titles are part of the Hebrew text as it has come down to us, and the New Testament treats their authorship as true: the Lord Jesus Christ said that David wrote Psalm 110 "by the holy spirit" (Mark 12:36), and Peter said the same of Psalms 16 and 110 (Acts 2:25, 34).

The New Testament also names David as the writer of two Psalms that have no Title in the Hebrew: Psalm 2 (Acts 4:25) and Psalm 95 (Heb. 4:7). So a Psalm without a Title is not necessarily without a known author.

B. The writers

- **David** — seventy-three Psalms bear his name in the Hebrew Titles, most of them in Books I and II. He was "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. 23:1). He reigned about forty years, from about 1010 to 970 B.C.
- **Asaph** — twelve Psalms (50, 73–83). Asaph was one of the three chief musicians whom David appointed (1 Chron. 15:17, 19; 16:5), and "the sons of Asaph" continued his office for centuries (Ezra 2:41). Some Psalms that bear his name may come from his house rather than from his own hand; Psalms 74 and 79 speak of the sanctuary laid waste.
- **The sons of Korah** — eleven Psalms (42, 44–49, 84, 85, 87, 88). They were Levites, descendants of the Korah who rebelled in the wilderness. "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not" (Num. 26:11). Their line became singers and doorkeepers in the House of Jehovah (1 Chron. 6:31–37; 9:19). Grace is written over their Psalms.
- **Solomon** — two Psalms (72, 127).
- **Moses** — one Psalm (90), "A Prayer of Moses the man of God," the oldest in the book.
- **Heman the Ezrahite** — Psalm 88; **Ethan the Ezrahite** — Psalm 89. Both were among David's chief musicians (1 Chron. 15:17, 19). Solomon's wisdom was said to exceed theirs (1 Kings 4:31).

- **Hezekiah** — Hezekiah does not sign his name, but *The Chief Musician* shows that he arranged the fifteen Songs of the Degrees (120–134) and wrote ten of them, in thanks for the fifteen years added to his life (Isa. 38:5, 20). That is set out in its place in Volume 5.
- **The rest** — about fifty Psalms bear no writer's name. Many are clearly songs of the Temple worship; some, as the New Testament shows, are David's.

C. When they were written

The Psalms span nearly a thousand years of Israel's history, from Moses (Psalm 90) to the days of Hezekiah and beyond. Psalm 137, "By the rivers of Babylon," was written in the captivity, after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Most, however, come from the days of David and the generations that followed him.

Some critics of a century ago placed many Psalms as late as the second century before Christ. That view cannot now stand. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls are some forty manuscripts of the Psalms, the oldest of them copied in the second century B.C., and the Psalter had been translated into Greek, in the Septuagint, by about the same time. A book cannot be copied and translated before it is written. The Psalms were old, and already gathered, long before then.

The historical Titles name events in David's life: his flight from Saul and from Absalom, his sin with Bathsheba, his deliverance from his enemies. Each is dated in its place, using the chronology already corrected in *The Chief Musician*, and listed together in Appendix D.

Chapter 3 — To Whom They Were Written

A. Written to Israel

Every book of the Bible is written *to* someone, and it must be read in the light of those to whom it was written. The Psalms were written to Israel. They were sung by Israel, in the land of Israel, at the House of Jehovah in Jerusalem. They speak of the Law (Psalm 1:2; 19:7; 119), of the sacrifices (Psalm 50:8–14; 51:19), of the Temple and its courts (Psalm 84; 122), of the King on David's throne (Psalm 2; 72; 89; 132), and of the Kingdom that Messiah will set up on the earth (Psalm 2:8; 72:8–11; 96:13).

In the terms of this library's study *The Seven Administrations of Scripture*, the Psalms belong to the administration of the Law, and they look forward to the Kingdom of Messiah and to the Day of the Lord, when He shall "judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth" (Psalm 96:13). They were not addressed to the Church of the grace administration, which was "hid in God" until it was made known to the apostles (Eph. 3:5, 9). The Psalms do not speak of it.

B. Written for our learning

That does not mean the Psalms are closed to us. Paul, writing to the Church, said:

> **Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

And in the very next verses (Rom. 15:9–11) he quotes the Psalms (18:49 and 117:1) to show that the Gentiles were always meant to glorify God for His mercy. Paul himself sang the Psalms with the believers (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

So the grace-administration believer reads the Psalms:

- **For learning.** They teach who God is: His holiness, His faithfulness, His mercy, His power over creation and over the nations.
- **For comfort.** No book in Scripture speaks so directly to the heart in trouble. David's cry, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" (Psalm 42:5), is the cry of every believer at some time.
- **For hope.** They show the end of the story: the wicked cut off, the righteous blessed, and the earth filled with the glory of Jehovah.
- **To see Christ.** "All things must be fulfilled, which were written . . . in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44). Chapter 10 sets this out.

What the believer must not do is take a Psalm's promise or command written to Israel under the Law and apply it as if it were written to the Church. The commentary will mark these places.

C. The cries for judgment

Some Psalms cry to God for judgment on the wicked in strong words: "Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow" (109:9); "Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (137:9). Readers are often troubled by them.

These cries belong to the administration in which they were written, and they look forward to the Day of the Lord, when God will judge the earth. They are not personal revenge: the Law itself forbade that (Lev. 19:18), and David spared Saul twice when he had him in his hand (1 Sam. 24; 26). They are the cry of the righteous for God to do what He has said He will do. The same cry is heard in heaven in the Revelation: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).

The believer in the grace administration is told to do otherwise: "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (Rom. 12:14). That is the difference between the administrations. The commentary will explain each such Psalm in its place.

Chapter 4 — The Five Books

A. The Psalter's own division

The Psalter is divided into five Books in the Hebrew text itself. Each Book closes with a blessing to Jehovah and "Amen":

- **Book I** (Psalms 1–41) closes: "Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen" (41:13).
- **Book II** (42–72) closes: "And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (72:19, 20).
- **Book III** (73–89) closes: "Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] for evermore. Amen, and Amen" (89:52).
- **Book IV** (90–106) closes: "Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD [Jah]" (106:48).
- **Book V** (107–150) closes with five Psalms (146–150), each beginning and ending "Praise ye the LORD [Jah]," the last ending: "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the LORD [Jah]" (150:6).

These divisions are not the work of commentators. They are part of the text.

B. The five books of Moses

The link between the five Books of the Psalms and the five books of Moses is very old. An early Jewish commentary on the Psalms says: "Moses gave to the Israelites the five books of the Law; and corresponding with these David gave them the five books of the Psalms." Dr. Bullinger, in *The Companion Bible*, went further, and showed that the subject of each Book of the Psalms answers to the subject of the matching book of Moses:

Book	Psalms	Answers to	Subject
I	1–41	Genesis	Concerning Man
II	42–72	Exodus	Concerning Israel as a Nation
III	73–89	Leviticus	Concerning the Sanctuary
IV	90–106	Numbers	Concerning Israel and the Nations of the Earth
V	107–150	Deuteronomy	Concerning God and His Word

C. How well the match holds

This study tests that observation, as it tests everything, and reports what it finds.

Where it is strong. Book IV answers clearly to Numbers. It opens with Psalm 90, "A Prayer of Moses," the only Psalm he wrote, and the man of the wilderness speaks of man's days "as grass." Psalm 95 recalls the provocation at Meribah and the forty years in the wilderness (Num. 14; 20). Psalm 106 rehearses Israel's rebellions in the wilderness one after another. Book III answers to Leviticus: the sanctuary, its courts, the congregation and Zion run through nearly every Psalm (73:17; 74:3–7; 78:69; 84:1–2). Book V answers to Deuteronomy, the Law given again: it is built around the Word, from "He

sent his word, and healed them" (107:20) to Psalm 119, in which the Word of God is praised in all 176 verses.

Where it is looser. Book I has real echoes of Genesis: the blessed man like a tree planted by the waters (1:3; compare the garden of Eden, Gen. 2), and man given dominion over the works of God's hands (8:6; compare Gen. 1:28). But much of Book I is David's own trouble and prayer. Book II has the Exodus journey and the name "JAH" in Psalm 68 (68:4; compare Ex. 15:2), and it moves from ruin to redemption; yet 68:1 quotes Numbers (10:35), and many Psalms in the Book fit the theme only in a general way.

There is also a second pattern that the match does not explain. In Psalms 42–83 the name *Elohim* (God) is used far more than *Jehovah*, the reverse of the rest of the Psalter. That points to the way the collections were gathered, and it is noted in Chapter 9.

What this study does. It presents the five Books as fact, because the text marks them. It presents the match with the five books of Moses as Dr. Bullinger's observation, with the evidence for each Book, strong where it is strong and looser where it is looser. Each Book of Part Two opens with that evidence.

D. The shape of the whole

Dr. Bullinger also observed that the five Books are arranged so that the first answers to the last, and the second to the fourth, with the third at the centre:

- A | Book I (1–41). Man: all blessing bound up in obedience.
- B | Book II (42–72). Israel: ruin, Redeemer, redemption.
- C | Book III (73–89). The Sanctuary.
- B | Book IV (90–106). Israel and the nations: rest for the earth.
- A | Book V (107–150). God's Word: the source of all blessing.

Man and the Word given to man stand at the beginning and the end; Israel and the nations stand on either side; and the Sanctuary, the place where God dwells among His people, stands at the centre.

Chapter 5 — The Titles Restored

A. The puzzle

Most Psalms have a Title at their head, and in the Hebrew Bible the Title is counted as part of the text (often as verse 1). Some Titles are simple: "A Psalm of David." Others are full of strange words: "To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben" (Psalm 9); "To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim" (Psalm 56); "To the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth" (Psalm 88). For centuries readers could not make sense of them. The words did not seem to fit the Psalms over which they stood. Psalm 9 has nothing to do with death; Psalm 56 has nothing to do with a dove.

B. The key

The key was found by Dr. James W. Thirtle and published in 1904 in *The Titles of the Psalms*. Dr. Bullinger set it before ordinary readers in *The Chief Musician* (1908), now revised in this library.

The key is the one complete Psalm that stands outside the Book of Psalms: the prayer of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3). It is built in three parts:

- **The super-scription** (v. 1): "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth."
- **The Psalm proper** (vv. 2–19-).
- **The sub-scription** (v. -19): "To the chief singer on my stringed instruments."

There the words "To the chief singer" (the same Hebrew as "To the chief Musician") stand at the *end* of the Psalm, not at its head. When the Psalms were copied one after another in a single column, with no space between them, the sub-scription of one Psalm came to stand directly above the next, and in time it was read as part of the next Psalm's Title.

Put the words back where they belong, and the puzzle is solved:

- "**Muth-labben**," "the death of the champion," is the sub-scription of **Psalm 8**, not of Psalm 9. Psalm 8 is David's song on the death of Goliath, the champion of the Philistines: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger" (8:2).
- "**Jonath-elem-rechokim**," "the dove of the distant terebinths," is the sub-scription of **Psalm 55**, where David says, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off" (55:6, 7).
- "**Mahalath Leannoth**," "dancings with shoutings," is the sub-scription of **Psalm 87**, the song of Zion, which ends "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there" (87:7), and recalls the bringing up of the Ark with shouting and dancing (2 Sam. 6:14, 15).

C. What stays and what moves

The rule is simple. A Title has two parts:

- What *precedes* "To the chief Musician" in the King James Title (for example "A Psalm of David," or the historical note "when he fled from Absalom his son") is the **super-scription** of the Psalm over which it stands. It stays where it is.
- "**To the chief Musician**," with whatever follows it (for example "on Neginoth," "upon Shoshannim," "upon Gittith"), is the **sub-scription** of the Psalm *before*. It moves to that Psalm's end.

In the Hebrew order the sub-scription comes *first* in the line, because it was the end of the Psalm above. Where a King James Title begins "To the chief Musician," that part belongs to the previous Psalm, and the rest stays.

D. How this study prints them

Every Psalm in this study is printed with its super-scription at its head and its sub-scription at its foot, in the restored places. Where a line has been moved, a small note says so: "In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 9." Nothing is added and nothing is taken away; the words are only put back where they belong. Appendix A lists all 150 Psalms with their Titles in their restored places.

Fifty-five Psalms carry "To the chief Musician," and once the words are moved they tell us something new about each of those Psalms: that it was handed to the chief musician for use in the Temple worship, and often how, or at which Feast, it was to be sung.

Chapter 6 — Selah, and the Special Words

A. Selah

The word *Selah* occurs seventy-one times in thirty-nine Psalms, and three times in Habakkuk 3. It is not read aloud in most churches, and many readers pass over it. But it is part of the text, and it has a purpose.

Dr. Bullinger showed, in Part II of *The Chief Musician*, that Selah does not merely mark a pause in the music. It *connects*. It stands between two passages and calls attention to the link between them: often between a statement and its reason, a cry and its answer, a judgment and its cause. To read past a Selah is to miss what the Psalm wants us to see.

A plain example is Psalm 46:

> **Psalm 46:3** *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*
>
> **Psalm 46:4** *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.*

The raging waters of verse 3 are set against the quiet river of verse 4, and Selah joins them. Every Selah is explained where it occurs, and all are listed in Appendix B with what each connects.

B. The special words of the Titles

The Titles use a number of words found almost nowhere else. *The Chief Musician* explains them, and Appendix C sets them out in full. In brief:

- **Neginoth** — stringed instruments, or songs of personal suffering played on them.
- **Nehiloth** — inheritances (sub-scription of Psalm 4).
- **Sheminith** — "the eighth," the division of singers so named (1 Chron. 15:21).
- **Alamoth** — "maidens," the women singers who went with the procession (1 Chron. 15:20; Psalm 68:25).

- **Gittith** — "winepresses," a song for the autumn Feast of Tabernacles, the feast of ingathering.
- **Shoshannim** — "lilies," a song for the spring Feast of the Passover.
- **Shushan-Eduth** — "the lily of testimony," a spring-feast song.
- **Muth-labben** — "the death of the champion" (Psalm 8; see Chapter 5).
- **Aijeleth Shahar** — "the hind of the morning" (sub-scription of Psalm 21).
- **Jonath-elem-rechokim** — "the dove of the distant terebinths" (Psalm 55).
- **Al-taschith** — "destroy not."
- **Mahalath** and **Mahalath Leannoth** — "dancings," and "dancings with shoutings."
- **Jeduthun** — the name of one of David's chief musicians, set over a choir.
- **Michtam**, **Maschil**, **Shiggaion**, **Higgaion** — kinds of composition (Chapter 1), and "Higgaion," a meditation or soliloquy (Psalm 9:16).

C. The Songs of the Degrees

Fifteen Psalms (120–134) are titled "A Song of degrees," or "of the degrees." *The Chief Musician*, Parts III and IV, shows that "the degrees" are the degrees on the sundial of Ahaz, by which the shadow went back ten degrees as the sign of the fifteen years added to Hezekiah's life (2 Kings 20:8–11; Isa. 38:8). Hezekiah promised, "we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD" (Isa. 38:20). The fifteen Songs, in five groups of three, are those songs. They are presented in Volume 5, using the revised translation and structures of *The Chief Musician*.

Chapter 7 — Hebrew Poetry and the Structures

A. Lines that answer

Hebrew poetry does not rhyme sounds; it rhymes *thoughts*. A line is followed by another line that answers it. This is called *parallelism*, and once it is seen the Psalms become much easier to understand. There are three main kinds:

- **The line that repeats** (synonymous). The second line says the same thing in other words: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (19:1).
- **The line that contrasts** (antithetic). The second line sets the opposite beside the first: "For the LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (1:6).
- **The line that builds** (synthetic). The second line carries the first further: "The LORD [Jehovah] is my shepherd; I shall not want" (23:1).

Knowing this protects the reader from a common mistake: treating two lines that say the same thing as if they spoke of two different things. When Psalm 19:1 speaks of "the heavens" and "the firmament," it is speaking of one sky twice.

B. Psalms that are built

What is true of two lines is true of a whole Psalm. The parts of a Psalm answer one another, and their order is part of their meaning. Dr. Bullinger called this *correspondence*, and he set out the structure of every Psalm in *The Companion Bible*. This study shows that structure at the head of every Psalm, after testing it against the text.

There are two main patterns.

Alternation. The parts follow in order and then repeat in the same order: A, B, A, B. The first A answers to the second A, and the first B to the second B.

Introversion. The parts follow in order and then return in reverse: A, B, C, C, B, A. The outer members answer one another, and the centre often holds the heart of the Psalm.

Psalm 122 is a plain example of introversion (the corresponding members are printed in italic letters, as in all the structures of this study):

- A | 1. The House of Jehovah.
- B | 2. Jerusalem spoken to.
- C | 3. Jerusalem spoken of.
- D | 4. Description.
- *D* | 5. Description.
- *C* | 6-. Jerusalem spoken of.
- *B* | -6–8. Jerusalem spoken to.
- *A* | 9. The House of Jehovah.

C. How to read a structure

- A capital letter names a **member** of the Psalm. The same letter in italic is the member that answers to it.
- The numbers give the **verses**. A dash after a number ("6-") means the first part of the verse; a dash before it ("-6") means the last part.
- Indentation shows how the members are arranged; the farther in, the closer to the centre.
- A member may be **expanded** into smaller members of its own (marked with small letters), shown separately below the main structure.

The structures are not decoration. They show what the Psalm is *about*, which part explains which, and where the weight falls. The commentary uses them throughout.

D. The acrostic Psalms

Eight Psalms (counting 9 and 10 as one) are built on the Hebrew alphabet: each line, or each group of lines, begins with the next letter, from *aleph* to *tav*. They are Psalms 9–10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119 and 145. The best known is Psalm 119, where each of the twenty-two letters begins eight verses in turn. In some acrostics a letter is missing or out of place, and the commentary will note where and why. Appendix G lists them all.

Chapter 8 — Figures of Speech in the Psalms

The Psalms are poetry, and poetry speaks in figures. A figure of speech is a word or phrase used out of its ordinary sense or order, for emphasis. The figure is never an excuse to empty a passage of meaning; it is a way of giving it *more* meaning. Dr. Bullinger catalogued more than two hundred figures in *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. The ones the reader will meet most often in the Psalms are these, explained once here so that the commentary can name them briefly:

- **Metaphor** — one thing is said to *be* another: "The LORD [Jehovah] is my shepherd" (23:1); "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet" (119:105).
- **Simile** — one thing is said to be *like* another: "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water" (1:3).
- **Anthropopatheia** — human parts, feelings or actions spoken of God, so that we may understand Him: His eyes (11:4), His ear (34:15), His hand (139:10), His wings (91:4). God is spirit; the figure brings Him near.
- **Metonymy** — one name put for another closely connected: "the gates" for the city; "the throne" for the king's rule; "my soul" for "myself."
- **Synecdoche** — a part put for the whole, or the whole for a part: "all flesh" for all people (65:2).
- **Hyperbole** — more said than is literally meant, for emphasis: "every night make I my bed to swim" (6:6).
- **Apostrophe** — a sudden turning to address someone or something: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates" (24:7).
- **Ellipsis** — a word left out, to be supplied from the sense (the King James Version prints supplied words in italic).
- **Erotesis** — a question asked, not for information, but for emphasis: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD [Jehovah]?" (24:3).
- **Anadiplosis** and **Polyptoton** — a word repeated at the end of one line and the start of the next, or repeated in different forms, to fix it in the mind.
- **Hendiadys** — two words used for one thing: "the rod and the staff" (23:4).
- **Prosopopoeia** — things spoken of as persons: "Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together" (98:8).

When the commentary says a verse uses a figure, it will name it, explain what it does, and show what the verse means because of it.

Chapter 9 — The Names and Titles of God

A. Why the Names matter

God reveals Himself by His Names. Each Name tells something of who He is and how He stands toward those who call on Him. In the Psalms the choice of Name is never careless, and in some places it is the key to the verse. The King James Version, following an old custom, hides the most important Name behind the word "LORD." This study shows it.

B. The Names

- **Jehovah** (in the King James Version, LORD or GOD in capitals). The Name God revealed to Moses (Ex. 3:14, 15; 6:3): the One who was, and is, and will be; the God who keeps covenant with His people. It is by far the most common Name in the Psalms.
- **Jah** (LORD in the King James Version). A short form of Jehovah, used in praise: "Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH" (68:4). It is the "-jah" in *Hallelu-jah*.
- **Elohim** (God). God as Creator, the One of power. It is used of God in Genesis 1, where He creates by His word.
- **El** (God). God the Mighty One: "The mighty God (*El*), even the LORD [Jehovah], hath spoken" (50:1).
- **Eloah** (God). God as the One to be worshipped (18:31).
- **Elyon** (the most High). God as possessor of heaven and earth, over all the nations (Gen. 14:19; Psalm 91:1).
- **Shaddai** (the Almighty). God as the One who supplies all that His people need (68:14; 91:1).
- **Adonai** (Lord, in small letters). God as Lord and Master, owner of His people.
- **Jehovah Sabaoth** (the LORD of hosts). Jehovah as Lord of all the hosts of heaven and earth (24:10; 46:7).

C. How this study prints them

The King James text is printed exactly. Where it has LORD or GOD in capitals, the Name is added after it in green brackets:

- "The LORD [Jehovah] is my shepherd" (23:1).
- "Praise ye the LORD [Jah]" (150:6).
- "O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord, the strength of my salvation" (140:7).
- Where the King James Version has "Lord GOD," the study adds [Adonai Jehovah].

Where the King James Version has "Lord" in small letters (*Adonai*), it is left as it stands, and the commentary names it where it matters.

D. Jehovah and Elohim in the Books

The Names are not spread evenly through the Psalter. In Books I, IV and V, Jehovah is the Name most used. In Psalms 42–83 (most of Book II and the first part of Book III), Elohim is used far more than Jehovah. Some Psalms even appear twice, once in each form: Psalm 14 uses Jehovah, and Psalm 53, nearly the same Psalm, uses Elohim. The commentary will note these places. Appendix H gives the count of each Name in each Book.

E. One God

The Psalms know one God: "For who is God save the LORD [Jehovah]? or who is a rock save our God?" (18:31). "Thou art God alone" (86:10). This study presents the Psalms in agreement with the library's study *One God*, *One Mediator*: Jehovah alone is God; Jesus Christ is His Son, the Messiah, the man through whom God will rule the earth (1 Tim. 2:5). Where a Psalm speaks of the King, the Anointed, or the Son, the commentary shows how the New Testament itself applies the verse, and in what sense.

Chapter 10 — Messiah in the Psalms

A. "Concerning me"

After His resurrection Jesus Christ opened the Scriptures to His disciples and showed them "all things . . . which were written . . . in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44). The New Testament quotes the Psalms more than almost any other book of the Old Testament, and a large part of those quotations concern Him.

B. The Psalms the New Testament applies to Him

- **The Son of God** — "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (2:7), applied to His resurrection (Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5).
- **The Son of Man** — "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands" (8:6), applied to Him (Heb. 2:6–9; 1 Cor. 15:27).
- **His resurrection** — "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [Sheol]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (16:10), applied by Peter and Paul (Acts 2:25–31; 13:35–37).
- **His sufferings** — "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (22:1; Matt. 27:46); "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (22:18; John 19:24); "in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (69:21; Matt. 27:34, 48).
- **His zeal** — "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (69:9; John 2:17).
- **His betrayal** — "mine own familiar friend . . . hath lifted up his heel against me" (41:9; John 13:18).

- **His obedience** — "Lo, I come . . . I delight to do thy will, O my God" (40:7, 8; Heb. 10:5–9).
- **His throne** — "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever . . . therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee" (45:6, 7; Heb. 1:8, 9).
- **His ascension** — "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men" (68:18; Eph. 4:8).
- **His seat at God's right hand** — "The LORD [Jehovah] said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (110:1; Matt. 22:44; Acts 2:34, 35; Heb. 1:13).
- **His priesthood** — "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (110:4; Heb. 5:6; 7:17).
- **The rejected stone** — "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner" (118:22; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7).
- **His coming in the name of Jehovah** — "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD [Jehovah]" (118:26; Matt. 21:9).

Appendix F lists them all, with Appendix E giving every New Testament quotation of the Psalms.

C. How these Psalms are read in this study

Two things are held together. First, each of these Psalms meant something when it was written: David really was in danger, the king really was anointed, the stone really was refused. Second, the New Testament shows that the full meaning reaches beyond David to the Son of David. The commentary presents both: the Psalm in its own day, and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, as the New Testament itself applies it.

Several of these verses have been used to teach that Jesus Christ is God. Read in their own words, they show the opposite. Psalm 45:7 says of the King, "God, *thy God*, hath anointed thee": the King has a God over him. Psalm 110:1 shows two persons, Jehovah and the one David calls "my Lord" (*adoni*, a word used of human lords, never of God). Psalm 2:7 speaks of a Son *begotten* on a day. These, and Psalms 82:6 and 102:25–27, are explained in their places, and the case is set out in Appendix J.

D. Death, resurrection, and ascension

Where the Psalms speak of the Messiah's death and resurrection (16; 22; 69), this study also shows His ascension, which completes them: "Thou hast ascended on high" (68:18); "Sit thou at my right hand" (110:1). The Psalms do not stop at the empty tomb; they carry Him to the throne.

Chapter 11 — The Psalms in History

A. In the Tabernacle and the Temple

David brought the Ark to Jerusalem with singing, "with psalteries, and with harps, and with cymbals" (1 Chron. 13:8; 15:16), and appointed Levites "to record, and to thank and praise the LORD [Jehovah] God

of Israel" (1 Chron. 16:4). He set Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun over the singers, and divided them into twenty-four courses (1 Chron. 25). Solomon brought the Ark into the Temple with the same music, and "the house was filled with a cloud" (2 Chron. 5:12–14). The Psalms are the words that were sung.

B. At the Feasts

Israel went up to Jerusalem three times a year, at the Feasts of Passover, of Weeks, and of Tabernacles (Deut. 16:16). *The Chief Musician* shows that several of the Titles name the Feast at which a Psalm was sung: *Shoshannim*, "lilies," for the spring Feast of the Passover; *Gittith*, "winepresses," for the autumn Feast of Tabernacles. The Psalms followed Israel's year.

C. In Hezekiah's day

When Hezekiah came to the throne he opened the doors of the House of Jehovah, cleansed it, and restored its worship "according to the commandment of David" (2 Chron. 29:3, 25). He kept a Passover for "all Israel" for the first time since the kingdom was divided (2 Chron. 30). When Sennacherib's army surrounded Jerusalem, Hezekiah went into the House of Jehovah and prayed, and Jehovah delivered the city. When he was sick unto death, Jehovah added fifteen years to his life, and he promised to sing his songs "all the days of our life in the house of the LORD [Jehovah]" (Isa. 38:20). The "men of Hezekiah" also copied out the proverbs of Solomon (Prov. 25:1). Hezekiah's hand is on the Psalter, above all in the Songs of the Degrees.

D. On the night of the Passover

Psalms 113–118 are known as the *Hallel*, "Praise." They were sung at the Passover, Psalms 113 and 114 before the meal and 115 to 118 after it. On the night He was betrayed, after the Passover with His disciples, "when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matt. 26:30). That hymn, it is generally held, was the second part of the Hallel. If so, the last words He sang with them before Gethsemane included "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner" and "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD [Jehovah]" (118:22, 26).

E. In the first assemblies

The believers of the first century went on singing the Psalms. Paul wrote: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19; compare Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:26). The Psalms were written to Israel, but they have been sung by God's people ever since.

Chapter 12 — How This Study Is Laid Out

A. Part Two, Book by Book

Part Two presents the five Books of the Psalter in order:

- **Book I** (Psalms 1–41).
- **Book II** (42–72).
- **Book III** (73–89).
- **Book IV** (90–106).
- **Book V** (107–150), followed by Part Three and the appendices.

B. Each Book

Each Book opens with:

- its introduction: its subject, its doxology, and the evidence for its match with the matching book of Moses (Chapter 4);
- its structure, showing its divisions;
- a short account of each division and its purpose.

C. Each division

Each division (for example Psalms 1–8, "Man, and the Son of Man") opens with:

- what the division is about, and why its Psalms stand together;
- its structure, showing how its Psalms answer one another.

D. Each Psalm

Each Psalm is presented in this order:

- **1. Heading.** The Psalm's number; its Book, division, and letter in the division's structure; its writer; and its occasion, where the Title names one, with the history and the date.
- **2. Introduction.** A short paragraph: what the Psalm is about, why it stands where it does, and how it carries the purpose of its group.
- **3. Structure.** The Psalm's structure, Bullinger-style, tested against the text, with any corrections noted.
- **4. The Psalm.** The whole Psalm in the King James Version, with the Names of God in green brackets and the Title in its restored place.
- **5. Verse by verse.** Every verse: each new word explained (with the Hebrew word and its meaning where it matters); the sense given phrase by phrase; figures of speech named; cross-references quoted or retold; numbers explained; Selah explained; the Name of God noted; and, where the New Testament quotes the verse, the quotation given and its use explained. In the longest Psalms (78, 105, 106, and 119) the verses are treated more simply, unless a verse needs more, and the weight falls on the Psalm's purpose, its structure, and what it imparts.

- **6. Its close.** The sub-scription, where the Psalm has one ("To the chief Musician . . ."), and what it tells us of the Psalm's use.
- **7. Looking back.** A short paragraph tying the Psalm to its group.

E. Finding a verse

Every Psalm begins on a new page, with its number at the head. The Contents list every Psalm with its page; *The Psalms at a Glance* links to each Psalm by number; and the Scripture Index at the back lists the other Scriptures cited, with the Psalms in which they are cited.

F. Psalms that repeat

A few Psalms repeat others: 14 and 53; 40:13–17 and 70; and 108, which joins 57:7–11 and 60:5–12. The second of each pair is treated in full where it differs, and points back to the first for the rest.

Part Two — The Psalms, Psalm by Psalm

Part Two presents the Psalms in the order and groups of the Psalter itself, beginning with Book I.

Book I — Psalms 1–41: Concerning Man

A. The subject of the Book

Book I is the "Genesis Book" of the Psalter. Its subject is *Man*: man blessed, man in rebellion, man's great enemy, and the Man through whom blessing is restored. It opens with the man who is blessed because he delights in the law of Jehovah (Psalm 1) and closes with the man who is blessed because he considers the poor (41:1). It ends with its doxology: "Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen" (41:13).

B. Its match with Genesis

The echoes of Genesis are real. The blessed man is "like a tree planted by the rivers of water" (1:3), as the garden of Eden was watered by its river and its trees (Gen. 2:9, 10). Man is given "dominion over the works of thy hands" with "all things under his feet" (8:6), as Adam was told to "have dominion" over every living thing (Gen. 1:28). Disobedience brings ruin, and blessing is restored only through One who is promised (Psalm 2; compare Gen. 3:15). These echoes are clearest in the first division (1–8). In much of the rest of Book I, which is largely David's own trouble and prayer, the match is a general one: man in his need, and God his deliverer.

C. Its structure

Book I falls into three divisions:

- A^1 | 1–8. "Man," and "the Son of Man" (8:4).
- A^2 | 9–15. "The man of the earth" (10:18): man's great enemy.
- A^3 | 16–41. "The man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5): the Deliverer, from suffering to glory.

The three are in order: man as God made him and as he has become; the lawless one who will oppose him; and the Man who will restore him.

Psalms 1–8: "Man," and "the Son of Man"

A. What this division is about

The first eight Psalms are a small book of their own. They begin with the man who is blessed (Psalm 1) and end with the Son of Man, crowned and given dominion over all the works of God's hands (Psalm 8). Between them lies the reason that blessing has not yet come: the rebellion of the nations against Jehovah and His Anointed (Psalm 2), and four prayers of David in the midst of that rebellion, morning and night (Psalms 3–6), followed by the blessed man again, trusting in Jehovah for defence (Psalm 7).

The question the division answers is the question of Psalm 8: "What is man?" He was made to be blessed (Psalm 1). He has turned against God (Psalm 2). He suffers from enemies without and sorrows within (Psalms 3–6). And yet God has purposed to crown him with glory and honour, and that purpose will be fulfilled in the Son of Man (Psalm 8; Heb. 2:6–9).

B. Its structure

- D | 1. Man blessed. The law of Jehovah his delight.
- E | 2. Rebellious man: vainly meditating against the Son of God, through whom alone universal dominion can be restored.
- C | F | 3. Prayer in view of this rebellion (morning). "Jehovah my shield."
- G | 4. Prayer in view of this rebellion (night). "How long?" } Enemies without.
- *C* | *F* | 5. Prayer in view of this rebellion (morning). "Jehovah my King."
- *G* | 6. Prayer in view of this rebellion (night). "How long?" } Sorrows within.
- *D* | 7. Man blessed. Trust in Jehovah his defence.
- *E* | 8. Rebellious man subdued: the Son of Man exalted with dominion in the earth.

The first two Psalms answer to the last two: the blessed man (1) to the blessed man (7), and rebellious man (2) to the Son of Man who subdues him (8). At the centre stand the four prayers, two in the morning and two at night. Psalms 3 and 4 face enemies without; Psalms 5 and 6, sorrows within.

C. Its purpose

This division lays the foundation for the whole Psalter. Every theme that follows is here in seed: the Word of God as the source of blessing; the rebellion of man against God and His Anointed; the righteous man in trouble, crying to Jehovah; Jehovah's answer; and the final dominion of the Son of Man over the earth. The reader who understands Psalms 1–8 has the key to the book.

Psalm 1 — The Blessed Man

Place: Book I; Psalms 1–8; member D (man blessed). **Writer:** not named in the Title (the Psalm has no Title). **Occasion:** none given.

Introduction

The first Psalm is the doorway to the whole book. It has no Title, and needs none. It sets two ways before the reader, the way of the righteous and the way of the ungodly, and two ends, the one that prospers and the one that perishes. Every Psalm that follows is a song sung by someone on one of these two ways.

Psalms 1 and 2 belong together. Neither has a Title. The first begins "Blessed is the man" (1:1) and the second ends "Blessed are all they" (2:12). The man of Psalm 1 "meditates" in the law of Jehovah (1:2); the nations of Psalm 2 "imagine" a vain thing (2:1): in Hebrew it is the same verb, *hāgāh*. The way of the ungodly "shall perish" (1:6); the rebels "perish from the way" (2:12). In some ancient copies of Acts 13:33, Paul's quotation of Psalm 2 is said to be "in the first psalm," a sign that the two were sometimes read as one.

Structure

- A | 1–3. The godly.
- B | 4, 5. The ungodly.
- *A* | 6-. The godly.
- *B* | -6. The ungodly.

The Psalm alternates between the two men. The godly man is described at length (vv. 1–3); the ungodly man briefly (vv. 4, 5); and then the two are set side by side in one verse (v. 6).

The Psalm

> **1** *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*
>
> **2** *But his delight is in the law of the LORD [Jehovah]; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*
>
> **3** *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*
>
> **4** *The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.*
>
> **5** *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*

> **6** *For the LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

Verse by verse

> **1:1** *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

Blessed. The Hebrew *ʾashrē* is plural: "O the happinesses of the man." It is not a wish ("may he be blessed") but a statement of fact. The first word of the Psalter is a blessing. God's first word to man in Genesis was a blessing too (Gen. 1:28).

the man. Hebrew *hāʾîsh*, "the man," one man singled out. In the first place it is any man who lives as this verse describes. The Psalm is written to Israel, and the blessing is promised to the Israelite who keeps the law of Jehovah. In its fullest sense only one Man has ever walked this way without a step aside, and the New Testament will show Him in the Psalms that follow.

walketh . . . standeth . . . sitteth. Three verbs, each going further than the last. A man first *walks* in step with the advice of the ungodly; then he *stands* still on the path where sinners go; at last he *sits* down among the scoffers and makes his home there. Sin is a road, and the road leads downward. The blessed man has not taken the first step.

counsel . . . way . . . seat. Three places: the advice they give, the path they take, the company they keep. Each verb has its own noun. The figure is called *Anabasis* (a going up, step by step): each member rises in strength above the one before.

the ungodly . . . sinners . . . the scornful. Three kinds of men. The *ungodly* (*rĕshāʿîm*) are the lawless, men restless and unsettled, who will not be ruled by God (Isa. 57:20, 21). *Sinners* (*ḥaṭṭāʾîm*) are those who miss the mark, who go wrong in what they do. The *scornful* (*lēṣîm*) are the scoffers, who mock at God and His Word (Prov. 21:24). Thought becomes act, and act becomes contempt.

> **1:2** *But his delight is in the law of the LORD [Jehovah]; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

But. Verse 1 told us what the blessed man does not do. Verse 2 tells us what he does. A man is not blessed merely by keeping away from evil; he must be filled with something better.

his delight. Not his duty only, but his *delight* (*ḥēphets*, his pleasure, what he wants). He loves the Word of God. Psalm 119 says it again and again: "I will delight myself in thy statutes" (119:16).

the law of the LORD [Jehovah]. *Tôrāh*, "instruction," "teaching": not only the commandments, but the whole of what Jehovah had taught Israel in the books of Moses. It is "the law of *Jehovah*," the God who made covenant with Israel. Then it is "*his* law": the man has made it his own.

meditate. *Hāgāh*: to murmur, to speak quietly to oneself, as a man reads half aloud and turns the words over. It is the same word that Jehovah used to Joshua: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night . . . for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous"

(Josh. 1:8). Psalm 1 is built on that verse. The same verb returns in Psalm 2:1, where the nations "imagine" a vain thing: men meditate either on God's Word or on rebellion against Him.

day and night. Continually: by the figure *Synecdoche*, the two parts of the day stand for the whole of it.

> **1:3** *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

like a tree. A *Simile*: the man is *like* a tree. In a dry land, a green tree is a picture of life.

planted. *Shāthûl*: transplanted, set in place on purpose. The tree did not grow wild by chance; it was taken up and planted where it would thrive. Jeremiah uses the same picture and the same word: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD . . . For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters" (Jer. 17:7, 8).

by the rivers of water. *Palgē mayim*: channels, streams divided off for watering, as in a garden. Its roots are where the water is, so it does not depend on the rain. The garden of Eden had its river, divided into four heads (Gen. 2:10).

his fruit in his season . . . his leaf also shall not wither. Fruit when fruit is due, and leaf all the year. The blessed man is fruitful and never dry.

whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. *Yatsliaḥ*: shall go forward, succeed. As Joshua was told, the man who meditates in the law will "make his way prosperous" (Josh. 1:8). In Israel under the Law this was a promise for this life (Deut. 28:1–14). It reaches its full meaning in the life to come.

> **1:4** *The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.*

The ungodly are not so. Four Hebrew words: *lōʾ-kēn hārĕshāʿîm*, "Not so the ungodly." The contrast is sudden, and the Septuagint repeats it for emphasis: "Not so the ungodly, not so."

like the chaff. The second simile, set against the first. A tree is rooted, green, fruitful, and stays where it is planted. Chaff (*mōts*) is the husk left on the threshing floor: dry, dead, useless, and blown away by the first wind. The threshing floors of Israel were on high ground for that reason; the farmer threw the grain into the air and the wind carried off the chaff. John the Baptist used the same picture of the coming judgment: "he will . . . gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff" (Matt. 3:12).

> **1:5** *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*

Therefore. Because they are chaff, they have nothing to stand on.

shall not stand. *Lōʾ yāqumû*: shall not rise up, shall not stand their ground. In the judgment they will not be able to stand and answer: "who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:17).

in the judgment. The time when God judges. The Psalm looks forward to it, as the Psalms do throughout.

the congregation of the righteous. *ʿĒdath tsaddîqîm*: the assembly of the righteous. The sinners who sat among the scornful (v. 1) will have no place in it. There are two companies, and every man belongs to one of them.

> **1:6** *For the LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

For. Here is the reason for everything that has gone before.

the LORD [Jehovah] knoweth. *Yādaʿ*: knows, in the sense of knowing with approval, caring for, watching over. It is the knowledge of relationship: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2); "The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19). The righteous man's way is known to Jehovah; that is his whole security.

the way of the ungodly shall perish. Not only the ungodly, but the *way* itself, the road they took, will come to nothing (*tōʾbēd*). It leads nowhere. The last word of the Psalm is "perish," as the first was "blessed." The figure is *Antithesis*: the two ends are set side by side, and the reader must choose.

Its close

Psalm 1 has no sub-scription. It opens the book, and Psalm 2 follows directly.

Looking back

Psalm 1 is the first member of the division (D, man blessed), and it answers to Psalm 7 (*D*, man blessed, trusting in Jehovah for his defence). It sets out the condition of blessing: delight in the Word of God. The rest of the Psalter shows how hard that way is in a world in rebellion against God, and how God keeps the man who walks in it.

Psalm 2 — Rebellious Man

Place: Book I; Psalms 1–8; member E (rebellious man). **Writer:** David (named in Acts 4:25; the Psalm has no Title). **Occasion:** none given.

Introduction

Psalm 1 showed the blessed man; Psalm 2 shows the world in which he lives. The nations, with their kings and rulers, have set themselves against Jehovah and against His Anointed. Jehovah answers from heaven: He has set His King upon Zion, His Son, to whom He will give the nations for an inheritance.

The New Testament quotes this Psalm more than once, and always of Jesus Christ. The believers in Jerusalem prayed it back to God when the rulers threatened Peter and John: "Lord, thou art God . . . Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage . . . For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together" (Acts 4:24–27). Paul applied verse 7 to the resurrection (Acts 13:33), and the writer to the Hebrews applied it to Christ's place above the angels (Heb. 1:5) and to His priesthood (Heb. 5:5). The Revelation shows verse 9 fulfilled at His coming (Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

Structure

The Psalm is in four voices: the nations speak (vv. 1–3); Jehovah speaks (vv. 4–6); the Son speaks (vv. 7–9); and then the nations are spoken to (vv. 10–12).

- E | 1–3. Mankind. Speaking.
- F | 4, 5. Jehovah.
- G | 6–9. The Son. His rule.
- *E* | 10. Mankind. Spoken to.
- *F* | 11. Jehovah.
- *G* | 12. The Son. His judgment.

In the first half the nations speak against Jehovah and His Son. In the second half they are spoken to, and told to serve Jehovah and to kiss the Son.

The Psalm

> **1** *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?*
>
> **2** *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD [Jehovah], and against his anointed, saying,*
>
> **3** *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*
>
> **4** *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.*

> **5** *Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*
>
> **6** *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*
>
> **7** *I will declare the decree: the LORD [Jehovah] hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*
>
> **8** *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*
>
> **9** *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*
>
> **10** *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.*
>
> **11** *Serve the LORD [Jehovah] with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*
>
> **12** *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

Verse by verse

> **2:1** *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?*

Why? The Psalm opens with a question, the figure *Erotesis*: not a request for information, but an exclamation of amazement. That men should rise against their Maker is beyond reason.

the heathen. *Gôyim*: the nations, the Gentiles. **the people.** *Lĕʾummîm*: the peoples. The two words cover the whole of mankind.

rage. *Rāgĕshû*: throng together in tumult, gather in a noisy crowd. It is the uproar of a mob. The New Testament uses the same picture of the assembling of Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and Israel against Jesus (Acts 4:27).

imagine. *Yehgû*: the same verb as "meditate" in 1:2. The blessed man meditates in the law of Jehovah; the nations meditate rebellion against Him.

a vain thing. *Rîq*: something empty, hollow, that can come to nothing. Their plotting is futile before it begins.

> **2:2** *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD [Jehovah], and against his anointed, saying,*

set themselves. *Yithyatstsĕbû*: take their stand, station themselves for battle.

take counsel together. Meet by appointment, plot in council. Here the "counsel of the ungodly" (1:1) is seen on the scale of the world.

against the LORD [Jehovah], and against his anointed. Two persons are named, and they are distinct: Jehovah, and the one He has anointed. To rebel against the Anointed is to rebel against Jehovah who anointed him.

his anointed. *Mĕshîḥô*: His Messiah. This is the first time the word occurs in the Psalms. In Greek it is *Christos*, Christ. Kings and priests in Israel were anointed with oil when they were set apart to their

office (1 Sam. 16:13; Ex. 29:7). David was "the LORD's anointed" (2 Sam. 19:21). The New Testament shows the full meaning: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38), "whom thou hast anointed" (Acts 4:27).

> **2:3** *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*

their bands . . . their cords. The bonds of Jehovah and His Anointed: their rule, their law. The nations see God's government as a yoke on the neck of an ox, a set of cords to be thrown off. This is the heart of man's rebellion from the beginning: not to be ruled by God.

> **2:4** *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.*

He that sitteth in the heavens. The scene changes from earth to heaven. Jehovah is enthroned; He does not need to rise to meet the threat.

shall laugh . . . shall have them in derision. The figure *Anthropopatheia*: human feelings spoken of God, so that we may understand Him. The noise of the nations is nothing to Him. The same is said in Psalm 37:13 and 59:8.

the Lord. In the King James Version "Lord" here is in small letters, *Adonai*. *The Companion Bible* notes that this is one of the 134 places where the ancient scribes (the *Sopherim*) changed the Name Jehovah to Adonai, out of a mistaken reverence; the Massorah records the change. The primitive text read "Jehovah shall have them in derision."

> **2:5** *Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*

Then. When His patience has run its course.

speak unto them in his wrath. His word is enough. They spoke against Him (v. 3); He will speak to them.

vex. *Bāhal*: terrify, throw into panic, confound. Their tumult (v. 1) will be answered by terror.

> **2:6** *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*

Yet have I. Here Jehovah Himself speaks. The "I" is emphatic: "But *I*, I have set My King." Whatever the nations plan, the matter is already settled.

set. *Nāsaktî*: installed, established, as one founds a thing or pours out an offering. The King's place is fixed by Jehovah's own act.

my king. Not the nations' choice, but Jehovah's.

my holy hill of Zion. Zion was the hill of Jerusalem where David brought the Ark (2 Sam. 5:7; 6:12), "the mountain of my holiness." It is the seat of the King's rule on earth. That is where the Messiah will reign (Isa. 2:2–4; 24:23; Mic. 4:7).

> **2:7** *I will declare the decree: the LORD [Jehovah] hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*

I will declare. Now the Son speaks. He tells what Jehovah has decreed concerning Him.

the decree. *Ḥōq*: the fixed statute, the settled ordinance. It is not an opinion but a law that cannot be broken.

Thou art my Son. These are the words God spoke to the anointed king: "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (2 Sam. 7:14). They are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. God spoke of Him from heaven in the same way at His baptism, "This is my beloved Son" (Matt. 3:17), and on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:5).

this day have I begotten thee. The Son was *begotten*, on a *day*. He had a beginning in time, as every son has, and God is His Father. Paul shows which day is meant: "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Acts 13:33). He was "declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). Raised from the dead, He was then exalted to God's right hand (Acts 2:32–36): the resurrection and the ascension together set the King on His throne. The writer to the Hebrews uses this verse to show that He is above the angels, for "unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son?" (Heb. 1:5), and that He did not take the honour of the high priesthood to Himself, but received it from the One who said "Thou art my Son" (Heb. 5:5). This verse is one of those discussed in Appendix J.

> **2:8** *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*

Ask of me. Even the Son receives the nations by asking. All that He has is given Him by the Father.

the heathen for thine inheritance. The very nations that raged against Him (v. 1) are to be His inheritance. **the uttermost parts of the earth.** His rule will cover the whole earth: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (72:8).

This is the Kingdom that Messiah will set up at His coming. It is not the work of the present administration of grace, in which God is calling out of the nations a people for His name (Acts 15:14), but the time to come, when "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15).

> **2:9** *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

break them. The Hebrew consonants can be read two ways: *tĕrōʿēm*, "thou shalt break them," as the King James Version has it, or *tirʿēm*, "thou shalt shepherd them," as the Septuagint read it. The Revelation follows the second: "he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15). The Greek word there is *poimainō*, to shepherd. Both are true: the King who rules as a shepherd will break all resistance.

a rod of iron. A sceptre that cannot be broken. **like a potter's vessel.** Clay pottery shatters at a blow and cannot be mended (Jer. 19:11). Resistance to the King will be utterly crushed.

> **2:10** *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.*

Be wise now therefore. The fourth voice: the Psalmist speaks to the nations. Before judgment comes there is a call to repent. **be instructed.** Be corrected, accept discipline. **ye judges of the earth.** The rulers who "took counsel together" (v. 2) are now taught what counsel to take.

> **2:11** *Serve the LORD [Jehovah] with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*

Serve. They wanted to throw off His bands (v. 3); they are told to serve Him. **with fear . . . with trembling.** Reverence, not terror. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10). **rejoice with trembling.** Joy and awe together: the joy of being under His rule, and the awe of who He is.

> **2:12** *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

Kiss the Son. To kiss was to do homage, to submit to a king and acknowledge him (1 Sam. 10:1; compare 1 Kings 19:18). The word for "Son" here is *bar*, the Aramaic word (as in Prov. 31:2), not the Hebrew *bēn* of verse 7. Some have rendered the phrase "kiss purely" or "do homage in purity"; but the King James reading fits the Psalm: the Son of verse 7 is the One to whom the nations must bow.

lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way. The Son's anger is real. To refuse Him is to perish *from the way*, cut off in the midst of the road, like the way of the ungodly in 1:6.

when his wrath is kindled but a little. "For his wrath will soon be kindled" (so the Revised Version): it does not take long.

Blessed. The same word as 1:1, *ʾashrē*: "O the happinesses of." Psalm 1 began with blessing; Psalm 2 ends with it.

all they that put their trust in him. *Ḥôsē bô*: all who take refuge in Him, who flee to Him for shelter. The way of blessing is still open to the nations, and to every man.

Its close

Psalm 2 has no sub-scription. Psalm 3 follows, with its own Title.

Looking back

Psalm 2 is member E of the division (rebellious man), and it answers to Psalm 8 (*E*, rebellious man subdued, the Son of Man exalted). Here the nations rage against Jehovah's King; there the enemy is stilled, and man is crowned and given dominion. Between them stand the prayers of David, who lived in the midst of that rebellion and trusted Jehovah through it.

Psalm 3 — Prayer in the Morning: "Jehovah My Shield"

Place: Book I; Psalms 1–8; member C, F (prayer in view of the rebellion, morning). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when he fled from Absalom his son" (2 Sam. 15–18), in the later years of David's reign, a little before 970 B.C.

Introduction

Psalm 2 showed the nations in rebellion against Jehovah's anointed king. Psalm 3 shows what that rebellion felt like to the anointed king himself. David's own son Absalom had stolen the hearts of Israel and raised an army against his father. David fled Jerusalem in tears, barefoot, with his head covered, up the ascent of the mount of Olives (2 Sam. 15:30). Men cursed him as he went (2 Sam. 16:5–8). This Psalm is his prayer on the morning after the first night of that flight (v. 5).

It is the first Psalm with a Title, and the first that names its occasion. It is also the first with *Selah*, which occurs three times in it (vv. 2, 4, 8).

Structure

- H | c | 1. Numbers of enemies against me.
- d | 2. No salvation for me (they say).
- e | 3. Thou my help. (Experience: second person.)
- I | 4. Prayer answered. (Experience: third person.)
- *I* | 5. Confidence justified. (Experience: third person.)
- *H* | *c* | 6. Numbers of enemies against me.
- *d* | 7-. Save me (I say).
- *e* | -7, 8. Thou my help. (Experience: second person.)

The enemies, their claim, and Jehovah's help come twice (H and *H*), and at the centre stand prayer answered and confidence justified (I, *I*). In the first half the enemies say "There is no help for him in God"; in the second David says "Save me." His answer to their taunt is prayer.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

> **1** *LORD [Jehovah], how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.*
> **2** *Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.*
> **3** *But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.*

> **4** *I cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.*
>
> **5** *I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD [Jehovah] sustained me.*
>
> **6** *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.*
>
> **7** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah]; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.*
>
> **8** *Salvation belongeth unto the LORD [Jehovah]: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 4.

Verse by verse

> **3:1** *LORD [Jehovah], how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.*

LORD [Jehovah]. David begins with the covenant Name. His son has betrayed him, his people have left him, but Jehovah has not.

how are they increased. *Mah rabbû*: how many they have become! The figure is *Exclamation*. The conspiracy "was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom" (2 Sam. 15:12).

that trouble me . . . that rise up against me. His foes (*tsārāy*, those who press him hard) are many, and they have risen up. "Many" comes three times in two verses (vv. 1, 2): the figure *Anaphora*, the same word beginning successive clauses, to press home how great the number was.

> **3:2** *Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.*

Many there be which say of my soul. *Of my soul*: of me (the Hebrew *nephesh*, soul, put by the figure *Synecdoche* for the whole person). They speak about him, not to him.

There is no help for him in God. *Ēn yĕshûʿāthāh lô bēʾlōhîm*: "There is no salvation for him in God." This was the cruellest thing they said. They meant that God had abandoned David because of his sin with Bathsheba, and that this rebellion was the judgment Nathan had foretold (2 Sam. 12:10–12). Shimei said it to his face: "The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul . . . behold, thou art taken in thy mischief" (2 Sam. 16:8). Notice that they say "God" (*Elohim*), as of a God far off; David answers "Jehovah," the God of the covenant (v. 3).

Selah. The first Selah in the Psalter. It joins the enemies' taunt (v. 2) to David's answer (v. 3): they say there is no help in God; *but thou, O Jehovah*, art my shield. The connection is the whole point of the Psalm.

> **3:3** *But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.*

But thou. The "thou" is emphatic. Over against the many voices stands the One.

a shield for me. *Māgēn*: a shield, and *for me* is literally "round about me," a shield on every side. It is the figure *Metaphor*: Jehovah does not merely protect David; He *is* his shield. God spoke the same word to Abraham: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield" (Gen. 15:1).

my glory. David had lost his throne, his city, his honour. Jehovah was still his glory; what men had taken away could not take that.

the lifter up of mine head. David had left Jerusalem with his head covered in shame and mourning (2 Sam. 15:30). Jehovah would lift his head again: restore him, give him honour, let him look up (compare Gen. 40:13).

> **3:4** *I cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.*

I cried . . . with my voice. Not a silent prayer, but a cry aloud. The tense shows what David habitually did: whenever he cried, he was heard.

he heard me out of his holy hill. David had fled from Zion, but he had sent the Ark back there: "Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation" (2 Sam. 15:25). Though he was far away, Jehovah answered from the place where His presence was, the holy hill where (Psalm 2:6) He had set His king.

Selah. It joins the prayer heard (v. 4) to the night of peaceful sleep that followed (v. 5).

> **3:5** *I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD [Jehovah] sustained me.*

I laid me down and slept; I awaked. Three short verbs. In the midst of rebellion, with an army behind him and a hostile country around him, David slept, and woke up alive. That is the evidence of verse 3.

for the LORD [Jehovah] sustained me. *Yismĕkēnî*: upheld, supported, as one leans on a staff. The tense shows continuing support: Jehovah keeps holding him up. That same night help came: David's friends brought beds, food and supplies to him at Mahanaim (2 Sam. 17:27–29).

> **3:6** *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.*

I will not be afraid. Having been kept through the night, David faces the day without fear.

ten thousands of people. *Mērībĕbōth ʿām*: myriads of people. Absalom gathered "all Israel . . . from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude" (2 Sam. 17:11). The number is not exaggeration but plain fact; David's faith does not deny the danger, it looks past it.

that have set themselves against me round about. Surrounded on every side, yet with Jehovah as a shield "round about" him (v. 3).

> **3:7** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah]; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.*

Arise, O LORD [Jehovah]. The words of Moses whenever the Ark set out: "Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered" (Num. 10:35).

save me, O my God. *Hôshîʿēnî*: save me, deliver me. It is the same word as "help" in verse 2. They said there was no salvation for him; he asks for salvation.

for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly. The enemies are pictured as wild beasts with open jaws, and Jehovah strikes them on the jaw and breaks their teeth, so that they can no longer bite or devour. The figure is *Hypotyposis* (a vivid word-picture). David speaks of the deliverance as already done, so sure is he of it. A blow on the cheek was also an insult (1 Kings 22:24); those who mocked him will themselves be shamed.

> **3:8** *Salvation belongeth unto the LORD [Jehovah]: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.*

Salvation belongeth unto the LORD [Jehovah]. Literally "To Jehovah, the salvation." It is the same word as in verses 2 and 7, and it is the final answer to the enemies' taunt. Salvation is not in man, nor in armies, nor in David's own strength; it belongs to Jehovah, and He gives it to whom He will. Jonah said the same in the fish's belly (Jonah 2:9).

thy blessing is upon thy people. David's last thought is not for himself but for the people, the very people who had followed Absalom. He prays for blessing upon them. Here is the spirit of the man who wept for his rebel son: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee" (2 Sam. 18:33).

Selah. Joining the end of Psalm 3 to Psalm 4, which carries on the same thought (see *The Companion Bible*'s note).

Its close: "To the chief Musician on Neginoth"

These words, which the King James Version places over Psalm 4, are the sub-scription of Psalm 3 (Chapter 5). David handed this Psalm to the chief musician for the worship of the House of Jehovah. *Neginoth* comes from *nāgan*, to strike, and is usually understood of stringed instruments, struck or plucked. *The Chief Musician* shows that it is also used of "smitings," personal sufferings, and so marks a Psalm that tells of the writer's own blows (compare Lam. 3:14; Job 30:9). Psalm 3 is the song of a man struck by his own son and by his own people; and it ends with the enemies smitten on the cheek bone (v. 7).

Looking back

Psalm 3 is the first of the four prayers in the division (C, F: morning, enemies without). It answers to Psalm 5 (*C*, *F*: morning again). In both, David prays in the morning, with enemies around him, and in both he finds Jehovah his shield (3:3; 5:12). Here the rebellion of Psalm 2 is seen in the life of one man, and the answer of Psalm 2, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion," is found to be true for him: he is heard "out of his holy hill" (3:4).

Psalm 4 — Prayer at Night: "How Long?"

Place: Book I; Psalms 1–8; member C, G (prayer in view of the rebellion, night). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named; by its contents, the same time of trouble as Psalm 3.

Introduction

Psalm 3 was David's morning prayer; Psalm 4 is his evening prayer (v. 8). The danger is the same, and the enemies are the same "sons of men" who have turned his glory into shame (v. 2). But in this Psalm David turns and speaks to them, and calls them to repent. It ends, like Psalm 3, with sleep (4:8; 3:5).

Structure

- J | 1. Prayer to Jehovah.
- K | f | 2-. The sons of men. (David speaks of their sin.)
- g | -2. The sons of men. (Their own way.)
- *K* | *f* | 3. The sons of men. (David speaks of Jehovah's choice.)
- *g* | 4, 5. The sons of men. (What they must do.)
- *J* | 6–8. Prayer to Jehovah.

The Psalm begins and ends with prayer to Jehovah (J, *J*). Between, David speaks to the sons of men twice (K, *K*): first to rebuke them, then to warn and counsel them.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*
>
> **2** *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.*
>
> **3** *But know that the LORD [Jehovah] hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD [Jehovah] will hear when I call unto him.*
>
> **4** *Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.*
>
> **5** *Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **6** *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD [Jehovah], lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*
>
> **7** *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.*
>
> **8** *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD [Jehovah], only makest me dwell in safety.*

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 5.

Verse by verse

> **4:1** *Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*

Hear me when I call. *Answer me when I call.* David does not only want to be listened to; he wants an answer.

O God of my righteousness. The God who is the source of his righteousness and who will vindicate it. Men have condemned David (3:2); God will declare him in the right. The figure is the Genitive of relation: "my righteous God," "the God who maintains my right."

thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress. *Distress* (*tsar*) means a narrow place, a tight corner; *enlarged* (*hirḥabtā*) means to make room, to set in a broad place. When David was hemmed in, God gave him room. He prays out of past experience: "Thou hast done it before."

have mercy upon me. *Ḥonnēnî*: be gracious to me, show me favour I do not deserve.

> **4:2** *O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.*

O ye sons of men. *Bĕnē ʾîsh*: sons of men of rank, the great men, the leaders, as opposed to common people (*bĕnē ʾādām*; compare Psalm 49:2; 62:9). David addresses the nobles who had gone over to Absalom.

how long will ye turn my glory into shame? David's glory was his kingship, and above all the God who was his glory (3:3). They were trying to disgrace both.

how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? *Vanity* (*rîq*) is emptiness, the same word as the "vain thing" of 2:1. *Leasing* is the old English word for lies (*kāzāb*, falsehood). They loved the empty promises of Absalom (2 Sam. 15:3, 4) and chased after lies about David.

Selah. It joins their empty pursuit (v. 2) to the truth they must know (v. 3).

> **4:3** *But know that the LORD [Jehovah] hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD [Jehovah] will hear when I call unto him.*

But know. Here is what they ought to know instead of their lies.

the LORD [Jehovah] hath set apart him that is godly for himself. *Set apart* (*hiphlāh*): distinguished, marked out as wonderful. *Him that is godly* (*ḥāsîd*): the one who is the object of God's loving-kindness (*ḥesed*), and who returns it. David means himself: Jehovah chose him, anointed him, and set him apart (1 Sam. 16:12, 13). No conspiracy can undo that.

the LORD [Jehovah] will hear when I call unto him. He comes back to the prayer of verse 1, now as a certainty.

> **4:4** *Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.*

Stand in awe, and sin not. *Rigzû*: tremble, be agitated, whether with fear or with anger. The Septuagint renders it "Be ye angry, and sin not," and Paul uses those very words: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26). Whatever stirs them, let it not drive them into sin.

commune with your own heart upon your bed. *Speak in your heart*: think it over at night, quietly, alone.

and be still. *Dōmmû*: be silent, cease. Stop the noise and the plotting.

Selah. It joins the call to be still (v. 4) with the call to offer right sacrifices (v. 5).

> **4:5** *Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD [Jehovah].*

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness. Right sacrifices, offered with a right heart, as opposed to Absalom's sacrifices at Hebron, which were a cover for rebellion (2 Sam. 15:7–12). God takes no pleasure in sacrifice without righteousness (51:16–19).

and put your trust in the LORD [Jehovah]. Not in Absalom, nor in their own schemes.

> **4:6** *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD [Jehovah], lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*

There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Many of those with David were discouraged. In a time of loss and danger they ask, "Who will let us see good?"

LORD [Jehovah], lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. David answers with the words of the priestly blessing: "The LORD make his face shine upon thee . . . The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num. 6:25, 26). The "good" they long for is not a change of circumstances but the face of God shining on them. The figure is *Anthropopatheia*.

> **4:7** *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.*

Thou hast put gladness in my heart. The prayer of verse 6 has already been answered in David's own heart.

more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. Corn and wine were the blessings of the land, the joy of harvest (Deut. 7:13). The rebels may have plenty; David has something better. His joy is in Jehovah Himself, not in what Jehovah gives.

> **4:8** *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD [Jehovah], only makest me dwell in safety.*

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep. *Together*: "In peace I will both lie down and sleep at once," without lying awake in fear. The morning Psalm said "I laid me down and slept" (3:5); the evening Psalm says "I will."

for thou, LORD [Jehovah], only makest me dwell in safety. *Only* may belong to Jehovah ("thou alone") or to David ("alone," "apart," "in solitude"). Either way the point is the same: David, cut off from his city and his people, dwells in safety (*lābeṭaḥ*, in confident security) because Jehovah keeps him. It was the promise of the Law to Israel in the land: "ye shall dwell in the land in safety" (Lev. 25:18, 19).

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 5; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 4. *Nehiloth* is best taken from *naḥălāh*, "inheritance": "concerning inheritances." It fits Psalm 4. David has lost his possessions; the rebels have their corn and their wine (v. 7), the inheritance of the land. But David's inheritance is Jehovah Himself: His favour (v. 3), His face (v. 6), His gladness (v. 7), His peace (v. 8). "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance" (16:5).

Looking back

Psalm 4 is the second of the four prayers (C, G: night, enemies without), and it answers to Psalm 6 (*C*, *G*: night, sorrows within). In both, the cry is "How long?" (4:2; 6:3). Here it is David's cry to his enemies; in Psalm 6 it is his cry to Jehovah. Psalms 3 and 4 together show the anointed king in the midst of the rebellion of Psalm 2, morning and night, surrounded and yet at peace.

Psalm 5 — Prayer in the Morning: "Jehovah My King"

Place: Book I; Psalms 1–8; member *C*, *F* (prayer in view of the rebellion, morning). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. The Psalm speaks of "the bloody and deceitful man" and of enemies who "fall by their own counsels" (vv. 6, 10), which fits the conspiracy of Absalom and the counsel of Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15–17).

Introduction

Psalm 5 is a morning prayer (v. 3), like Psalm 3. But where Psalm 3 looked at the enemies around David, Psalm 5 looks at the character of God and the character of the wicked. God does not delight in wickedness; therefore the wicked cannot stand before Him. David comes into God's house, not by his own merit but "in the multitude of thy mercy" (v. 7).

Structure

- L | 1–3. Prayer to Jehovah.
- M | 4. "For": the reason. The character of Jehovah.
- N | 5, 6. The lawless, and their wickedness.
- O | 7. "But": the true worshippers.
- *L* | 8. Prayer to Jehovah.
- *M* | 9. "For": the reason. The character of the wicked.
- *N* | 10. The wicked, and their judgment.
- *O* | 11, 12. "But": the true worshippers.

The Psalm repeats its four members in the same order. Twice David prays (L, *L*); twice he gives his reason, first in God's character, then in the enemies' character (M, *M*); twice the wicked are described, first in their sin and then in their judgment (N, *N*); and twice the true worshippers are set over against them, beginning "But" (O, *O*).

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Give ear to my words, O LORD [Jehovah], consider my meditation.*
>
> **2** *Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.*
>
> **3** *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD [Jehovah]; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*
>
> **4** *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.*
>
> **5** *The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.*

> **6** *Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD [Jehovah] will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.*
>
> **7** *But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.*
>
> **8** *Lead me, O LORD [Jehovah], in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.*
>
> **9** *For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*
>
> **10** *Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.*
>
> **11** *But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.*
>
> **12** *For thou, LORD [Jehovah], wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 6.

Verse by verse

> **5:1** *Give ear to my words, O LORD [Jehovah], consider my meditation.*

Give ear . . . consider. Two requests, saying the same thing in two ways (the figure *Synonymia*): listen to my words, and understand what lies beneath them.

my meditation. *Hăgîgî*: my murmuring, my sighing; the unspoken groaning of the heart, as well as the words of the lips. It is from the same root as "meditate" (1:2). Paul speaks of "groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

> **5:2** *Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.*

the voice of my cry. The words of verse 1 have become a cry for help.

my King, and my God. David is himself king of Israel, yet he calls Jehovah "my King." His throne is under Jehovah's throne. Absalom may claim the kingdom, but the true King of Israel is Jehovah (compare 1 Sam. 8:7).

for unto thee will I pray. To no one else.

> **5:3** *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD [Jehovah]; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*

in the morning . . . in the morning. The repetition marks the time: the first thing in the day. The morning was the time of the morning sacrifice in the Tabernacle (Ex. 29:39).

will I direct my prayer unto thee. *ʾEʿĕrāk*: I will set in order, arrange, as the priest laid the wood in order on the altar (Lev. 1:7) and set out the shewbread (Ex. 40:23). David lays out his prayer before God like an offering.

and will look up. *ʾĂtsappeh*: I will watch, keep a look-out, as a watchman on the wall watches for news. He does not pray and forget; he watches for the answer (compare Hab. 2:1).

> **5:4** *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.*

For. The reason for David's confidence: the character of God.

thou art not a God. *El*: God, the Mighty One. This is the first time *El* occurs in the Psalms.

that hath pleasure in wickedness. *Reshaʿ*: lawlessness, the restless wickedness of the *rāshāʿ* (1:1). God takes no delight in it.

neither shall evil dwell with thee. *Evil* (*raʿ*) cannot *sojourn* with Him, cannot even be His guest. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab. 1:13).

> **5:5** *The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.*

The foolish shall not stand in thy sight. *Hôlĕlîm*: the boasters, the arrogant, those who make a show of themselves. They will not be able to take their stand before Him (compare 1:5).

thou hatest all workers of iniquity. *Iniquity* (*ʾāwen*) is wickedness that brings trouble and emptiness, the mischief men plot. God's hatred is not human spite; it is His holy rejection of evil and of those who make it their trade.

> **5:6** *Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD [Jehovah] will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.*

Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing. *Leasing*, lies (as 4:2). Lies were the weapon of Absalom (2 Sam. 15:3–6) and of the men who slandered David.

the LORD [Jehovah] will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. *The man of bloods and deceit*: one who sheds blood and deals in treachery. Ahithophel's counsel was to strike David and kill him while he was weary (2 Sam. 17:1–4).

> **5:7** *But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.*

But as for me. The "But" (O) sets the true worshipper against the wicked. The "me" is emphatic.

I will come into thy house. Into the House of Jehovah, the Tabernacle that David had pitched on Zion (2 Sam. 6:17), from which he was now cut off.

in the multitude of thy mercy. *Ḥesed*: loving-kindness, covenant faithfulness. David does not come in by his own right; he comes in by the abundance of God's mercy. That is the only way any man can come into God's presence.

in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. *Temple* (*hêkāl*) means a palace, the royal dwelling of the King. It was used of the Tabernacle before Solomon's Temple was built (1 Sam. 1:9; 3:3). Far from it, David bows toward it, as Daniel later prayed toward Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10).

> **5:8** *Lead me, O LORD [Jehovah], in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.*

Lead me, O LORD [Jehovah], in thy righteousness because of mine enemies. *Because of mine enemies*: literally "because of those who watch me," who lie in wait for a misstep. David asks to be led in God's righteous way, not his own.

make thy way straight before my face. Level, plain, so that he will not stumble. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:6).

> **5:9** *For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*

For. The second reason, now in the enemies' character.

there is no faithfulness in their mouth. Nothing steady or reliable in anything they say.

their inward part is very wickedness. *Havvôth*: ruin, destruction. Their hearts are full of schemes to destroy.

their throat is an open sepulchre. An open grave, giving off the stench of death and ready to swallow its victim. The figure is *Metaphor*. Paul quotes this verse, with others from the Psalms, to show that "There is none righteous, no, not one": "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit" (Rom. 3:10, 13).

they flatter with their tongue. They make their tongue smooth. Absalom flattered his way into the hearts of Israel: he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (2 Sam. 15:6).

> **5:10** *Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.*

Destroy thou them, O God. *Hold them guilty* (*haʾăshîmēm*): declare them guilty and let them bear their guilt. This is the first of the prayers for judgment (Chapter 3 of Part One). It is a prayer for God to do justice, not for David's revenge.

let them fall by their own counsels. It was answered to the letter. Ahithophel's counsel was rejected, and "when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed . . . he . . . hanged himself" (2 Sam. 17:23). David had prayed, "O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness" (2 Sam. 15:31).

cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions. David came in by the multitude of God's mercy (v. 7); they go out by the multitude of their own transgressions (*pĕshāʿîm*, rebellions).

for they have rebelled against thee. This is the reason. Their rebellion was against David, but it was really against God, whose anointed he was (compare 2:2).

> **5:11** *But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.*

But. The second "But" (*O*): the true worshippers again.

let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice. *Those who take refuge in thee*, the same word as 2:12. **let them ever shout for joy.** For ever, without end.

because thou defendest them. *Thou coverest them*, spreadest a covering over them, as a bird spreads its wings over its young (91:4).

let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. *Thy name* stands for God Himself, all that He has revealed of Himself (the figure *Metonymy*).

> **5:12** *For thou, LORD [Jehovah], wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*

For thou, LORD [Jehovah], wilt bless the righteous. The righteous man of Psalm 1, blessed by Jehovah.

with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield. *Tsinnāh*: the great shield that covered the whole body, larger than the *māgēn* of 3:3 (compare 1 Sam. 17:7). God's favour surrounds him on every side. The Psalm began with the cry of a hunted man; it ends with that man encircled by the favour of God.

Its close: "To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith"

This line stands over Psalm 6 in the King James Version, but it is the sub-scription of Psalm 5. *Neginoth*, as in Psalm 3, marks a song of personal suffering played on strings. *Sheminith* means "the eighth." The word is used of David's order of musicians: "Mattithiah . . . with harps on the Sheminith to excel" (1 Chron. 15:21). Its exact meaning in the Titles is discussed in Appendix C.

Looking back

Psalm 5 is the third of the four prayers (*C*, *F*: morning, sorrows within), and it answers to Psalm 3 (morning, enemies without). Psalm 3 ended "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah"; Psalm 5 ends with Jehovah's favour as a shield all round. In Psalm 5 the enemies are seen for what they are, rebels against God (v. 10), and David is seen for what he is: a man who comes into God's house only by God's mercy (v. 7).

Psalm 6 — Prayer at Night: "O Jehovah, How Long?"

Place: Book I; Psalms 1–8; member *C*, *G* (prayer in view of the rebellion, night). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 6 is the first of the seven Psalms that the church has long called "the penitential Psalms" (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143). It is a night prayer (v. 6). David is ill in body (v. 2), troubled in soul (v. 3), worn out with weeping (v. 6), and surrounded by enemies (v. 7). He fears that God is chastening him in anger. The trouble is now within as well as without. Yet the Psalm turns sharply at verse 8: "Depart from me . . . for Jehovah hath heard." The night ends in assurance.

Structure

- P | 1–5. Prayer offered.
- Q | 6-. Exhaustion.
- R | -6-. Tears.
- *R* | -6. Tears.
- *Q* | 7. Exhaustion.
- *P* | 8–10. Prayer answered.

A simple introversion. The Psalm opens with prayer offered and closes with prayer answered (P, *P*). Inside are exhaustion (Q, *Q*), and at the very centre, tears (R, *R*). The structure puts David's weeping at the heart of the Psalm.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *O LORD [Jehovah], rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*
> **2** *Have mercy upon me, O LORD [Jehovah]; for I am weak: O LORD [Jehovah], heal me; for my bones are vexed.*
> **3** *My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD [Jehovah], how long?*
> **4** *Return, O LORD [Jehovah], deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.*
> **5** *For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*
> **6** *I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.*
> **7** *Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.*
> **8** *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD [Jehovah] hath heard the voice of my weeping.*

> **9** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath heard my supplication; the LORD [Jehovah] will receive my prayer.*
>
> **10** *Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.*

Psalm 6 has no sub-scription. The Title of Psalm 7 begins with its own super-scription, "Shiggaion of David."

Verse by verse

> **6:1** *O LORD [Jehovah], rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*

rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. David does not ask to be spared correction, but to be corrected in measure, not in wrath. Jeremiah prays the same: "O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jer. 10:24). *Rebuke* is to reprove, to show a man his fault; *chasten* is to discipline, to train by correction. "Whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Prov. 3:12).

> **6:2** *Have mercy upon me, O LORD [Jehovah]; for I am weak: O LORD [Jehovah], heal me; for my bones are vexed.*

Have mercy upon me. *Be gracious to me* (as 4:1).

for I am weak. *ʾUmlal*: withered, faded, drooping like a cut plant.

heal me. The first prayer for healing in the Psalms. David's suffering is in his body. "I am the LORD that healeth thee" (Ex. 15:26).

for my bones are vexed. *Bones* are the frame of the body, put by the figure *Synecdoche* for the whole man. *Vexed* (*nibhălû*) is the same word as in 2:5, where Jehovah "vexes" the rebels: terrified, shaken, in dismay. The trouble has gone to the very frame of his being.

> **6:3** *My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD [Jehovah], how long?*

My soul is also sore vexed. Not only the body but the soul: "My soul (I myself) is greatly dismayed." The same verb as verse 2, now with "greatly" added. Jesus Christ used words like these in the garden: "Now is my soul troubled" (John 12:27; compare Matt. 26:38).

but thou, O LORD [Jehovah], how long? The sentence is broken off. David cannot finish it. This is the figure *Aposiopesis*, sudden silence, which says more than words could: "How long wilt thou leave me like this?" It is the first "how long?" addressed to God in the Psalms; it will be heard often (13:1, 2; 35:17; 90:13).

> **6:4** *Return, O LORD [Jehovah], deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.*

Return, O LORD [Jehovah]. God seemed to have turned away. David asks Him to turn back.

deliver my soul. *Draw out* my soul, as one draws a man out of danger.

oh save me for thy mercies' sake. Not for David's sake, but for the sake of God's own *ḥesed*, His covenant loving-kindness. David pleads what God is, not what David is.

> **6:5** *For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*

For in death there is no remembrance of thee. David gives his reason: if he dies, he cannot remember God or speak of Him. The dead do not praise. **in the grave who shall give thee thanks?** *The grave* is *Sheol*, the state of the dead.

This is the plain teaching of the Old Testament, and of this library's study *Where Are the Dead Right Now?*: the dead are dead, silent until the resurrection. "The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence" (115:17). "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing . . . there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:5, 10). Hezekiah, in his sickness, prayed in the same words: "For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee . . . The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day" (Isa. 38:18, 19). David wants to live so that he may go on praising God. The hope of the believer is not death but resurrection.

> **6:6** *I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.*

I am weary with my groaning. Worn out with sighing.

all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. The figure is *Hyperbole*: more is said than is literally meant, to express the depth of grief. His tears were so many that his bed seemed to float in them. *Bed* and *couch* say the same thing twice (synonymous parallelism). Here, at the centre of the Psalm (R, *R*), are the tears.

> **6:7** *Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.*

Mine eye is consumed because of grief. *Wasted away*, dimmed with weeping and sorrow (*kaʿas*, vexation, provocation).

it waxeth old because of all mine enemies. Grown dim like an old man's eye, because of his adversaries. Here the enemies appear for the first time in this Psalm, and with them the reason for the turn that follows.

> **6:8** *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD [Jehovah] hath heard the voice of my weeping.*

Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. A sudden change: the figure *Apostrophe*, a turning away from God to address the enemies. David speaks to them as one who has already been answered. The Lord Jesus Christ used these words of those who would claim to have done works in His name at the judgment: "depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27).

for the LORD [Jehovah] hath heard the voice of my weeping. Weeping has a voice, and Jehovah hears it. It is the first of three statements of assurance (vv. 8, 9).

> **6:9** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath heard my supplication; the LORD [Jehovah] will receive my prayer.*

The LORD [Jehovah] hath heard my supplication; the LORD [Jehovah] will receive my prayer. Three times in two verses David says that Jehovah has heard: the voice of his weeping, his supplication (his cry

for grace), and his prayer. He has heard, and He *will receive*, take it up and act on it. The repetition of the Name, three times, is emphatic.

> **6:10** *Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.*

Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed. The very word that described David's own state (vv. 2, 3) now falls on his enemies. He was dismayed; now they will be.

let them return and be ashamed suddenly. *Return*: turn back, retreat. David asked God to "return" to him (v. 4); now his enemies will "return" from him. And they will be ashamed *in a moment* (*rāgaʿ*). The long night of verse 6 ends in a sudden reversal.

Its close

Psalm 6 has no sub-scription, for the line over Psalm 7 begins with Psalm 7's own super-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 6 is the last of the four prayers (*C*, *G*: night, sorrows within), and it answers to Psalm 4 (night, enemies without). Both cry "How long?" (4:2; 6:3), and both end in quiet confidence. Together the four prayers (3–6) show the blessed man of Psalm 1 living in the rebellious world of Psalm 2: surrounded, slandered, sick and weeping, but heard.

Psalm 7 — The Blessed Man: "Jehovah My Defence"

Place: Book I; Psalms 1–8; member *D* (man blessed, trusting in Jehovah his defence). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite."

Introduction

Psalm 7 returns to the man of Psalm 1, now seen trusting in Jehovah when he is falsely accused. The Title calls it "Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite." Cush is not named anywhere else in Scripture. He was a Benjamite, of Saul's tribe, and the Psalm shows the kind of words he spoke: lying accusations that David had wronged a man at peace with him and had done evil to his enemy (vv. 3, 4). That fits the days when Saul hunted David, and Saul's men told Saul that David sought his hurt (1 Sam. 24:9; 26:19). David answers by putting himself in the hands of the Judge of all the earth.

Structure

- S | 1-. Trust in Jehovah for defence.
- T | -1. Prayer for deliverance.
- U | 2. The evil to be delivered from.
- V | 3, 4-. Demerit (if I have done this).
- *V* | -4. Merit (I have delivered him).
- *U* | 5. The evil to be delivered from.
- *T* | 6–9. Prayer for deliverance.
- *S* | 10–17. Trust in Jehovah for defence.

An introversion. Trust opens and closes the Psalm (S, *S*); prayer comes next on either side (T, *T*); then the danger (U, *U*); and at the centre David's own case: the charge he denies, and the truth that he spared his enemy (V, *V*).

The Psalm

Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD [Jehovah], concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.

> **1** *O LORD [Jehovah] my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:*
>
> **2** *Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.*
>
> **3** *O LORD [Jehovah] my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;*
>
> **4** *If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)*

> **5** *Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.*
>
> **6** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah], in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.*
>
> **7** *So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high.*
>
> **8** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD [Jehovah], according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*
>
> **9** *Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.*
>
> **10** *My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.*
>
> **11** *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*
>
> **12** *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.*
>
> **13** *He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.*
>
> **14** *Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.*
>
> **15** *He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.*
>
> **16** *His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.*
>
> **17** *I will praise the LORD [Jehovah] according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD [Jehovah] most high.*

To the chief Musician upon Gittith.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 8.

The Title

Shiggaion. From *shāgāh*, to wander, to reel, to cry aloud; a loud cry, a song of strong feeling, in danger or in joy. The word occurs only here and in the plural in Habakkuk 3:1 ("Shigionoth").

which he sang unto the LORD [Jehovah]. David did not answer Cush; he sang to Jehovah.

concerning the words of Cush. *The words* (*dibrē*) can mean "the matters" or "the affairs": the things Cush said and did against him.

Verse by verse

> **7:1** *O LORD [Jehovah] my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:*

O LORD [Jehovah] my God. The covenant Name, and the personal "my."

in thee do I put my trust. *Ḥāsîthî*: I have taken refuge in Thee. It is the word of 2:12 and 5:11. The blessed man has fled to Jehovah.

save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me. *Persecute*: pursue, chase. David was a hunted man: "the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains" (1 Sam. 26:20).

> **7:2** *Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.*

Lest he tear my soul like a lion. The enemy is now spoken of as one man, "he," most likely Saul himself, with Cush as his mouthpiece. *Like a lion* is a *Simile*; David had faced lions as a shepherd boy (1 Sam. 17:34–37). **rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.** A lion tears its prey and drags it off where no one can rescue it.

> **7:3** *O LORD [Jehovah] my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;*

O LORD [Jehovah] my God, if I have done this. David appeals to God's judgment. "This" is the charge Cush had made. **if there be iniquity in my hands.** *Hands* stand for what a man does (the figure *Metonymy*).

> **7:4** *If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)*

If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me. If he had repaid with evil one who was his friend, as Cush accused him.

(yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:). The bracket is the truth: far from repaying good with evil, David had repaid evil with good. Twice he had Saul in his power and spared him, once in the cave at En-gedi (1 Sam. 24:4–11) and once in the camp at Hachilah (1 Sam. 26:7–12). "Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil," Saul confessed (1 Sam. 24:17). Here at the centre of the Psalm (V, *V*) the false charge and the truth stand side by side.

> **7:5** *Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.*

Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it. If the charge is true, David is willing to bear the penalty: let his enemy hunt him down and catch him. This is an oath of clearing, calling down judgment on himself if he is guilty.

yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. *Tread down*, trample like a beast in the field. *Mine honour* (*kĕbôdî*, my glory, as 3:3; 4:2) laid in the dust: his life ended in disgrace.

Selah. It joins David's oath (v. 5) to his call for God to arise and judge (v. 6). Having laid his case open, he calls on the Judge.

> **7:6** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah], in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.*

Arise, O LORD [Jehovah], in thine anger. As in 3:7, the call of the Ark setting out (Num. 10:35). **lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies.** Their fury (*ʿabrôth*, overflowing rage) has risen; let God rise above it.

and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded. God has already commanded judgment, set it in His law; David asks Him to rouse Himself and carry it out. *Awake* is the figure *Anthropopatheia*: God does not sleep (121:4), but He may seem to.

> **7:7** *So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high.*

So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about. *The assembly of the peoples* will gather around Thee: the nations gathered before their Judge.

for their sakes therefore return thou on high. *Over it*: over that assembly, return to Thy seat on high, the judgment-seat above them all. The scene is a court, with the Judge on His throne and the peoples gathered round.

> **7:8** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD [Jehovah], according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*

The LORD [Jehovah] shall judge the people. *The peoples*: all nations. Jehovah is "the Judge of all the earth" (Gen. 18:25).

judge me, O LORD [Jehovah], according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. David is not claiming to be sinless. He is asking to be judged on *this* charge, where he knows he is innocent. *Integrity* (*tōm*): completeness, singleness of heart, the same root as Job's "perfect" (Job 1:1).

> **7:9** *Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.*

Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end. The longing of every righteous man: that lawlessness should cease.

but establish the just. Make the righteous man firm, settled.

for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins. *Trieth*: tests, as metal is tested. *Reins* are the kidneys, put by the figure *Metonymy* for the inmost thoughts and feelings. God sees what no man sees. The Lord Jesus Christ says the same of Himself in the Revelation: "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts" (Rev. 2:23).

> **7:10** *My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.*

My defence is of God. *My shield is upon God*: God carries my shield. The *S* member begins: trust in Jehovah for defence, as in verse 1.

which saveth the upright in heart. The straight, the honest. David counts himself among them on this charge.

> **7:11** *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.*

God judgeth the righteous. *God is a righteous judge* (as the Hebrew may also be read). **and God is angry with the wicked every day.** *El* is indignant every day. The words "with the wicked" are supplied by the translators (they are in italic in the King James Version), but they are true to the sense. God's anger against evil is not a sudden outburst; it is constant, every day.

> **7:12** *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.*

If he turn not. If the wicked man does not repent. There is still room for that.

he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. God is pictured as a warrior sharpening His sword and stringing His bow (the figure *Anthropopatheia*). His weapons are prepared; judgment is ready, but held back while there is time to turn.

> **7:13** *He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.*

He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death. The weapons that kill. **he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.** *He maketh his arrows burning*: fire-arrows, aimed at those who hunt the righteous.

> **7:14** *Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.*

Behold. The figure *Asterismos*: "Look at this."

he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood. The picture of a birth, told backwards for emphasis: travail, conception, delivery. The wicked man is pregnant with iniquity (*ʾāwen*); he conceived *mischief* (*ʿāmāl*, trouble, toil), and what he brings forth is a *lie*. James uses the same picture: "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:15).

> **7:15** *He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.*

He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. The pit dug to catch a wild animal. He dug it carefully, and fell into it himself. "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein" (Prov. 26:27). It happened to Haman, hanged on the gallows he built for Mordecai (Esther 7:10), and it happened to Saul, who died by his own sword (1 Sam. 31:4).

> **7:16** *His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.*

His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate. *Pate* is the crown of the head. What he threw up comes down on him. The mischief (*ʿāmāl*) he conceived (v. 14) returns on him; his violence (*ḥāmās*) falls on his own head.

> **7:17** *I will praise the LORD [Jehovah] according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD [Jehovah] most high.*

I will praise the LORD [Jehovah] according to his righteousness. David ends, not with his own righteousness (v. 8), but with God's. *Praise* (*ʾôdeh*): give thanks, confess.

and will sing praise to the name of the LORD [Jehovah] most high. *Most High* is *Elyon*, God as possessor of heaven and earth, over all nations (Gen. 14:19). It is the first time *Elyon* occurs in the Psalms. The Judge of verse 8, before whom the peoples gather, is the Most High over them all.

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Gittith"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 8 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 7. *Gittith* comes from *gath*, a winepress. The vintage and the treading of the winepresses came at the end of the year's harvest, at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 16:13), when Israel dwelt in booths, rejoicing in safety in the land. *The Chief Musician* shows that the three "Gittith" Psalms (7, 80, 83) are songs for that Feast. Psalm 7, ending in praise to the Most High after deliverance, was handed to the chief musician to be sung at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Looking back

Psalm 7 is member *D* (man blessed), and it answers to Psalm 1 (D). The man of Psalm 1 does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly; the man of Psalm 7 is falsely accused by the ungodly and puts his case in God's hands. Psalm 1 said "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment"; Psalm 7 shows the judgment, with the Judge on high and the wicked falling into their own pit.

Psalm 8 — The Son of Man

Place: Book I; Psalms 1–8; member *E* (rebellious man subdued; the Son of Man exalted with dominion in the earth). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** the death of Goliath, the champion (from the sub-scription; see below).

Introduction

The division ends where it began, with man; but now man is seen as God purposed him to be. David looks up at the night sky and asks, "What is man?" and answers from Genesis 1: man was made to have dominion over the works of God's hands. The Psalm is framed by praise of Jehovah's name "in all the earth" (vv. 1, 9).

The sub-scription (printed over Psalm 9 in the King James Version) is "upon Muth-labben," "the death of the champion." *The Chief Musician* shows that it refers to the death of Goliath, the champion of the Philistines (1 Sam. 17:4, 23). A shepherd boy, a "babe and suckling" in the eyes of the giant, stilled the enemy; and David saw in it God's purpose for man.

The New Testament applies the Psalm to Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, who was made a little lower than the angels and is now crowned with glory and honour, waiting until all things are put under His feet (Heb. 2:6–9; 1 Cor. 15:27).

Structure

- W | 1-. The greatness of Jehovah in the earth.
- X | h | -1. The glory of Jehovah in the heavens.
- j | 2. His condescension to man.
- *X* | *h* | 3. The glory of Jehovah in the heavens.
- *j* | 4–8. His condescension to man.
- *W* | 9. The greatness of Jehovah in the earth.

The Psalm begins and ends with the same words (W, *W*). Between, it moves twice from the glory of God in the heavens to His care for man on earth (X, *X*). The second time, the care for man is unfolded at length (vv. 4–8).

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *O LORD [Jehovah] our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.*

> **2** *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*
>
> **3** *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;*
>
> **4** *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*
>
> **5** *For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.*
>
> **6** *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:*
>
> **7** *All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;*
>
> **8** *The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*
>
> **9** *O LORD [Jehovah] our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*

To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 9.

Verse by verse

> **8:1** *O LORD [Jehovah] our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.*

O LORD [Jehovah] our Lord. *Jehovah ʾădōnēnû*: "Jehovah, our Sovereign." The covenant Name, and the Lord to whom all belong. The "our" includes all God's people.

how excellent is thy name in all the earth! *Excellent* (*ʾaddîr*): majestic, glorious. His *name* is Himself as He has made Himself known (the figure *Metonymy*). *In all the earth*: this Psalm is about the earth, and God's purpose for it.

who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Thy majesty is set above, higher than the heavens. The heavens declare His glory (19:1), but His glory is greater than they.

> **8:2** *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength. *Ordained*: founded, established. God builds His strength out of the weakest things. When Goliath saw David, "he disdained him: for he was but a youth" (1 Sam. 17:42). The shepherd boy was to the giant what a babe is to a warrior.

The Lord Jesus Christ quoted this verse when the children cried "Hosanna to the son of David" in the Temple and the chief priests were indignant: "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt. 21:16). He quoted the Septuagint, which reads "praise" for "strength": the strength God ordains is shown in the praise He draws from the weak.

because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. *Still*: make to cease, silence. Goliath "defied the armies of the living God" (1 Sam. 17:26); his voice was silenced by a stone from a shepherd's sling. *The avenger* is the one who seeks revenge, the vengeful foe. Behind every such enemy stands the great enemy of God and man, whose silencing is the end of the story (Rev. 20:2, 3).

> **8:3** *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;*

When I consider thy heavens. *When I see*: David looks up, as he must have done many nights as a shepherd on the hills of Bethlehem.

the work of thy fingers. The figure *Anthropopatheia*. The vast heavens are only the work of God's *fingers*, fine work, like embroidery.

the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained. *Ordained*: fixed, established in their places. He mentions the moon and stars, not the sun: it is night. "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names" (147:4).

> **8:4** *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

What is man. *ʾĔnôsh*: man in his frailty, mortal man. Set beside the heavens, he is nothing. The question is the figure *Erotesis*, asked in wonder.

that thou art mindful of him? That Thou rememberest him, keepest him in mind.

and the son of man. *Ben ʾādām*: a son of Adam, a son of the ground (*ʾădāmāh*) from which Adam was taken. The second line repeats the first (synonymous parallelism), both pointing to man's lowliness.

that thou visitest him? That Thou carest for him, lookest after him, comest to him for good (as Gen. 21:1; Ruth 1:6).

The writer to the Hebrews quotes verses 4–6 and applies them to Jesus: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? . . . But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2:6–9). What God purposed for man, He has done first in the Man Jesus Christ. "Son of man" was the title Jesus used of Himself more than any other. He was truly a man, a son of Adam, and as a man He will have dominion over the earth.

> **8:5** *For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.*

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels. *The angels* translates *ʾĕlōhîm*, which commonly means God. The Septuagint renders it "angels" (*angelous*), and so does the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. 2:7, 9). The word is used of mighty ones other than God, of judges (Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9) and of the heavenly host. Man was made a little lower than these mighty heavenly beings.

and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Man was made to be crowned, a king under God. In Adam the crown was lost; in Jesus Christ it has been restored: "we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and

honour" (Heb. 2:9). He was raised, ascended into heaven, and seated at God's right hand (Eph. 1:20–22); the crown is His already.

> **8:6** *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:*

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands. The words of Genesis: "let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26, 28). Adam lost that dominion when he sinned.

thou hast put all things under his feet. Paul quotes this to show that the risen Christ will reign until every enemy is subdued, death last of all: "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him" (1 Cor. 15:27). God, who puts all things under Him, is not under Him; Christ Himself will be subject to God, "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). The writer to the Hebrews adds: "But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:8). It is promised, not yet seen; it will be fulfilled when He comes.

> **8:7** *All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;*

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field. The domestic animals and the wild beasts of the open country.

> **8:8** *The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*

The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. Air, sea, and the depths: the whole created world below man. Verses 7 and 8 name the very creatures of Genesis 1:26, 28, in nearly the same order.

> **8:9** *O LORD [Jehovah] our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*

O LORD [Jehovah] our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! The Psalm ends with the words it began with (the figure *Epanadiplosis*, the same words at the beginning and the end). But this time there is no "who hast set thy glory above the heavens." Everything between has shown how the excellence of His name will be seen *in the earth*: in the dominion of the Son of Man.

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben"

The King James Version puts these words over Psalm 9, where they have puzzled readers for centuries, since Psalm 9 says nothing of death. They are the sub-scription of Psalm 8. *Muth* is "death." *Labben* is taken by *The Chief Musician* (following Dr. Thirtle) as a form of *habbēnayim*, the word used of Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:4, 23: *ʾîsh habbēnayim*, "the man between the two," the champion who stood out between the two armies to fight in single combat. "Upon Muth-labben" means "relating to the death of the champion." The Targum (the ancient Aramaic paraphrase) also connects the title with Goliath. Psalm 8 is David's song of that day: the babe and suckling, the enemy stilled, the Son of Man crowned. It was handed to the chief musician for the worship of the House of Jehovah.

Looking back

Psalm 8 is member *E*, and it answers to Psalm 2 (E). In Psalm 2 the nations rage against Jehovah and His Anointed, and Jehovah declares, "Thou art my Son." In Psalm 8 the enemy is stilled, and the Son of Man is crowned and given dominion over all the works of God's hands. The first division of the Psalter ends with the question of man answered: what man lost in Adam, God will restore in the Son of Man, Jesus Christ.

Looking Back on Psalms 1–8

The first division of the Psalter is complete, and its message is clear.

- **Man was made for blessing** (Psalm 1), and blessing is found in delight in the Word of God.
- **Man is in rebellion** (Psalm 2) against Jehovah and His Anointed; yet Jehovah has set His King on Zion and declared Him His Son.
- **The righteous suffer** in that rebellious world (Psalms 3–6), morning and night, from enemies without and sorrows within. But Jehovah is their shield (3:3), their light (4:6), their King (5:2), and their healer (6:2), and He hears.
- **The righteous are kept** (Psalm 7): Jehovah is their defence, and the Judge of all the earth will do right.
- **Man will be crowned** (Psalm 8): the dominion lost in Adam is restored in the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, now crowned with glory and honour, and waiting until all things are put under His feet.

The next division (Psalms 9–15) turns to "the man of the earth," man's great enemy, and to the times of trouble that he brings.

Psalms 9–15: "The Man of the Earth"

A. What this division is about

The first division ended with the Son of Man crowned (Psalm 8). The second shows the man who stands against him: "the man of the earth" (10:18), the lawless one who oppresses the poor, says in his heart "God hath forgotten," and boasts that he shall never be moved. Psalms 9 and 10 describe him and his "times of trouble" (9:9; 10:1). Then come two prayers in view of those times (11, 13), each followed by a Psalm on what man is when left to himself (12, 14). The division closes with the man who will stand: the one who shall "abide in thy tabernacle" and "never be moved" (Psalm 15).

The wicked man of these Psalms was real in David's day; such men always are. But the language goes beyond any one oppressor. He is "the wicked" (9:5, 17; 10:2–4), set against God, and his end is to be cut off when Jehovah sits on His throne to judge the world (9:7, 8; 10:16). Dr. Bullinger saw in him a picture of the lawless one still to come, "that man of sin . . . the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3), whose time is "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). The commentary shows both: the oppressor David knew, and the pattern he follows.

B. Its structure

- H | 9, 10. "The man of the earth." His days, his character, and his end. Two Psalms linked by one broken acrostic.
- J | K | 11. Prayer in view of "those times of trouble."
- L | 12. The vanity of man.
- *J* | *K* | 13. Prayer in view of "those times of trouble."
- *L* | 14. The depravity of man.
- *H* | 15. The perfect man: his character, and his eternal abiding.

The division opens with the man of the earth (H) and closes with the man of heaven's choosing (*H*): the one who oppresses and the one who "shall never be moved." Between them, two prayers (K, *K*) each followed by a Psalm on man without God (L, *L*).

C. Its purpose

This division answers the question raised by the first: if God has purposed to crown man with dominion (Psalm 8), why does the wicked man rule now? The answer is that his day is short. Jehovah "shall endure for ever" (9:7); "The LORD [Jehovah] is King for ever and ever" (10:16). The righteous are told to wait, to pray, and to trust; and they are shown the kind of man who will dwell with God for ever.

Psalm 9 — "The Man of the Earth" (I): Jehovah Judges

Place: Book I; Psalms 9–15; member H (the man of the earth; with Psalm 10). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalms 9 and 10 belong together. Psalm 10 has no Title of its own, and the two are joined by an acrostic: verses begin with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order, starting at *aleph* in 9:1 and ending at *tav* in 10:17. The acrostic is broken: some letters are missing, especially in the middle of Psalm 10, where the lawless one is described. Dr. Bullinger noted that the broken alphabet matches the broken "times of trouble" of which the Psalms speak. The Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate print the two as one Psalm, which is why their numbering of the Psalms differs from ours from here to Psalm 147 (Appendix I).

Psalm 9 is thanksgiving: Jehovah has judged the enemy, and will judge the world. Psalm 10 is appeal: the wicked still prosper, and the cry is "Arise, O LORD."

Structure

- Y | 1, 2. Thanksgiving.
- Z | 3–10. The excision (cutting off) of the wicked.
- *Y* | 11. Thanksgiving.
- *Z* | 12–20. The excision of the wicked.

Each section of thanksgiving is followed by the reason for it: the wicked cut off and the oppressed delivered.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *I will praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah], with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.*
> **2** *I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.*
> **3** *When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.*
> **4** *For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right.*
> **5** *Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.*
> **6** *O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.*
> **7** *But the LORD [Jehovah] shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.*

> **8** *And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.*
>
> **9** *The LORD [Jehovah] also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.*
>
> **10** *And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*
>
> **11** *Sing praises to the LORD [Jehovah], which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.*
>
> **12** *When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.*
>
> **13** *Have mercy upon me, O LORD [Jehovah]; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:*
>
> **14** *That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.*
>
> **15** *The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.*
>
> **16** *The LORD [Jehovah] is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.*
>
> **17** *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*
>
> **18** *For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.*
>
> **19** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah]; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.*
>
> **20** *Put them in fear, O LORD [Jehovah]: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.*

Psalm 9 has no sub-scription, for Psalm 10, which carries it on, has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **9:1** *I will praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah], with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.*

I will praise thee . . . with my whole heart. *ʾÔdeh*: give thanks, acknowledge. Not with half a heart. This verse begins with *aleph*, the first letter. **I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.** *Niphlĕʾôth*: wonders, things beyond man's doing. The deliverance he is about to describe was God's doing.

> **9:2** *I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.*

I will be glad and rejoice in thee. In God Himself, not only in what He has done. **O thou most High.** *Elyon*, as in 7:17: the possessor of heaven and earth, above all the nations who rise against Him.

> **9:3** *When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.*

When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence. *At thy presence*: before Thy face. They do not fall by David's strength; they fall when God appears. "As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God" (68:2).

> **9:4** *For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right.*

For thou hast maintained my right and my cause. *My judgment and my plea*: God has taken up David's case. **thou satest in the throne judging right.** The Judge has taken His seat. What David prayed for in 7:7, 8 has been done.

> **9:5** *Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.*

Thou hast rebuked the heathen. *The nations*. God's rebuke is enough to scatter them (compare 104:7). **thou hast destroyed the wicked.** *The wicked* is singular here (*rāshāʿ*): the lawless one, the head of the enemies. **thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.** *Blotted out*, erased from the record, as Amalek's name was to be blotted out (Ex. 17:14; Deut. 25:19).

> **9:6** *O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.*

O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end. The figure *Apostrophe*: David turns and speaks to the enemy. The sense is: "The enemy! His ruins are finished for ever." The destroyer is himself destroyed. **and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.** The cities he laid waste are gone, and so is his memory with them. "The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot" (Prov. 10:7).

> **9:7** *But the LORD [Jehovah] shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.*

But the LORD [Jehovah] shall endure for ever. *Shall sit*, as on a throne, for ever. The enemy's ruin is "perpetual"; Jehovah's reign is everlasting. **he hath prepared his throne for judgment.** Set it up, established it.

> **9:8** *And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.*

And he shall judge the world in righteousness. *Tēbēl*: the inhabited world. This is the first time the word occurs in the Psalms. Paul quoted this verse to the Athenians: God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). **he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.** *The peoples*: all nations, with equity.

> **9:9** *The LORD [Jehovah] also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.*

The LORD [Jehovah] also will be a refuge for the oppressed. *Misgāb*: a high place, a fortress on a height, out of reach. *The oppressed* (*dak*): the crushed. **a refuge in times of trouble.** *Times of trouble*: times of extremity, of distress. The phrase occurs only here and in 10:1, and it binds the two Psalms together. These are the times of the man of the earth.

> **9:10** *And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*

And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee. To know His name is to know Him as He has revealed Himself. Those who know Him trust Him. **for thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast not forsaken them that seek thee.** Never once.

> **9:11** *Sing praises to the LORD [Jehovah], which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.*

Sing praises to the LORD [Jehovah], which dwelleth in Zion. *Which sitteth enthroned in Zion*, where the Ark was. The second thanksgiving (*Y*) calls others to join. **declare among the people his doings.** Make known among the peoples what He has done.

> **9:12** *When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.*

When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them. *Inquisition for blood*: the avenger of blood, who seeks out the murderer (Gen. 9:5; Num. 35:19). God is the great Avenger of the blood of His people, and He remembers them. **he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.** *The afflicted*. The wicked man says "God hath forgotten" (10:11); He has not.

> **9:13** *Have mercy upon me, O LORD [Jehovah]; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:*

Have mercy upon me, O LORD [Jehovah]. Be gracious to me. **consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me.** See my affliction. **thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.** *The gates of death*: death is pictured as a city, with gates through which men enter and do not return (compare 107:18; Job 38:17; Isa. 38:10, where Hezekiah speaks of "the gates of the grave"). God lifts His servant up from its very threshold.

> **9:14** *That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.*

That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion. The contrast is deliberate: lifted from the *gates of death*, he will praise God in the *gates of Zion*, where the people gathered. *The daughter of Zion* is the city and its people (the figure *Prosopopoeia*, a city spoken of as a person). The dead do not praise (6:5); the living will. **I will rejoice in thy salvation.** *Yĕshûʿāh*, as in 3:8.

> **9:15** *The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.*

The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The pit and the net were traps for wild beasts. The nations set them for the righteous and are caught in their own snares, as in 7:15.

> **9:16** *The LORD [Jehovah] is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.*

The LORD [Jehovah] is known by the judgment which he executeth. Jehovah makes Himself known by what He does. **the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.** *Snared* (*nôqēsh*): caught in a fowler's trap. **Higgaion. Selah.** *Higgaion* is a meditation, a soliloquy, a time for quiet thought (from *hāgāh*, as

1:2). Here, joined with *Selah*, it calls for deep reflection on what has just been said: the wicked trapped in his own work. The Selah connects the snaring of the wicked one (v. 16) with the end of all the wicked (v. 17).

> **9:17** *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*

The wicked shall be turned into hell. *Turned* is *return* (*yāshûbû*): they shall go back to Sheol. *Hell* here is *Sheol*, the grave, the state of the dead. Man came from the dust and returns to it (Gen. 3:19); the wicked will be sent back to the grave from which they came, and kept there. Sheol is not a place of torment; it is the place of the dead, where there is no knowledge or praise (6:5; Eccl. 9:10). **and all the nations that forget God.** *Elohim*. To forget God is the root of all wickedness (Deut. 8:19). The wicked man says that God has forgotten (10:11); in truth it is he who forgets God.

> **9:18** *For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.*

For the needy shall not alway be forgotten. *Not for ever*. The needy may seem forgotten now, but not always. In the Hebrew the word "not" is placed at the end of the first clause and serves for both lines (the figure *Ellipsis*). **the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.** *The hope of the afflicted*. The way of the wicked perishes (1:6); the hope of the poor does not.

> **9:19** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah]; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.*

Arise, O LORD [Jehovah]; let not man prevail. *Man* is *ʾĕnôsh*, frail mortal man (as 8:4). Let not weak man be strong against God. **let the heathen be judged in thy sight.** Before Thy face.

> **9:20** *Put them in fear, O LORD [Jehovah]: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.*

Put them in fear, O LORD [Jehovah]. *Set a terror on them*. Some ancient versions read "a teacher" (*môreh*) for "fear" (*môrāʾ*), a difference of one letter; the Septuagint has "a lawgiver." Either way, God will make them know Him. **that the nations may know themselves to be but men.** *Only ʾĕnôsh*: mortal men. Their great sin is to forget it. **Selah.** It connects the end of Psalm 9 with Psalm 10: the nations must learn that they are but men, and Psalm 10 describes the man who will not learn.

Its close

Psalm 9 has no sub-scription. Psalm 10 continues it without a Title.

Psalm 10 — "The Man of the Earth" (II): "Arise, O Jehovah"

Place: Book I; Psalms 9–15; member H (with Psalm 9). **Writer:** David (the Psalm continues Psalm 9). **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 9 gave thanks for judgment already seen; Psalm 10 cries out because the wicked still prosper. It is the fullest portrait of the wicked man in the Psalms: his pride, his boasting, his lies, his ambush of the poor, and above all his thought about God: "God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it" (v. 11). The acrostic of Psalm 9 breaks down in the middle of this Psalm, where he is described, and resumes at verse 12 with the cry "Arise, O LORD."

Structure

- F | 1. Appeal to Jehovah.
- G | I | 2–5. The lawless one: his acts.
- J | 6. His thoughts (concerning himself).
- *G* | *I* | 7–10. The lawless one: his acts.
- *J* | 11. His thoughts (concerning God).
- *F* | 12–18. Appeal to Jehovah.

Twice the Psalm shows the lawless man's acts and then his thoughts: first what he thinks of himself, then what he thinks of God. It is framed by appeal to Jehovah.

The Psalm

Psalm 10 has no Title; it continues Psalm 9.

> **1** *Why standest thou afar off, O LORD [Jehovah]? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?*
>
> **2** *The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.*
>
> **3** *For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD [Jehovah] abhorreth.*
>
> **4** *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*
>
> **5** *His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.*
>
> **6** *He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.*

> **7** *His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.*
>
> **8** *He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.*
>
> **9** *He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.*
>
> **10** *He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.*
>
> **11** *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.*
>
> **12** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah]; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.*
>
> **13** *Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.*
>
> **14** *Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.*
>
> **15** *Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.*
>
> **16** *The LORD [Jehovah] is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.*
>
> **17** *LORD [Jehovah], thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:*
>
> **18** *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 11.

Verse by verse

> **10:1** *Why standest thou afar off, O LORD [Jehovah]? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?*

Why standest thou afar off, O LORD [Jehovah]? The figure *Erotesis*: the question of a man who cannot understand God's silence. **why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?** The same phrase as 9:9. In the times of the man of the earth, God seems absent. He is not, as the Psalm will show.

> **10:2** *The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.*

The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor. *Hotly pursues* the afflicted. *Pride* (*gaʾăwāh*) is the root. **let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.** The prayer of 7:15 and 9:15: let them be caught in their own schemes.

> **10:3** *For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD [Jehovah] abhorreth.*

For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire. He boasts of what he wants and gets. **and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD [Jehovah] abhorreth.** The Hebrew is difficult. *The Companion Bible* notes that this is one of the places where the scribes altered the text out of reverence, and that the primitive reading was "the covetous (or robber) blasphemeth, yea, abhorreth Jehovah." The sense either way is that the wicked man praises greed and despises God.

> **10:4** *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*

The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God. *The height of his nose*: his face lifted in arrogance. He does not inquire of God. **God is not in all his thoughts.** Literally "No God! are all his schemes." His whole plan of life leaves God out. It is the practical atheism of Psalm 14:1.

> **10:5** *His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.*

His ways are always grievous. *Firm, prosperous*: his ways succeed at all times. That is the grief of the righteous (73:3). **thy judgments are far above out of his sight.** God's judgments are too high for him to see; he does not think of them. **as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.** He sneers, blows at them with contempt.

> **10:6** *He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.*

He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity. His thoughts about himself (J). He is sure he will never fall. The perfect man of Psalm 15 "shall never be moved" (15:5); the wicked man only says so.

> **10:7** *His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.*

His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud. Paul quotes this verse among the proofs that "there is none righteous": "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Rom. 3:14). **under his tongue is mischief and vanity.** Kept ready, like food held under the tongue. *Mischief* (*ʿāmāl*) and *vanity* (*ʾāwen*): trouble and wickedness.

> **10:8** *He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.*

He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages. In ambush near the unwalled villages, where the poor live unprotected. **in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.** He watches in secret for the helpless.

> **10:9** *He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.*

He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den. The *Simile* of the lion again (7:2). **he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.** Now the hunter: first the lion, then the fowler with his net.

> **10:10** *He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.*

He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones. He crouches low like a lion before the spring; and the helpless fall into his claws (*his strong ones*: his strong limbs, or his strong men).

> **10:11** *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.*

He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it. His thoughts about God (*J*). This is the centre of his wickedness: he believes God does not see. *El* has forgotten. It is the very thing the righteous feared in verse 1 ("why hidest thou thyself?"); but what is a question in the mouth of the righteous is a boast in the mouth of the wicked.

> **10:12** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah]; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.*

Arise, O LORD [Jehovah]; O God, lift up thine hand. The acrostic resumes with *qoph*. *Lift up thine hand*: to strike, to act (the figure *Anthropopatheia*). **forget not the humble.** The wicked said God has forgotten; the righteous pray, "Forget not."

> **10:13** *Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.*

Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? *Despise* God. **he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.** "Thou wilt not call me to account." He thinks there will be no reckoning.

> **10:14** *Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.*

Thou hast seen it. The answer to verse 11: "He will never see it." God has seen. **for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand.** God sees, in order to repay. **the poor committeth himself unto thee.** *Leaveth* himself, abandons himself to Thee. **thou art the helper of the fatherless.** "A father of the fatherless . . . is God in his holy habitation" (68:5).

> **10:15** *Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.*

Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man. The arm is his strength (the figure *Metonymy*). **seek out his wickedness till thou find none.** Search it out until there is none left to find.

> **10:16** *The LORD [Jehovah] is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.*

The LORD [Jehovah] is King for ever and ever. This is the answer to the whole Psalm. The man of the earth is a passing tyrant; Jehovah is the everlasting King. **the heathen are perished out of his land.** The land is His (Lev. 25:23). The nations that oppressed it will be gone.

> **10:17** *LORD [Jehovah], thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:*

LORD [Jehovah], thou hast heard the desire of the humble. The longing of the afflicted. The acrostic ends here with *tav*. **thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.** God prepares the heart to pray, and then hears the prayer. The figure *Anabasis*: heard, prepared, attending.

> **10:18** *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.*

To judge the fatherless and the oppressed. To do them justice. **that the man of the earth may no more oppress.** *ʾĔnôsh min-hāʾārets*: mortal man, of the earth, earthly, who has nothing above the earth. He will no more cause terror. This is the phrase that names the whole division.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands over Psalm 11 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalms 9–10. The double Psalm was handed to the chief musician for the worship of the House of Jehovah.

Looking back

Psalms 9 and 10 together are member H, and they answer to Psalm 15 (*H*). Here is the man of the earth who says "I shall not be moved" (10:6); there is the man who walks uprightly and truly "shall never be moved" (15:5). Here the wicked dwell in lurking places; there the righteous dwell in Jehovah's tabernacle.

Psalm 11 — Prayer in View of the Times of Trouble (I): "In Jehovah Put I My Trust"

Place: Book I; Psalms 9–15; member K (prayer in view of "those times of trouble"). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. The counsel to "flee as a bird to your mountain" fits the days when Saul hunted David (1 Sam. 23:14; 26:20).

Introduction

David's friends urge him to flee: the wicked have their arrows on the string, the foundations are being destroyed, and there is nothing the righteous can do. David answers that he has already fled, to Jehovah. Jehovah is in His holy temple and on His throne in heaven, and His eyes are on the children of men. The Psalm is a short and steady answer to fear.

Structure

- L | 1. Trust in Jehovah, the defender of the righteous.
- M | 2. The lawless: violence manifested.
- N | 3. The righteous tried.
- O | 4-. Jehovah's temple and throne in heaven.
- *O* | -4. Jehovah's eyes and eyelids on earth.
- *N* | 5-. The righteous tried.
- *M* | -5, 6. The lawless: violence revenged.
- *L* | 7. Trust in Jehovah, the lover of the righteous.

At the centre: Jehovah in heaven (O) and His eyes on earth (*O*). That is the answer to all the fear around it.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *In the LORD [Jehovah] put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?*
> **2** *For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.*
> **3** *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*
> **4** *The LORD [Jehovah] is in his holy temple, the LORD's [Jehovah's] throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.*
> **5** *The LORD [Jehovah] trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.*

> **6** *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.*
>
> **7** *For the righteous LORD [Jehovah] loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.*

To the chief Musician upon Sheminith.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 12.

Verse by verse

> **11:1** *In the LORD [Jehovah] put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?*

In the LORD [Jehovah] put I my trust. *Ḥāsîthî*: I have taken refuge. The first word of the Psalm in Hebrew is "In Jehovah": that is where David stands. **how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?** *To me* (my soul = myself). His friends' advice: fly away like a frightened bird to the hills. David had in fact hidden in the mountains (1 Sam. 23:14), but he would not flee in fear as though God could not protect him. *As a bird*: the Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate read "as" or "like," as the King James Version supplies.

> **11:2** *For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.*

For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string. The friends go on: the danger is real and immediate. **that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.** *In the dark*: in secret, from ambush.

> **11:3** *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? *The foundations* (*hashshāthôth*): the settled order of things, the pillars of law and justice on which society rests. When those are overthrown, what can a righteous man accomplish? This is still the friends' counsel of despair. The answer comes in verse 4.

> **11:4** *The LORD [Jehovah] is in his holy temple, the LORD's [Jehovah's] throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.*

The LORD [Jehovah] is in his holy temple. *Hêkāl*: His palace. Not the earthly Tabernacle here, but His dwelling above, the pattern of the earthly (Heb. 8:5). **the LORD's [Jehovah's] throne is in heaven.** The foundations of earth may shake; the throne of heaven does not. **his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.** The figure *Anthropopatheia*. *Eyelids try*: as a man narrows his eyes to look closely, God examines men. He sees everything on earth from His throne in heaven.

> **11:5** *The LORD [Jehovah] trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.*

The LORD [Jehovah] trieth the righteous. He tests them, as gold is tested, to prove them and refine them. The trial of the righteous is not abandonment; it is attention. **but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.** *His soul*: He Himself (the figure *Anthropopatheia*). God hates violence and the one who loves it.

> **11:6** *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.*

Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone. The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24). *Snares* (*paḥîm*) may also be read "coals of fire" (*paḥămê*), by a very small change; either way it is judgment rained from heaven. **and an horrible tempest.** *A burning wind*, the scorching wind of the desert. **this shall be the portion of their cup.** A cup was a man's allotted portion (16:5; 23:5); the wicked will drink the cup of God's wrath (75:8; Rev. 14:10).

> **11:7** *For the righteous LORD [Jehovah] loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.*

For the righteous LORD [Jehovah] loveth righteousness. He is righteous, and He loves righteous deeds. **his countenance doth behold the upright.** The Hebrew may also be read "the upright shall behold his face." *The Companion Bible* notes this as one of the places where the scribes altered the text, and that the primitive reading was "the upright shall behold His face." That is the great hope of the righteous: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness" (17:15); "they shall see his face" (Rev. 22:4).

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Sheminith"

This line stands over Psalm 12 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 11. *Sheminith*, "the eighth," appears also at the end of Psalm 5 (Appendix C).

Looking back

Psalm 11 is member K, the first prayer in view of the times of trouble, and it answers to Psalm 13 (*K*). Here the trouble is the arrows of the wicked; there it is the long silence of God. In both, the answer is trust: "In Jehovah put I my trust" (11:1); "I have trusted in thy mercy" (13:5).

Psalm 12 — The Vanity of Man: The Words of Men and the Words of Jehovah

Place: Book I; Psalms 9–15; member L (the vanity of man). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

The godly man is disappearing; everyone speaks lies and flattery. Over against the empty words of men stand the pure words of Jehovah, "as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." The Psalm is a contrast of two kinds of words.

Structure

- P | 1. The decrease of the godly and faithful.
- Q | r | 2. Men's words.
- s | 3, 4. The speakers: "cut off."
- R | 5-. The oppression of the humble.
- *R* | -5. Deliverance from the oppression.
- *Q* | *r* | 6. Jehovah's words.
- *s* | 7. The hearers: "preserved."
- *P* | 8. The increase of the lawless and vile.

Men's words (Q) are set against Jehovah's words (*Q*); those who speak lies are cut off, those who hear God's words are preserved. At the centre, oppression and deliverance.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Help, LORD [Jehovah]; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*
>
> **2** *They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*
>
> **3** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:*
>
> **4** *Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?*
>
> **5** *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD [Jehovah]; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.*
>
> **6** *The words of the LORD [Jehovah] are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*
>
> **7** *Thou shalt keep them, O LORD [Jehovah], thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

> **8** *The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 13.

Verse by verse

> **12:1** *Help, LORD [Jehovah]; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

Help, LORD [Jehovah]. *Save, Jehovah!* Two words in Hebrew, a cry. **for the godly man ceaseth.** *Ḥāsîd*, the one who shows loving-kindness (as 4:3). He is coming to an end. **for the faithful fail from among the children of men.** The trustworthy have vanished (compare Isa. 57:1; Mic. 7:2).

> **12:2** *They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.*

They speak vanity every one with his neighbour. *Vanity* (*shāwʾ*): emptiness, falsehood. **with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.** *Smooth lips* and *a heart and a heart*: two hearts, one for show and one for real. The Hebrew idiom is a figure (*Epizeuxis*, the same word repeated) for double-mindedness (compare 1 Chron. 12:33, "not of double heart").

> **12:3** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:*

The LORD [Jehovah] shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things. Great things, boasting.

> **12:4** *Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?*

Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail. *We will make our tongue mighty*. They trust in words. **our lips are our own: who is lord over us?** *Our lips are with us*: we answer to no one. It is the voice of Psalm 2:3, refusing God's rule.

> **12:5** *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD [Jehovah]; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.*

For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD [Jehovah]. God Himself speaks. The cry of verse 1 is answered: *Now* I will arise. **I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.** *I will place him in the safety he pants for* (another reading of the Hebrew). The needy man is set where the boaster's sneers cannot reach him (10:5).

> **12:6** *The words of the LORD [Jehovah] are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*

The words of the LORD [Jehovah] are pure words. Set against the empty words of men (v. 2). **as silver tried in a furnace of earth.** *Tried in a crucible pertaining to the earth*: refined in an earthen furnace. **purified seven times.** Seven is the number of spiritual perfection: refined completely, with no dross left. "Every word of God is pure" (Prov. 30:5; compare 18:30; 119:140).

> **12:7** *Thou shalt keep them, O LORD [Jehovah], thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

Thou shalt keep them, O LORD [Jehovah], thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. *Them* refers back to the godly and faithful of verse 1, the poor and needy of verse 5: God will keep them (so *The Companion Bible*, and the structure, which sets the hearers *preserved* against the speakers *cut off*). The second "them" is "him" in the Hebrew: each one of them. Some apply "them" to the words of verse 6; both are true, for God keeps His words and keeps those who keep them. **from this generation.** This lying, faithless generation.

> **12:8** *The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*

The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted. The lawless go about freely when worthlessness is honoured. The Psalm ends where it began, with the world as it is (P, *P*): but the reader now knows that Jehovah has said "Now will I arise."

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands over Psalm 13 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 12.

Looking back

Psalm 12 is member L, the vanity of man, and it answers to Psalm 14 (*L*), the depravity of man. Psalm 12 shows man's words; Psalm 14 shows man's heart. In both, God looks down and acts (12:5; 14:2, 5).

Psalm 13 — Prayer in View of the Times of Trouble (II): "How Long?"

Place: Book I; Psalms 9–15; member *K* (prayer in view of "those times of trouble"). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Six verses carry a man from the depths to song. Four times he cries "How long?" Then he prays. Then he trusts and sings. It is a model of prayer in a long trial.

Structure

- S^1 | 1–4. Prayer.
- t | 1, 2-. For himself.
- u | -2. Against the enemy.
- *t* | 3. For himself.
- *u* | 4. Against the enemy.
- S^2 | 5, 6. Praise.
- v | 5-. Past: "I have trusted."
- w | -5. Future: "my heart shall rejoice."
- *w* | 6-. Future: "I will sing."
- *v* | -6. Past: "he hath dealt bountifully."

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD [Jehovah]? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?*
> **2** *How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*
> **3** *Consider and hear me, O LORD [Jehovah] my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;*
> **4** *Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.*
> **5** *But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*
> **6** *I will sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], because he hath dealt bountifully with me.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 14.

Verse by verse

> **13:1** *How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD [Jehovah]? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?*

How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD [Jehovah]? for ever? *How long?* is *ʿad-ʾānāh*, "until when?" Four times in two verses: the figure *Anaphora*. David feels forgotten; the wicked man said "God hath forgotten" (10:11) in pride, David says it in pain. *For ever?* He fears it will never end. **how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?** The face of God is His favour (4:6; Num. 6:25). To have it hidden is darkness.

> **13:2** *How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*

How long shall I take counsel in my soul. Turn plans over in his mind, finding no way out. **having sorrow in my heart daily?** Grief every day. **how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?** The enemy is lifted up while David is brought low.

> **13:3** *Consider and hear me, O LORD [Jehovah] my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;*

Consider and hear me, O LORD [Jehovah] my God. *Look* and *answer me*. After "how long?" comes prayer. **lighten mine eyes.** Give light to my eyes: revive me, put life back in me (compare 1 Sam. 14:27, 29, where Jonathan's eyes "were enlightened" when he ate the honey). **lest I sleep the sleep of death.** *Lest I sleep the death*: the figure *Polyptoton*. Death is spoken of as sleep, as it is throughout Scripture (Dan. 12:2; John 11:11–14; 1 Thess. 4:13), a sleep from which there is no waking until the resurrection.

> **13:4** *Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.*

Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him. If David dies, his enemy will boast. **and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.** *When I am shaken*, when I fall.

> **13:5** *But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.*

But I have trusted in thy mercy. *But I*: emphatic. In Thy *ḥesed*, Thy loving-kindness. The turn of the Psalm. Nothing has changed outwardly; David has turned to God's character. **my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.** The enemy would rejoice at his fall (v. 4); David will rejoice at God's salvation.

> **13:6** *I will sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], because he hath dealt bountifully with me.*

I will sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], because he hath dealt bountifully with me. *Gāmal*: dealt fully with me, recompensed me, done me good. He speaks as if it were already done. The Septuagint adds a line from 7:17: "and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD most High."

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands over Psalm 14 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 13.

Looking back

Psalm 13 is the second prayer (*K*), answering to Psalm 11 (K). In Psalm 11 the danger was outward and David refused to flee; in Psalm 13 the darkness is within and David refuses to despair. In both he trusts.

Psalm 14 — The Depravity of Man: "There Is None That Doeth Good"

Place: Book I; Psalms 9–15; member *L* (the depravity of man). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. The Psalm appears again, with small changes, as Psalm 53 (see Chapter 9 of Part One).

Introduction

Psalm 12 showed man's lying words; Psalm 14 shows his corrupt heart. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Jehovah looks down from heaven to see if any understand, and finds none. Paul quotes this Psalm to show that all men, Jew and Gentile, are under sin (Rom. 3:9–12). And yet Jehovah is with the generation of the righteous, and salvation will come out of Zion.

Structure

- x^1 | 1. The lawless: their words.
- y^1 | 2. Jehovah: His inspection.
- x^2 | 3. The lawless: their deeds.
- y^2 | 4. Jehovah: His expostulation.
- x^3 | 5, 6. The lawless: their feelings.
- y^3 | 7. Jehovah: His interposition.

Three times the lawless are described, and three times Jehovah answers. The order is words, deeds, feelings; and God's answer is to look, to speak, and at last to act.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*
>
> **2** *The LORD [Jehovah] looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*
>
> **3** *They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
>
> **4** *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **5** *There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.*
>
> **6** *Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD [Jehovah] is his refuge.*

> **7** *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD [Jehovah] bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*

Psalm 14 has no sub-scription. Psalm 15 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **14:1** *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*

The fool. *Nābāl*: not a man without intelligence, but a man without moral sense, who rejects God. Nabal, Abigail's husband, bore the name (1 Sam. 25:25). **hath said in his heart, There is no God.** Not necessarily with his lips, but in his heart: he lives as though God were not there (compare 10:4, 11). *God* is *Elohim*. **They are corrupt, they have done abominable works.** *They have acted corruptly; they have made their deeds abhorrent*. **there is none that doeth good.** Not one.

> **14:2** *The LORD [Jehovah] looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*

The LORD [Jehovah] looked down from heaven upon the children of men. The figure *Anthropopatheia*, as at Babel (Gen. 11:5) and before the Flood (Gen. 6:12). **to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.** *Any that acted wisely*: wisdom begins with seeking God.

> **14:3** *They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

They are all gone aside. *Turned aside* from the way. **they are all together become filthy.** *Gone sour*, gone bad, like milk that has turned. **there is none that doeth good, no, not one.** The phrase of verse 1 is repeated, now with "no, not one" added for emphasis. Paul quotes it: "There is none righteous, no, not one . . . They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10–12). He uses it to show that the Jew under the Law is no better than the Gentile: "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19).

> **14:4** *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD [Jehovah].*

Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? Jehovah's expostulation: do they know nothing? **who eat up my people as they eat bread.** They devour God's people as easily as they eat a meal (compare Mic. 3:3). **and call not upon the LORD [Jehovah].** They never pray.

> **14:5** *There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.*

There were they in great fear. *There they feared a fear*: the figure *Polyptoton*. Suddenly, when God acts, those who said "there is no God" are filled with terror. **for God is in the generation of the righteous.** *Generation* (*dôr*): the company, the circle. God is among His people.

> **14:6** *Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD [Jehovah] is his refuge.*

Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor. The wicked mock the plans of the afflicted man, because he trusts God. **because the LORD [Jehovah] is his refuge.** That is precisely why they mock him (compare 22:8). But it is also why he is safe.

> **14:7** *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD [Jehovah] bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*

Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! *Who will give out of Zion the salvation of Israel?* The figure *Epiphonema*: a closing exclamation. Salvation comes from Jehovah who dwells in Zion. **when the LORD [Jehovah] bringeth back the captivity of his people.** *Turneth again the fortunes*, restores what was lost. *The Chief Musician* shows that "turning the captivity" is a Hebrew idiom for ending distress and restoring former blessing, as "the LORD turned the captivity of Job" (Job 42:10); it does not require an exile. **Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.** *Jacob* names the nation in its weakness; *Israel*, in its standing as a prince with God (Gen. 32:28).

Its close

Psalm 14 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 14 is member *L*, the depravity of man, answering to Psalm 12 (L), the vanity of man. Together they show man without God: false in his words and corrupt in his heart. Yet both end with God's answer: "Now will I arise" (12:5); "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!" (14:7).

Psalm 15 — The Perfect Man: "Who Shall Abide in Thy Tabernacle?"

Place: Book I; Psalms 9–15; member *H* (the perfect man). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. It may have been written when David brought the Ark to Zion (2 Sam. 6), and the question was who might come near.

Introduction

The division began with the man of the earth (Psalms 9–10). It ends with the man who will dwell with God. David asks the question, and Jehovah's answer is a description of character: what he does, what he says, what he will not do. "He that doeth these things shall never be moved." The man of the earth said, "I shall not be moved" (10:6); this man truly will not be.

Structure

- T | 1. His eternal abiding. (The question.)
- U | a | 2. Positive.
- b | 3. Negative.
- *U* | *a* | 4-. Positive.
- *b* | -4, 5-. Negative.
- *T* | -5. His eternal abiding. (The answer.)

The question and its final answer frame the Psalm (T, *T*). Between them, twice, what the man does and what he does not do. Many of the descriptions are joined by the figure *Zeugma*, one verb yoked to several objects.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *LORD [Jehovah], who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*
>
> **2** *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*
>
> **3** *He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.*
>
> **4** *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD [Jehovah]. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*
>
> **5** *He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*

Psalm 15 has no sub-scription. Psalm 16 begins with its own super-scription, "Michtam of David."

Verse by verse

> **15:1** *LORD [Jehovah], who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*

LORD [Jehovah], who shall abide in thy tabernacle? *Sojourn* in Thy tent, as a guest. **who shall dwell in thy holy hill?** *Dwell*, settle permanently. The figure *Anabasis*: from sojourning to dwelling. *Thy holy hill* is Zion, where the Ark was (2:6; 3:4). The question is who may live in God's presence.

> **15:2** *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*

He that walketh uprightly. *Walketh blameless*: his whole life is whole, sound, sincere. **and worketh righteousness.** Does what is right. **and speaketh the truth in his heart.** Truth not only on his lips, but within. Compare the "double heart" of 12:2. Walk, work, speak: the whole man.

> **15:3** *He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.*

He that backbiteth not with his tongue. *Goeth not about* with his tongue: does not go round slandering. **nor doeth evil to his neighbour.** His *friend*. **nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.** He does not pick up and spread a slander against one near him.

> **15:4** *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD [Jehovah]. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*

In whose eyes a vile person is contemned. He does not honour the worthless, however powerful; contrast 12:8, "when the vilest men are exalted." **but he honoureth them that fear the LORD [Jehovah].** His esteem follows God's. **He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.** He keeps his word even when it costs him. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it" (Eccl. 5:4; compare Lev. 5:4; Num. 30:2). Joshua kept his oath to the Gibeonites though it was made by deceit (Josh. 9:19).

> **15:5** *He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*

He that putteth not out his money to usury. Israel was forbidden to lend at interest to a poor brother (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36, 37; Deut. 23:19, 20). The perfect man does not profit from another's need. **nor taketh reward against the innocent.** No bribe to pervert justice (Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:19; 27:25). **He that doeth these things shall never be moved.** *Shall not be shaken for ever*. The man of the earth boasted, "I shall not be moved" (10:6); this man will not be. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:17).

Who is this man? In the first place, any Israelite who walked in the Law. But no man has done all these things perfectly except One: Jesus Christ, who "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22). The perfect man of Psalm 15 leads straight into Psalm 16, the first Psalm of the next division, "the man Christ Jesus."

Its close

Psalm 15 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 15 is member *H*, the perfect man, answering to Psalms 9–10 (H), the man of the earth. One oppresses, lies and says "God hath forgotten"; the other walks uprightly, speaks truth and fears Jehovah. One will be cut off; the other shall never be moved.

Looking Back on Psalms 9–15

The second division of the Psalter shows the enemy of the blessed man, and his end.

- **The man of the earth** (9–10) is proud, violent and deceitful, and says in his heart that God has forgotten. But Jehovah sits on His throne, judges the world in righteousness, and is King for ever and ever.
- **Two prayers** in the times of trouble (11, 13) teach the righteous what to do: not to flee in fear, nor to despair in the dark, but to trust, pray and sing.
- **Two portraits of man** without God (12, 14) show his empty words and his corrupt heart. Over against them stand the pure words of Jehovah and the salvation that comes out of Zion.
- **The perfect man** (15) is the answer to the man of the earth: the one who shall abide in God's tabernacle and never be moved.

The next division (Psalms 16–41) presents that perfect Man: "the man Christ Jesus," from His sufferings to His glory.

Psalms 16–41: "The Man Christ Jesus"

A. What this division is about

The first division set out God's purpose for man, crowned in the Son of Man (Psalm 8). The second showed man's enemy and closed with the perfect man who shall never be moved (Psalm 15). The third and longest division of Book I presents that perfect Man. Its title comes from Paul: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

These are David's Psalms, written out of David's own life. But again and again the New Testament takes their words and shows that they reach beyond David to David's Son: His trust (16), His sufferings and death (22), His resurrection (16:10), His ascension (16:11; 24:7–10), His betrayal (41:9), and His obedience (40:6–8). The Psalms of this division move, twice over, from His sufferings to His glory.

B. Its structure

The division is built in two great parallel halves (Psalms 16–24 and 25–41). Each half moves through the same three stages.

- M | P | 16. Taking His place of suffering. Jehovah apportioning His lot.
- Q | 17. Prayer and appeal in view of Psalm 16.
- R | 18. Answer to the prayer of Psalm 17, and promise of deliverance and triumph.
- N | S | 19. His people acknowledging God's glory in creation and revelation.
- T | 20. Their prayer, as they see in Messiah their own salvation.
- U | 21. Their exultation in Messiah's exaltation.
- O | V | 22. The Good Shepherd in death (John 10:11). Atonement, the basis of all blessing.
- W | 23. The Great Shepherd in resurrection (Heb. 13:20). The basis of present blessing.
- X | 24. The Chief Shepherd in glory (1 Pet. 5:4). His coming, the basis of all future blessing.
- *M* | *P* | 25. Prayer with reference to Psalm 16. "The path" and "the way."
- *Q* | 26. Prayer with reference to Psalm 17. Appeal to integrity.
- *R* | 27, 28. Prayers with reference to Psalm 18. Answer from Jehovah as "Rock" and "Deliverer."
- *N* | *S* | 29. His people's praise for God's glory in creation. Compare Psalm 19.
- *T* | 30–33. Their praise as they see the answer to Psalm 20.
- *U* | 34. Their exultation in Messiah's exaltation, as in Psalm 21.

- *O* | *V* | 35, 36. Prayer and praise with reference to atonement, as the basis of all blessing. Compare Psalm 22.
- *W* | 37. Instruction as to present blessing, in view of Psalm 23.
- *X* | 38–41. Prayer and praise with reference to future blessing. Compare Psalm 24.

The first half (Psalms 16–24) and the second half (Psalms 25–41) follow in turn.

C. Its purpose

The division answers the question of the whole Book: how will the blessing of Psalm 1 and the dominion of Psalm 8 come to man? Not through the man of the earth, nor through man as he is, but through one Man who trusts God perfectly, suffers, dies, is raised, ascends, and comes again in glory. The Psalms of this division are David's prayers and praises; the New Testament shows that in their fullest sense they are the prayers and praises of the Son of David.

The commentary keeps both in view. It first reads each Psalm in David's life, and then shows how the New Testament applies it to Jesus Christ, presented throughout as the library's study *One God, One Mediator* sets out: the Son of God, the man whom God anointed, raised and exalted.

Psalm 16 — Michtam: Taking His Place, Trusting His God

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member M, P (taking His place of suffering; Jehovah apportioning His lot). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 16 is the first "Michtam" Psalm (Chapter 1 of Part One). The word is generally taken as "a writing engraved," something meant to be permanent; *The Chief Musician* and *The Companion Bible* connect the six Michtam Psalms (16, 56–60) with death and resurrection. That fits this Psalm exactly. It ends with the most important resurrection promise in the Psalms: "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [Sheol]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (v. 10).

On the day of Pentecost Peter quoted verses 8–11 and showed that David could not have been speaking of himself, for David died and was buried and his tomb was still among them. "Being a prophet . . . he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ" (Acts 2:25–31). Paul made the same argument in Antioch (Acts 13:35–37).

Structure

The Psalm has two parts, in which David speaks first to Jehovah and to the saints, and then concerning Messiah (Acts 2:25).

- V^1 | 1–7. David speaks to Jehovah, and of the saints.
- c | 1. Prayer for preservation.
- d | 2-. "My Lord": my good.
- e | -2, 3. The saints.
- *e* | 4. The apostates.
- *d* | 5, 6. My portion; my heritage.
- *c* | 7. Praise for counsel.
- V^2 | 8–11. David speaks concerning Messiah.
- f | 8. Jehovah at my right hand. (Life.)
- g | 9. Rest in hope. (Death.)
- *g* | 10. Not left in Sheol. (Resurrection.)
- *f* | 11. At His right hand. (Ascension.)

The second part traces the whole path: life, death, resurrection, and ascension to God's right hand.

The Psalm

Michtam of David.

> **1** *Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.*
>
> **2** *O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD [Jehovah], Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;*
>
> **3** *But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*
>
> **4** *Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*
>
> **5** *The LORD [Jehovah] is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.*
>
> **6** *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*
>
> **7** *I will bless the LORD [Jehovah], who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*
>
> **8** *I have set the LORD [Jehovah] always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*
>
> **9** *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.*
>
> **10** *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*
>
> **11** *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

Psalm 16 has no sub-scription. Psalm 17 begins with its own super-scription, "A Prayer of David."

Verse by verse

> **16:1** *Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.*

Preserve me. *Shomrēnî*: keep me, guard me. **O God.** *El*, the Mighty One. **for in thee do I put my trust.** *I have taken refuge in Thee* (as 7:1; 11:1). The whole Psalm rests on this first line.

> **16:2** *O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD [Jehovah], Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;*

O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD [Jehovah]. *O my soul* is supplied; the Hebrew reads "Thou hast said," and some manuscripts, with the Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate, read "I have said." **Thou art my Lord.** *Adonai*: my Master, the One I serve. *The Companion Bible* notes that this is one of the 134 places where the scribes changed "Jehovah" to "Adonai." **my goodness extendeth not to thee.** *I have no good beyond Thee*: all my good is in Thee. Everything good that David has comes from God and is found in God.

> **16:3** *But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*

But to the saints that are in the earth. *As for* the holy ones, the people set apart to God, in the land. **and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.** The *nobles*, the truly great, are not the powerful but the godly. David's delight is in them (compare 15:4, "he honoureth them that fear the LORD").

> **16:4** *Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*

Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god. Those who run after other gods (*ʾaḥēr*, another) multiply their own griefs. **their drink offerings of blood will I not offer.** The heathen poured out offerings mingled with blood; David will have no part in them. **nor take up their names into my lips.** He will not even name their gods (Ex. 23:13; Josh. 23:7).

> **16:5** *The LORD [Jehovah] is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.*

The LORD [Jehovah] is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup. *Portion* is a share of the land, as each tribe and family received its lot (Josh. 13–19). The Levites had no land; "the LORD is his inheritance" (Deut. 10:9). David says the same of himself: Jehovah is his share. *My cup* is what is poured out for him to drink, his lot in life (compare 11:6; 23:5). **thou maintainest my lot.** Thou holdest it fast: no one can take it away.

> **16:6** *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. *The lines* are the measuring cords used to mark out each man's portion of land. His has fallen in delightful places. **yea, I have a goodly heritage.** *My inheritance is beautiful to me.*

> **16:7** *I will bless the LORD [Jehovah], who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*

I will bless the LORD [Jehovah], who hath given me counsel. Jehovah advises him; that is part of his inheritance. **my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.** *Reins* (the kidneys) stand for the inmost thoughts (as 7:9). In the night his own heart, taught by God, instructs him.

> **16:8** *I have set the LORD [Jehovah] always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

I have set the LORD [Jehovah] always before me. Here the second part begins. *I have placed Jehovah before me continually*: kept Him in view. **because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.** The right hand was the place of a defender (109:31; 110:5). With Jehovah there, he cannot be shaken (compare 15:5).

Peter quoted verses 8–11: "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved" (Acts 2:25). The Lord Jesus Christ lived His whole life with the Father before Him: "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29).

> **16:9** *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth. *My glory* is his soul, the noblest part of him (compare 7:5; 30:12); Peter, following the Septuagint, renders it "my tongue" (Acts 2:26). **my flesh also shall rest in hope.** *Shall dwell in confidence*: shall lie down securely. His body, laid in the grave, would rest there in sure hope. This is death, spoken of as rest (g, death).

> **16:10** *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. *Leave* is *abandon*: Thou wilt not abandon me to Sheol. *My soul* means "me" (the figure *Synecdoche*). *Hell* here is *Sheol*, the grave, the state of the dead, as the library's study *Where Are the Dead Right Now?* shows. The promise is not that He would not die, but that He would not be left among the dead.

neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. *Thine Holy One* (*ḥăsîdĕkā*): Thy godly one, the one who is the object of Thy loving-kindness. *Corruption* (*shaḥath*): the pit, decay. His body would not decay.

Peter's argument is plain: "David . . . is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet . . . He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up" (Acts 2:29–32). Paul says the same: "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption" (Acts 13:36, 37). Jesus Christ was dead and buried, truly dead, for three days and three nights (Matt. 12:40), and on the third day God raised Him (*g*, resurrection).

> **16:11** *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

Thou wilt shew me the path of life. *Make known to me*: the way back from death to life, the path that leads upward. **in thy presence is fulness of joy.** *Before Thy face*: abundance of joy. **at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.** The right hand of God is the place of honour and power. Raised from the dead, Jesus Christ ascended and sat down at God's right hand: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand" (Acts 2:33, 34). The resurrection is completed by the ascension (*f*). The Psalm that began with "Preserve me, O God" ends at God's right hand.

Its close

Psalm 16 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 16 is member P of the division: Messiah taking His place of suffering, trusting God for His lot. It answers to Psalm 25 (*P*), which speaks again of "the path" and "the way" (16:11; 25:4, 8–12). It opens the division with the whole story in brief: trust, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Psalm 17 — A Prayer of David: The Righteous Sufferer

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member Q (prayer and appeal in view of Psalm 16). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. The enemies who "compass" him (vv. 9, 11) and lie in wait like a lion (v. 12) fit the days of Saul's pursuit.

Introduction

Psalm 16 ended with the hope of God's presence; Psalm 17 ends with the same hope: "I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (v. 15). In between, David appeals as a righteous man unjustly hunted. He is not claiming sinlessness, but innocence of what his enemies charge him with. In its fullest sense the prayer belongs to the One who could say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46).

Structure

- W | 1–6. "I": the righteous sufferer.
- X | i | 7, 8. Prayer for deliverance.
- k | 9. From enemies.
- l | 10, 11. Description of them.
- Y | 12-. Comparison: a lion.
- *Y* | -12. Comparison: a young lion.
- *X* | *i* | 13-. Prayer for deliverance.
- *k* | -13, 14-. From enemies.
- *l* | -14. Description of them.
- *W* | 15. "As for me": the righteous sufferer.

The Psalm

A Prayer of David.

> **1** *Hear the right, O LORD [Jehovah], attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.*
>
> **2** *Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.*
>
> **3** *Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*
>
> **4** *Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.*
>
> **5** *Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.*

> **6** *I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.*
>
> **7** *Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.*
>
> **8** *Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,*
>
> **9** *From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.*
>
> **10** *They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.*
>
> **11** *They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;*
>
> **12** *Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.*
>
> **13** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah], disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:*
>
> **14** *From men which are thy hand, O LORD [Jehovah], from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.*
>
> **15** *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 18.

Verse by verse

> **17:1** *Hear the right, O LORD [Jehovah], attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.*

Hear the right, O LORD [Jehovah]. *Hear righteousness*: hear a righteous cause. **attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer.** Three verbs (hear, attend, give ear), the figure *Synonymia*. **that goeth not out of feigned lips.** *Lips of deceit*: his prayer is sincere.

> **17:2** *Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.*

Let my sentence come forth from thy presence. *My judgment*: let the verdict come from Thee. **let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.** *Uprightly*: let Thy eyes see what is right.

> **17:3** *Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.*

Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night. God has tested him, examined him at night when the heart is laid bare (16:7). **thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing.** *Tried* as metal is refined. On this charge, God will find no dross. **I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.** He has resolved not to sin with his lips.

> **17:4** *Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.*

Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. As for what men do, he has kept himself by God's word from the ways of the *violent*. The Word kept him, as Psalm 1 promised (compare 119:9, 11).

> **17:5** *Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.*

Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. *My steps have held fast to thy paths; my feet have not slipped* (the Hebrew may be read as a statement). Either way, he walks in God's paths, and only God can keep him there.

> **17:6** *I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.*

I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God. *El*. He prays because he knows God answers. **incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.** The figure *Anthropopatheia*.

> **17:7** *Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.*

Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness. *Make wonderful Thy loving-kindnesses* (*ḥăsādêkā*): set them apart, display them. **O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them.** God's right hand saves those who take refuge in Him.

> **17:8** *Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,*

Keep me as the apple of the eye. *The little man of the daughter of the eye*: the pupil, where a man sees his own small image reflected. It is the part of the body most carefully guarded. God said of Israel, "he kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deut. 32:10; compare Zech. 2:8). **hide me under the shadow of thy wings.** The figure of a mother bird covering her young (Deut. 32:11; Ruth 2:12; Matt. 23:37).

> **17:9** *From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.*

From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about. *My enemies against my soul*, who want his life, and surround him.

> **17:10** *They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.*

They are inclosed in their own fat. *They have closed up their fat*: their hearts are gross and unfeeling (compare 73:7; 119:70). **with their mouth they speak proudly.**

> **17:11** *They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;*

They have now compassed us in our steps. They track every step. **they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.** Their eyes are fixed, watching for a chance to throw him to the ground.

> **17:12** *Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.*

Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places. The two similes form the centre of the Psalm (Y, *Y*): the full-grown lion longing to tear, and the young lion crouching in ambush (compare 10:9).

> **17:13** *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah], disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:*

Arise, O LORD [Jehovah], disappoint him, cast him down. *Confront him*, meet him face to face, make him bow. **deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword.** *By Thy sword*: deliver me from the wicked with Thy sword (so the Revised Version). God's sword, not David's, will deal with them.

> **17:14** *From men which are thy hand, O LORD [Jehovah], from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.*

From men which are thy hand, O LORD [Jehovah]. *By Thy hand*, as with the sword. **from men of the world, which have their portion in this life.** *Men of this passing age*: their whole share is here and now. Contrast David, whose portion is Jehovah (16:5). **and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure.** God gives them good things in this life. **they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.** They have families and leave their wealth to them. That is all they have, and it is all temporal.

> **17:15** *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

As for me. The contrast (*W*). **I will behold thy face in righteousness.** They have their portion in this life; his is to see God's face (compare 11:7). **I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.** *When I awake*: from the sleep of death (13:3; Dan. 12:2). The Psalm ends with resurrection, as Psalm 16 did. They are satisfied with things (v. 14); he will be satisfied with God. "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 18 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 17.

Looking back

Psalm 17 is member Q, prayer in view of Psalm 16, and it answers to Psalm 26 (*Q*), another appeal to integrity. Psalm 16 ended at God's right hand; Psalm 17 ends beholding His face. Psalm 18 gives the answer.

Psalm 18 — The Answer: "I Will Love Thee, O Jehovah, My Strength"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member R (answer to the prayer of Psalm 17, and promise of deliverance and triumph). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul" (Title; 2 Sam. 22:1).

Introduction

Psalm 18 is David's great song of deliverance. It appears twice in Scripture: here, and in 2 Samuel 22, near the end of David's life. The differences between the two are small; the chief one is the first line, "I will love thee, O LORD, my strength," which is found only here. It was added, it seems, when the song was handed to the chief musician for the worship of the House of Jehovah.

The Psalm describes Jehovah coming down from heaven in storm, earthquake and fire to rescue His servant (vv. 7–15), and then the king's victories over his enemies (vv. 28–48). It is the answer to Psalm 17's cry, "Arise, O LORD" (17:13). Paul quoted verse 49 to show that the Gentiles were to glorify God for His mercy (Rom. 15:9).

Structure

- A | D | 1. Jehovah spoken to: love.
- E | 2. Jehovah spoken of: Deliverer.
- B | 3–19. Enemies: deliverance from them.
- C | 20–24. The equity of Jehovah's dealings with me.
- *C* | 25–27. The equity of Jehovah's dealings with others.
- *B* | 28–48. Enemies: victory over them.
- *A* | *D* | 49. Jehovah spoken to: praise.
- *E* | 50. Jehovah spoken of: Deliverer.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD [Jehovah], who spake unto the LORD [Jehovah] the words of this song in the day that the LORD [Jehovah] delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,

> **1** *I will love thee, O LORD [Jehovah], my strength.*
>
> **2** *The LORD [Jehovah] is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

3 *I will call upon the LORD [Jehovah], who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*

4 *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.*

5 *The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.*

6 *In my distress I called upon the LORD [Jehovah], and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.*

7 *Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.*

8 *There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.*

9 *He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.*

10 *And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.*

11 *He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.*

12 *At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.*

13 *The LORD [Jehovah] also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.*

14 *Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.*

15 *Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD [Jehovah], at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.*

16 *He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.*

17 *He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.*

18 *They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD [Jehovah] was my stay.*

19 *He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.*

20 *The LORD [Jehovah] rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.*

21 *For I have kept the ways of the LORD [Jehovah], and have not wickedly departed from my God.*

22 *For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.*

23 *I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.*

24 *Therefore hath the LORD [Jehovah] recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.*

25 *With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;*

26 *With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.*

27 *For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.*

28 *For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD [Jehovah] my God will enlighten my darkness.*

> **29** *For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.*
>
> **30** *As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD [Jehovah] is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*
>
> **31** *For who is God save the LORD [Jehovah]? or who is a rock save our God?*
>
> **32** *It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*
>
> **33** *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.*
>
> **34** *He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*
>
> **35** *Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.*
>
> **36** *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.*
>
> **37** *I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.*
>
> **38** *I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.*
>
> **39** *For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.*
>
> **40** *Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.*
>
> **41** *They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD [Jehovah], but he answered them not.*
>
> **42** *Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.*
>
> **43** *Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me.*
>
> **44** *As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.*
>
> **45** *The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.*
>
> **46** *The LORD [Jehovah] liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.*
>
> **47** *It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me.*
>
> **48** *He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.*
>
> **49** *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.*
>
> **50** *Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 19.

The Title

David, the servant of the LORD [Jehovah]. David is so called only here and in the Title of Psalm 36. It was his highest title: Jehovah called him "my servant David" (2 Sam. 3:18; 7:5). **in the day that the LORD**

[Jehovah] delivered him. Not one day only, but the time when all his deliverances could be looked back on together (2 Sam. 22:1). **and from the hand of Saul.** Saul is named apart, as the greatest and longest of his enemies.

Verse by verse

> **18:1** *I will love thee, O LORD [Jehovah], my strength.*

I will love thee. *Raḥam*: an unusual word for love toward God, a deep, tender, yearning love, from the word for the womb (it is used of a mother's compassion). **O LORD [Jehovah], my strength.** *Ḥizqî*: my strength, my firm hold.

> **18:2** *The LORD [Jehovah] is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

The LORD [Jehovah] is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. Nine titles of God in one verse, each a picture drawn from David's life as a fugitive and soldier (the figure *Metaphor*, repeated). *Rock* (*selaʿ*): the high cliff where he hid. *Fortress* (*mĕtsûdāh*): the mountain stronghold, as at Masada ("the hold," 1 Sam. 22:4; 24:22). **my God, my strength.** *My El, my rock* (*tsûr*, the great rock mass). **in whom I will trust.** *In whom I take refuge.* **my buckler.** *Māgēn*: shield (as 3:3). **and the horn of my salvation.** The horn is the strength of a beast, its weapon of defence and attack (the figure *Metonymy*). Zacharias used the words of the Messiah: God "hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David" (Luke 1:69). **and my high tower.** *Misgāb*: a high refuge, out of reach (as 9:9).

> **18:3** *I will call upon the LORD [Jehovah], who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*

I will call upon the LORD [Jehovah], who is worthy to be praised. *I call upon Jehovah, the One to be praised.* **so shall I be saved from mine enemies.** The theme of the Psalm in one line.

> **18:4** *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.*

The sorrows of death compassed me. *The cords of death*: death pictured as a hunter with ropes (2 Sam. 22:5 has "the waves of death"). **and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.** *The torrents of Belial*: the floods of worthlessness, of destruction, overwhelming him like a flash flood in a dry valley.

> **18:5** *The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.*

The sorrows of hell compassed me about. *The cords of Sheol*, the grave, again pictured as a hunter. **the snares of death prevented me.** *Prevented* is the old English "came before," "met." The snares of death confronted him. He was at death's door.

> **18:6** *In my distress I called upon the LORD [Jehovah], and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.*

In my distress I called upon the LORD [Jehovah], and cried unto my God. he heard my voice out of his temple. *Hêkāl*: His palace in heaven (11:4). **and my cry came before him, even into his ears.** The cry from earth reached heaven. What follows is God's answer.

> **18:7** *Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.*

Then the earth shook and trembled. The figure *Paronomasia*: in Hebrew *vattigʿash vattirʿash*, "it shook and quaked." Jehovah's coming is described in the language of Sinai (Ex. 19:16–18) and of the deliverance at the Red Sea. **the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.**

> **18:8** *There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.*

There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. The figure *Anthropopatheia*. God's anger is pictured as the breath of a great being, smoke and fire, as at Sinai, where "the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended" (Ex. 19:18).

> **18:9** *He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.*

He bowed the heavens also, and came down. *Bent* the heavens down, as a storm brings the sky low. **and darkness was under his feet.** *Thick darkness*, as at Sinai (Ex. 20:21).

> **18:10** *And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.*

And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly. The cherubim are the living creatures nearest God's throne (Ezek. 1; 10); God rides on them as His chariot. **yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.** *He swooped*: the speed of His coming.

> **18:11** *He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.*

He made darkness his secret place. His hiding place, His covering. **his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.** *His booth*: storm-clouds dark with water.

> **18:12** *At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.*

At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. Out of the brightness before Him, the clouds broke into hail and lightning, as in the plague of hail on Egypt (Ex. 9:23, 24) and at Beth-horon (Josh. 10:11).

> **18:13** *The LORD [Jehovah] also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.*

The LORD [Jehovah] also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice. *Elyon*, the Most High. Thunder is His voice (29:3–9). **hail stones and coals of fire.** The refrain of verse 12, repeated. The phrase is not in 2 Samuel 22:14; some ancient copies of the Psalm omit it.

> **18:14** *Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.*

Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them. His arrows are the lightnings. **and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.** *Routed them*, threw them into confusion, the word used of the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:24).

> **18:15** *Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD [Jehovah], at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.*

Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered. *Laid bare*, as the sea-bed was at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:8). *The world* is *tēbēl*, the inhabited earth (as 9:8). **at thy rebuke, O LORD [Jehovah], at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.** "With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together" (Ex. 15:8).

> **18:16** *He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.*

He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. *Drew me out* (*yamshēnî*): the word from which Moses was named, "because I drew him out of the water" (Ex. 2:10). *Many waters* are a figure for overwhelming troubles (the figure *Metonymy*; compare 32:6; 144:7). After all the storm and thunder, the purpose was one man drawn out of the flood.

> **18:17** *He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.*

He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. *My strong enemy*: Saul above all. David admits they were stronger than he.

> **18:18** *They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD [Jehovah] was my stay.*

They prevented me in the day of my calamity. *Came upon me*, confronted me, in the day of disaster. **but the LORD [Jehovah] was my stay.** *My support*, the staff to lean on.

> **18:19** *He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.*

He brought me forth also into a large place. Out of the narrow place of distress into room (as 4:1). **he delivered me, because he delighted in me.** The reason is God's delight, not David's merit. The same is said of the Son: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

> **18:20** *The LORD [Jehovah] rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.*

The LORD [Jehovah] rewarded me according to my righteousness. Now the second section (C): Jehovah's equity toward David. David is not claiming to be sinless; he is speaking of his conduct toward Saul and his enemies, in which he had been upright (compare 7:3–5; 1 Sam. 24:17; 26:23). **according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.**

> **18:21** *For I have kept the ways of the LORD [Jehovah], and have not wickedly departed from my God.*

For I have kept the ways of the LORD [Jehovah], and have not wickedly departed from my God. He had not turned from God to idols, nor taken matters into his own hands.

> **18:22** *For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.*

For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. He kept God's word in view, as the blessed man of Psalm 1.

> **18:23** *I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.*

I was also upright before him. *Blameless*, whole-hearted (as 15:2). **and I kept myself from mine iniquity.** From his own besetting sin. Some read "from iniquity."

> **18:24** *Therefore hath the LORD [Jehovah] recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.*

Therefore hath the LORD [Jehovah] recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight. The section ends where it began (v. 20), the figure *Epanadiplosis*.

In the fullest sense only one Man could speak verses 20–24 without any qualification: Jesus Christ, "who did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22), and whom God "highly exalted" because "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:8, 9).

> **18:25** *With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;*

With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful. Now God's equity toward others (*C*). *Merciful* (*ḥāsîd*): the one who shows loving-kindness; God shows loving-kindness to him. **with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.** *With the blameless man, blameless.*

> **18:26** *With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.*

With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward. *Froward* is *crooked*, twisted. God does not become crooked; but to the crooked man He shows Himself as an adversary who outmanoeuvres him (the word is *tittappāl*, "thou wilt show thyself a wrestler"). God deals with each man according to his way (compare Lev. 26:23, 24).

> **18:27** *For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.*

For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks. *Proud eyes* (compare 10:4). "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5).

> **18:28** *For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD [Jehovah] my God will enlighten my darkness.*

For thou wilt light my candle. *My lamp*: the lamp that burned in every home; to have it put out meant death or ruin (Job 18:6; Prov. 20:20). God keeps David's lamp burning, as He kept "a lamp" for David in Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:36). **the LORD [Jehovah] my God will enlighten my darkness.** The last section (*B*), the victories, begins.

> **18:29** *For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.*

For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall. *Run through* is *run upon*, charged. By God's strength he charged a raiding band and scaled a city wall. The figure *Hyperbole*, the language of a soldier.

> **18:30** *As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD [Jehovah] is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*

As for God, his way is perfect. *El. Perfect*: complete, without flaw. **the word of the LORD [Jehovah] is tried.** *Refined*, tested in the furnace and found pure (12:6). **he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.** *A shield to all who take refuge in Him* (repeated in Prov. 30:5).

> **18:31** *For who is God save the LORD [Jehovah]? or who is a rock save our God?*

For who is God save the LORD [Jehovah]? *Eloah*. The figure *Erotesis*: there is no other. **or who is a rock save our God?** One God, the only Rock (Deut. 32:31; Isa. 44:8). This verse is quoted in Part One, Chapter 9.

> **18:32** *It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*

It is God that girdeth me with strength. *El.* The soldier's belt held his weapons and armour; God is the one who girds him. **and maketh my way perfect.** Smooth, blameless.

> **18:33** *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.*

He maketh my feet like hinds' feet. Swift and sure-footed, like the female deer on the mountains (Hab. 3:19). **and setteth me upon my high places.** On the heights, safe from the enemy.

> **18:34** *He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*

He teacheth my hands to war. God trained him (compare 144:1). **so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.** *A bow of bronze is bent by my arms*: he could draw a bow too strong for ordinary men.

> **18:35** *Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.*

Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation. and thy right hand hath holden me up. and thy gentleness hath made me great. *Thy condescension* (*ʿanwāthĕkā*): God's humility, His stooping down, made David great. The great God stoops to lift the lowly (113:5–8).

> **18:36** *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.*

Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. Room to walk, and ground that held. Compare 17:5.

> **18:37** *I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.*

I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. The tenses may be read as future, looking forward: so the passage becomes prophecy of the final victory of David's Son.

> **18:38** *I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.*

I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. *Shattered them*. "Under my feet": the very phrase of 8:6.

> **18:39** *For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.*

For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. The victory was God's.

> **18:40** *Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.*

Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies. Made them turn their backs in flight (Ex. 23:27; Josh. 10:24). **that I might destroy them that hate me.**

> **18:41** *They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD [Jehovah], but he answered them not.*

They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD [Jehovah], but he answered them not. David cried and was heard (v. 6); they cried and were not. Even the enemies of Israel cried to Jehovah in their extremity, but too late (compare 1 Sam. 28:6, where Saul inquired and was not answered).

> **18:42** *Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.*

Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind. Like the chaff of 1:4. **I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.** *Emptied them out*, poured them away.

> **18:43** *Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me.*

Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people. *Of the people*: the internal strife of Israel, the rebellions of Saul's house, of Absalom, of Sheba. **and thou hast made me the head of the heathen.** Of the nations around: Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria (2 Sam. 8). **a people whom I have not known shall serve me.** Peoples he had never met would submit, as Toi king of Hamath sent gifts (2 Sam. 8:9, 10). This looks beyond David to the King who will receive "the heathen for thine inheritance" (2:8).

> **18:44** *As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.*

As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me. *Shall come cringing*: feign submission, yield.

> **18:45** *The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.*

The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places. *Shall come trembling out of their strongholds*, giving themselves up.

> **18:46** *The LORD [Jehovah] liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.*

The LORD [Jehovah] liveth. The living God, against the dead idols of the nations. **and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.** The section moves toward praise.

> **18:47** *It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me.*

It is God that avengeth me. *El.* Vengeance belongs to God (Deut. 32:35), not to David. **and subdueth the people under me.** The peoples.

> **18:48** *He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.*

He delivereth me from mine enemies. yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me. thou hast delivered me from the violent man. *The man of violence*: Saul, in David's life.

> **18:49** *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.*

Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name. *Among the nations.* Paul quoted this verse to show that God always purposed that the Gentiles should glorify Him: "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (Rom. 15:9). David's song of victory reaches to the nations.

> **18:50** *Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.*

Great deliverance giveth he to his king. *He maketh great the salvations of His king.* **and sheweth mercy to his anointed.** *His Messiah.* **to David, and to his seed for evermore.** The promise of 2 Samuel 7:12–16: David's seed and throne established for ever. That seed is Jesus Christ, "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3), to whom "the Lord God shall give . . . the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32).

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 19 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 18. The song David sang at the end of his life was handed to the chief musician, with its new first line, for the worship of the House of Jehovah.

Looking back

Psalm 18 is member R, the answer to Psalm 17, and it answers in turn to Psalms 27 and 28 (*R*), where Jehovah is again "Rock" and "Deliverer." Psalms 16–18 together show the righteous one trusting (16), praying (17) and delivered (18): from the cords of death to the throne, from the floods to the "large place," with the nations under him.

Psalm 19 — The Two Books: The Heavens and the Word

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member N, S (His people acknowledging God's glory in creation and revelation). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 18 ended with the king and his seed; Psalm 19 turns to the two ways God has made Himself known to all: the heavens He made, and the word He gave. The first half speaks of *El* (God the Mighty One, v. 1), the Creator; the second half names *Jehovah* seven times (vv. 7–14), the God who makes covenant and speaks to His people.

Paul quoted verse 4 of the preaching of the gospel: "Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18). The library's study *The Heavens Declare* takes up the witness of the heavens in detail; this commentary keeps to the Psalm itself.

Structure

- G | H | 1–4-. The heavens: the word written there.
- J | -4–6. In them, the sun.
- *G* | *H* | 7–10. The Scriptures: the word written therein.
- *J* | 11–14. In them, Thy servant.

The heavens contain the sun; the Scriptures contain "thy servant." As the sun runs its course in the heavens, so the servant walks his course in the Word, warned, kept and cleansed by it.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*
> **2** *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*
> **3** *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*
> **4** *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,*
> **5** *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*
> **6** *His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*

> **7** *The law of the LORD [Jehovah] is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD [Jehovah] is sure, making wise the simple.*
>
> **8** *The statutes of the LORD [Jehovah] are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [Jehovah] is pure, enlightening the eyes.*
>
> **9** *The fear of the LORD [Jehovah] is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD [Jehovah] are true and righteous altogether.*
>
> **10** *More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*
>
> **11** *Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*
>
> **12** *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.*
>
> **13** *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*
>
> **14** *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD [Jehovah], my strength, and my redeemer.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 20.

Verse by verse

> **19:1** *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

The heavens declare. *Are recounting*: the verb is continuous; they never stop. **the glory of God.** *El*, the Mighty One. **and the firmament sheweth his handywork.** *The expanse* (Gen. 1:6–8) *is telling the work of His hands.*

> **19:2** *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*

Day unto day uttereth speech. *Pours forth* speech like a spring bubbling up. **and night unto night sheweth knowledge.** Each day passes the message to the next, each night to the next: an unbroken witness.

> **19:3** *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. The italic *where* is supplied. The Hebrew reads: *There is no speech, and there are no words; their voice is not heard.* The heavens speak without sound or words, and yet (v. 4) their message goes everywhere. Both readings agree that no people is left without this witness.

> **19:4** *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,*

Their line is gone out through all the earth. *Line* is the measuring cord (as 16:6): their domain reaches the whole earth. The Septuagint reads "their sound," and Paul follows it (Rom. 10:18). **and their words to the end of the world.** *Tēbēl*, the inhabited earth. **In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.** The sun has its tent in the heavens.

> **19:5** *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber. Radiant and joyful, coming out from the wedding canopy. **and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.** A champion eager to run his course.

> **19:6** *His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*

His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it. From horizon to horizon. **and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.** Its warmth reaches everything. So the Word reaches everything (v. 7 follows at once).

> **19:7** *The law of the LORD [Jehovah] is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD [Jehovah] is sure, making wise the simple.*

The law of the LORD [Jehovah] is perfect, converting the soul. Verses 7–9 give six names for the Word, each with what it is and what it does. *Law* (*tôrāh*): teaching, instruction. *Perfect*: complete, lacking nothing. *Converting*: *restoring*, bringing back. **the testimony of the LORD [Jehovah] is sure, making wise the simple.** *Testimony*: what God witnesses to. *Sure*: faithful, reliable. *The simple*: the open-minded, easily led.

> **19:8** *The statutes of the LORD [Jehovah] are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [Jehovah] is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

The statutes of the LORD [Jehovah] are right, rejoicing the heart. *Precepts*, charges given in detail. *Right*: straight. **the commandment of the LORD [Jehovah] is pure, enlightening the eyes.** *Pure*: clear, like the sun (Song 6:10, the same word). As the sun lights the earth, the commandment lights the eyes.

> **19:9** *The fear of the LORD [Jehovah] is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD [Jehovah] are true and righteous altogether.*

The fear of the LORD [Jehovah] is clean, enduring for ever. *The fear of Jehovah* here is the reverence the Word teaches, and so stands for the Word itself (the figure *Metonymy*). **the judgments of the LORD [Jehovah] are true and righteous altogether.** *Judgments*: His decisions. Every one is true and every one is righteous.

> **19:10** *More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold. *Fine gold*: refined gold. **sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.** *Than the droppings of the honeycomb*, the purest honey. Compare 119:72, 103, 127.

> **19:11** *Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

Moreover by them is thy servant warned. *Thy servant* (*J*): David in the Word, as the sun in the heavens. *Warned*: also "enlightened." **and in keeping of them there is great reward.** Not a payment earned, but the blessing that comes with walking in them (Psalm 1).

> **19:12** *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.*

Who can understand his errors? *Errors* (*shĕgîʾôth*): sins of ignorance and wandering (Lev. 4:2). The Word shows a man faults he never knew he had. **cleanse thou me from secret faults.** *Hidden* ones, hidden even from himself. *Cleanse*: acquit, hold me innocent.

> **19:13** *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins. *Proud* sins, deliberate, high-handed (Num. 15:30). **let them not have dominion over me. then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.** *Upright*: blameless. *The great transgression*: rebellion against God, the end to which presumptuous sin leads.

> **19:14** *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD [Jehovah], my strength, and my redeemer.*

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight. The language of sacrifice: "accepted" as an offering is accepted (Lev. 1:3). Words and thoughts are offered to God. **O LORD [Jehovah], my strength.** *My rock* (*tsûrî*). **and my redeemer.** *Gôʾălî*: my kinsman-redeemer, the near kinsman who has the right to buy back what was lost (Lev. 25:25; Ruth 4). The Psalm ends with the God who redeems.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 20 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 19.

Looking back

Psalm 19 is member S, His people acknowledging God's glory in creation and in His Word. It answers to Psalm 29 (*S*), where the voice of Jehovah is heard in the storm. It begins the second group of three (19–21), in which the people speak: they acknowledge God (19), pray for the king (20), and rejoice in his exaltation (21).

Psalm 20 — The People's Prayer for the King

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member T (their prayer, as they see in Messiah their own salvation). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. The king is about to go out to battle; sacrifice is offered and the people pray for him.

Introduction

Psalms 20 and 21 are a pair. In Psalm 20 the people pray for the king before the battle; in Psalm 21 they give thanks after the victory. The king is Jehovah's "anointed" (v. 6), *Messiah*. In David's day it was David; in the fullest sense it is the Son of David, in whose salvation His people find their own.

Structure

- K | 1–4. Prayer.
- L | 5-. "We": the people's trust.
- M | -5. Jehovah's Messiah.
- *M* | 6. Jehovah's Messiah.
- *L* | 7, 8. "We": the people's trust.
- *K* | 9. Prayer.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *The LORD [Jehovah] hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;*
> **2** *Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion;*
> **3** *Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah.*
> **4** *Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.*
> **5** *We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD [Jehovah] fulfil all thy petitions.*
> **6** *Now know I that the LORD [Jehovah] saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.*
> **7** *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD [Jehovah] our God.*
> **8** *They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.*
> **9** *Save, LORD [Jehovah]: let the king hear us when we call.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 21.

Verse by verse

> **20:1** *The LORD [Jehovah] hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;*

The LORD [Jehovah] hear thee in the day of trouble. The people pray for the king. **the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.** *Set thee on high*, out of reach (as *misgāb*, 9:9). *The name* is God Himself as He has made Himself known (the figure *Metonymy*). *The God of Jacob*: the God who answered Jacob "in the day of my distress" (Gen. 35:3).

> **20:2** *Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion;*

Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion. Help comes from where God dwells among His people.

> **20:3** *Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah.*

Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice. *Offerings* (*minḥāh*): gifts. *Accept*: *reduce to ashes*, that is, accept by consuming it with fire, as at Gideon's and Elijah's altars (Judg. 6:21; 1 Kings 18:38). **Selah.** Pause: the sacrifice is offered.

> **20:4** *Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.*

Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel. All his plan for the battle.

> **20:5** *We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD [Jehovah] fulfil all thy petitions.*

We will rejoice in thy salvation. *We* (L): the people, confident before the battle is fought. **and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.** *We will wave our banners.* **the LORD [Jehovah] fulfil all thy petitions.**

> **20:6** *Now know I that the LORD [Jehovah] saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.*

Now know I that the LORD [Jehovah] saveth his anointed. One voice now speaks, perhaps a Levite or the king himself: *I know*. *His anointed* is *His Messiah*. **he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.** *With the mighty acts of salvation of His right hand.* Compare 16:11.

> **20:7** *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD [Jehovah] our God.*

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses. *Trust* is supplied; the Hebrew is short: *These in chariots, and these in horses*. Israel's king was not to multiply horses (Deut. 17:16). **but we will remember the name of the LORD [Jehovah] our God.** *We will make mention of* Him, boast in Him.

> **20:8** *They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.*

They are brought down and fallen. *They have bowed down*: the prophetic past, as certain as if already done. **but we are risen, and stand upright.**

> **20:9** *Save, LORD [Jehovah]: let the king hear us when we call.*

Save, LORD [Jehovah]: let the king hear us when we call. The Septuagint, followed by many, divides it differently: *O Jehovah, save the king, and hear us when we call.* Either way the prayer ends as it began (K, *K*).

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 21 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 20.

Looking back

Psalm 20 is member T, the people's prayer for their Messiah. It answers to Psalms 30–33 (*T*), where they praise God for answered prayer.

Psalm 21 — The People's Joy in the King's Exaltation

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member U (their exultation in Messiah's exaltation). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** after victory; the companion of Psalm 20.

Introduction

The prayer of Psalm 20 is answered. "Grant thee according to thine own heart" (20:4) becomes "Thou hast given him his heart's desire" (21:2). The king is crowned, given life "for ever and ever," and set over his enemies. The Jewish Targum reads verse 1 as "King Messiah," and no earthly king fully answers to verse 4. "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever" is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, who "dieth no more" (Rom. 6:9).

Structure

- N | 1. The king rejoicing in Jehovah's strength.
- O | P | 2–5. Jehovah's dealings with the king.
- Q | d | 6. His reward.
- e | 7. His merit.
- *O* | *P* | 8–10. The king's dealings with his enemies.
- *Q* | *e* | 11. Their guilt.
- *d* | 12. Their defeat.
- *N* | 13. Jehovah exalted in His own strength.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD [Jehovah]; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!*
>
> **2** *Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.*
>
> **3** *For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.*
>
> **4** *He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.*
>
> **5** *His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.*
>
> **6** *For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.*
>
> **7** *For the king trusteth in the LORD [Jehovah], and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.*

> **8** *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.*
>
> **9** *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD [Jehovah] shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.*
>
> **10** *Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.*
>
> **11** *For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.*
>
> **12** *Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.*
>
> **13** *Be thou exalted, LORD [Jehovah], in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.*

To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 22.

Verse by verse

> **21:1** *The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD [Jehovah]; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!*

The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD [Jehovah]. and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! The king's joy is in what God has done.

> **21:2** *Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.*

Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. The answer to 20:4, 5. **Selah.**

> **21:3** *For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.*

For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness. *Thou comest to meet him*: God goes out to meet him with blessings before he asks. **thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.** David received the crown of the king of Rabbah (2 Sam. 12:30). The Son of Man is "crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2:9, quoting 8:5).

> **21:4** *He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.*

He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever. For David, the promise of an everlasting house and throne (2 Sam. 7:16, 29). For the Son of David, life out of death: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18). Compare Heb. 5:7: He "offered up prayers . . . unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard."

> **21:5** *His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.*

His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. The glory is given: God lays it on him (Phil. 2:9; Acts 2:36).

> **21:6** *For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.*

For thou hast made him most blessed for ever. *Thou hast made him blessings for ever*: not only blessed, but a blessing to others, as Abraham (Gen. 12:2). **thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.** *With joy before Thy face*: the fulness of joy of 16:11 (quoted in Acts 2:28).

> **21:7** *For the king trusteth in the LORD [Jehovah], and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.*

For the king trusteth in the LORD [Jehovah]. His merit (*e*): he trusts. **and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.** *Elyon.* The same promise as 16:8 and 15:5.

> **21:8** *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.*

Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies. Now the people speak to the king (*O*). **thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.** None will escape.

> **21:9** *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD [Jehovah] shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.*

Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger. *In the time of thy presence*, when thou appearest. **the LORD [Jehovah] shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.** The judgment at the coming of the King (Mal. 4:1; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

> **21:10** *Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.*

Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. *Their fruit*: their offspring.

> **21:11** *For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.*

For they intended evil against thee. *Spread out evil over thee*, like a net. **they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.** As Psalm 2:1–4.

> **21:12** *Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.*

Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back. In flight (18:40). **when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.**

> **21:13** *Be thou exalted, LORD [Jehovah], in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.*

Be thou exalted, LORD [Jehovah], in thine own strength. The Psalm began with the king rejoicing in Jehovah's strength; it ends with Jehovah exalted in His own (N, *N*). **so will we sing and praise thy power.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 22 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 21.

Aijeleth Shahar means "the hind of the morning," and is understood as the first light of dawn, which spreads up the sky like the horns of a deer. *The Chief Musician* (Chapter 6 of Part One) connects it with the dawn of a new day, here the coronation of the king. Read at the head of Psalm 22, it has led many to look for "the hind" in the sufferer of that Psalm; restored to its place, it belongs to the joy of the crowned king. It points forward to the morning when Messiah will reign (2 Sam. 23:4; Mal. 4:2).

Looking back

Psalm 21 is member U, the people's joy in Messiah's exaltation, and answers to Psalm 34 (*U*). Psalms 19–21 together show the people of God: they see His glory in the heavens and the Word (19), they pray for their king (20), and they rejoice when he is crowned (21).

Psalm 22 — The Good Shepherd in Death: "My God, My God, Why?"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member O, V (the Good Shepherd in death; John 10:11). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. No event in David's life fully matches what is described.

Introduction

Psalms 22, 23 and 24 are the centre and climax of the first half of this division. They present the Shepherd in three ways:

- **Psalm 22.** The Good Shepherd, who gives His life for the sheep (John 10:11). His death.
- **Psalm 23.** The Great Shepherd, "brought again from the dead" (Heb. 13:20). His present care.
- **Psalm 24.** The Chief Shepherd, who "shall appear" (1 Pet. 5:4). His coming in glory.

Psalm 22 is the Psalm of the cross. The Lord Jesus Christ took its first line on His lips as He hung there (Matt. 27:46). Its details were written about a thousand years before: the mockery and wagging heads (vv. 7, 8; Matt. 27:39–43), the thirst (v. 15; John 19:28), the hands and feet (v. 16), the bones that could be counted (v. 17), and the garments parted and the lot cast for the vesture (v. 18; John 19:23, 24). Death by crucifixion was unknown in Israel when it was written.

Then at verse 21 the Psalm turns. The one who cried "why hast thou forsaken me?" says "thou hast heard me," and the rest of the Psalm is praise: in the congregation, in Israel, to the ends of the earth, and to generations not yet born. The sufferings lead to the glory (1 Pet. 1:11).

Structure

- R^1 | 1–21. His sufferings.
- S^1 | 1–6.
- T | 1, 2. Desertion mourned.
- U | 3. Jehovah's holiness declared.
- *U* | 4, 5. Jehovah's goodness experienced by the fathers.
- *T* | 6. Desertion: "But I am a worm."
- S^2 | 7–21.
- V | f | 7, 8. Enemies: their mockery.
- g | 9–11. "But Thou."
- W | h | 12, 13. Enemies: bulls and lion.
- i | 14, 15. "I": His sufferings.
- *W* | *h* | 16. Enemies: dogs.

- *i* | 17-. "I": His sufferings.
- *V* | *f* | -17, 18. Enemies: they look, they part the garments.
- *g* | 19–21. "But Thou."
- R^2 | 22–31. His glory.
- X | 22. Messiah's praise promised.
- Y | 23-. Praise to Jehovah.
- Z | j^1 | -23. Israel to praise Him.
- k^1 | 24. The reason: "For . . ."
- *X* | 25. Messiah's praise rendered.
- *Y* | 26. Praise to Jehovah.
- *Z* | j^2 | 27. The nations to praise Him.
- k^2 | 28. The reason: "For . . ."
- j^3 | 29–31-. All, to the generations to come.
- k^3 | -31. The reason: "He hath done this."

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*
> **2** *O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*
> **3** *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*
> **4** *Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.*
> **5** *They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*
> **6** *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.*
> **7** *All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,*
> **8** *He trusted on the LORD [Jehovah] that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*
> **9** *But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.*
> **10** *I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.*
> **11** *Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*
> **12** *Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.*
> **13** *They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*
> **14** *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

> **15** *My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*
>
> **16** *For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*
>
> **17** *I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*
>
> **18** *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*
>
> **19** *But be not thou far from me, O LORD [Jehovah]: O my strength, haste thee to help me.*
>
> **20** *Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.*
>
> **21** *Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.*
>
> **22** *I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*
>
> **23** *Ye that fear the LORD [Jehovah], praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.*
>
> **24** *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.*
>
> **25** *My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.*
>
> **26** *The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD [Jehovah] that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.*
>
> **27** *All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD [Jehovah]: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*
>
> **28** *For the kingdom is the LORD's [Jehovah's]: and he is the governor among the nations.*
>
> **29** *All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.*
>
> **30** *A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.*
>
> **31** *They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*

Psalm 22 has no sub-scription. Psalm 23 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **22:1** *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

My God, my God. *Eli, Eli*: My El, my El. The figure *Epizeuxis*, the word repeated for emphasis. On the cross the Lord cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (Matt. 27:46), in the Aramaic of His day (Mark 15:34). **why hast thou forsaken me?** *Why didst Thou leave me?* Not "why have I been left," but a cry of the Son to His God, whose trust had never wavered. The one who had always known the Father with Him (John 8:29; 16:32) now bore the sin of the world (1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21). **why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?** *My groaning*: the cry of one in agony.

> **22:2** *O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. *There is no rest for me.* On the cross there were three hours of darkness at midday (Matt. 27:45).

> **22:3** *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

But thou art holy. Even in desertion He does not accuse God. God is holy; the cause of the forsaking was the sin He bore, not any fault in God (U). **O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.** *Enthroned upon the praises of Israel*: God dwells where His people praise Him.

> **22:4** *Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.*

Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. The fathers' experience (*U*). "Trusted" three times in verses 4 and 5.

> **22:5** *They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*

They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. *Not ashamed*, not disappointed. The fathers were heard; He is not, yet.

> **22:6** *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.*

But I am a worm, and no man. *Tôlaʿath*: the crimson worm, from which the scarlet dye of the tabernacle hangings was made (Ex. 25:4, "scarlet" is *tôlaʿath shānî*). It was crushed to yield its colour. He is treated as less than a man, a thing to be trodden on (Isa. 52:14; 53:3). **a reproach of men, and despised of the people.**

> **22:7** *All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,*

All they that see me laugh me to scorn. "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads" (Matt. 27:39). **they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.** Gestures of contempt.

> **22:8** *He trusted on the LORD [Jehovah] that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

He trusted on the LORD [Jehovah] that he would deliver him. *Roll it upon Jehovah*: commit it to Him. The chief priests used almost these very words at the cross: "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him" (Matt. 27:43). They quoted the Psalm without knowing they were fulfilling it. **let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.** Compare 18:19.

> **22:9** *But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.*

But thou art he that took me out of the womb. "But Thou" (*g*): He turns from the mockers to God. **thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.** *Didst make me trust.* From His birth He had trusted God.

> **22:10** *I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.*

I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. *Thou art my El.* Of no one else could this be said as fully as of Him who was conceived by the holy spirit and "called the Son of God" from His birth (Luke 1:35).

> **22:11** *Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*

Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. All His disciples forsook Him and fled (Matt. 26:56).

> **22:12** *Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.*

Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. Bashan, east of Jordan, was famous for its rich pastures and powerful cattle (Deut. 32:14; Amos 4:1). The rulers and priests surrounded Him like a herd of bulls.

> **22:13** *They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*

They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. *Opened wide their mouths* (compare 17:12).

> **22:14** *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

I am poured out like water. "I" (*i*): now His own sufferings. His strength drains away. **and all my bones are out of joint.** *Have separated themselves*: the weight of the body hanging by the arms pulls the joints apart. **my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.** His courage and strength fail within Him.

> **22:15** *My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

My strength is dried up like a potsherd. A fragment of baked clay, dry and brittle. **and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws.** "After this, Jesus . . . saith, I thirst" (John 19:28). **and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.** God's hand is in it: "it pleased the LORD to bruise him" (Isa. 53:10). *The dust of death* is the grave, the return to dust (Gen. 3:19).

> **22:16** *For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*

For dogs have compassed me. Dogs were scavengers, unclean; Gentiles were called "dogs" (Matt. 15:26). Here the Roman soldiers who carried out the crucifixion. **the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me.** *A congregation of evil-doers.* **they pierced my hands and my feet.**

The Hebrew text as now printed (the Masoretic text) reads *kaʾărî*, "like a lion": "like a lion, my hands and my feet." That does not make a complete sense. The Septuagint, translated before the time of Christ, reads "they dug" (or pierced) my hands and my feet; so do the Syriac and the Vulgate. A copy of the Psalms found among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Naḥal Ḥever reads a verb (*kʾrw*), not "like a lion," supporting "they dug." The King James translators followed the ancient versions, and the evidence supports them. "Behold my hands and my feet," the risen Lord said (Luke 24:39; John 20:25, 27).

22:17 *I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*

I may tell all my bones. *I can count all my bones*: stretched on the cross, the body is laid bare (*i*). **they look and stare upon me.** The enemies again (*f*). "And sitting down they watched him there" (Matt. 27:36).

22:18 *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. *Garments* (*bĕgādîm*), the outer clothes, divided into shares; *vesture* (*lĕbûsh*), the inner garment, for which lots were cast. John records both exactly: the soldiers took His garments and made four parts, "and also his coat: now the coat was without seam . . . Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it . . . that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John 19:23, 24).

22:19 *But be not thou far from me, O LORD [Jehovah]: O my strength, haste thee to help me.*

But be not thou far from me, O LORD [Jehovah]. "But Thou" (*g*) again. **O my strength, haste thee to help me.** *My strength* (*ʾĕyālûthî*): a word found only here, related to *Aijeleth* (21, sub-scription), "hind," the deer's strength and swiftness.

22:20 *Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.*

Deliver my soul from the sword. *My soul*: me, my life. **my darling from the power of the dog.** *My only one* (*yĕḥîdāthî*): my one life, my only possession (as 35:17). *The power* is *the hand* (paw) of the dog.

22:21 *Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.*

Save me from the lion's mouth. The three enemies again: bulls (12), lion (13, 21), dogs (16, 20). **for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.** *The wild oxen* (*rēʾēm*). The verse turns in the middle: *From the horns of the wild oxen Thou hast answered me.* The cry of verse 2, "thou hearest not," is now "thou hast heard me." The sufferings are over; what follows is glory (R^2).

Isaiah describes the same turn: "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days" (Isa. 53:10). The one who died is alive again, raised by God. The rest of the Psalm can only be spoken by One raised from the dead.

22:22 *I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*

I will declare thy name unto my brethren. Messiah's praise promised (X). Hebrews quotes this of the risen Christ: "he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:11, 12). On the day He rose He said, "go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). **in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.**

22:23 *Ye that fear the LORD [Jehovah], praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.*

Ye that fear the LORD [Jehovah], praise him. (Y.) **all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.** (j^1.) Israel is called first.

> **22:24** *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.*

For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted. The reason (k[1]). *Affliction* is lowliness: God did not despise the humbled one. **neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.** In the end He was heard (Heb. 5:7).

> **22:25** *My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.*

My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation. *From Thee*: God gives Him the theme (*X*). **I will pay my vows before them that fear him.** Vows made in trouble were paid with peace offerings, from which the worshippers ate (Lev. 7:16; Prov. 7:14).

> **22:26** *The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD [Jehovah] that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.*

The meek shall eat and be satisfied. *The afflicted*, the lowly, share the feast of the peace offering (*Y*). **they shall praise the LORD [Jehovah] that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.**

> **22:27** *All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD [Jehovah]: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD [Jehovah]. Now the nations (j[2]): the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:3). **and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.** *Families*, as in Gen. 12:3; 28:14.

> **22:28** *For the kingdom is the LORD's [Jehovah's]: and he is the governor among the nations.*

For the kingdom is the LORD's [Jehovah's]. The reason (k[2]). **and he is the governor among the nations.** He rules them (Obad. 21; Zech. 14:9).

> **22:29** *All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.*

All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship. *The prosperous*, the great. (j[3].) **all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him.** The dying and the poor. Great and small alike. **and none can keep alive his own soul.** *Even he who cannot keep himself alive*: no man has power over his own life; all must bow before the One who gives it.

> **22:30** *A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.*

A seed shall serve him. *Posterity.* **it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.** *Adonai. It shall be told of Adonai to the generation to come.* The story will be handed on.

> **22:31** *They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*

They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born. The message reaches generations not yet born. **that he hath done this.** The reason (k[3]). *That He hath done it*, or *it is done*: the work is finished. The Psalm that opened with "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

closes with the word that echoes the last cry from the cross: "It is finished" (John 19:30). The Good Shepherd laid down His life; God raised Him and exalted Him to His right hand (Acts 2:32, 33), and the news of what God has done goes to the ends of the earth.

Its close

Psalm 22 has no sub-scription. The line that stands over it in the King James Version, "To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar," belongs to Psalm 21.

Looking back

Psalm 22 is member V, the Good Shepherd in death, and answers to Psalms 35 and 36 (*V*), prayer and praise concerning atonement. It is the foundation of everything after it: there could be no green pastures (23) and no King of glory entering the gates (24) without the cross.

Psalm 23 — The Great Shepherd: "Jehovah Is My Shepherd"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member W (the Great Shepherd in resurrection; Heb. 13:20). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. David had been a shepherd himself (1 Sam. 16:11; 17:34–36).

Introduction

The best-known Psalm of all follows the Psalm of the cross. The Shepherd who died (22) is the Shepherd who now leads: "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20). Jehovah is the Shepherd of His people (80:1; Isa. 40:11), and He shepherds them through the one He has appointed: "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David" (Ezek. 34:23). The Lord Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14).

Structure

- A | 1–3. Jehovah: provision. Pastures and waters. ("He.")
- B | 4. Danger: death. Rod and staff. ("Thou.")
- *B* | 5. Danger: enemies. Table and cup. ("Thou.")
- *A* | 6. Jehovah: goodness and mercy. ("I.")

The Psalm moves from speaking *of* Jehovah ("He," vv. 1–3) to speaking *to* Him ("Thou," vv. 4, 5) just at the point of greatest danger, the valley of the shadow of death.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *The LORD [Jehovah] is my shepherd; I shall not want.*
>
> **2** *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*
>
> **3** *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*
>
> **4** *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*
>
> **5** *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*
>
> **6** *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] for ever.*

Psalm 23 has no sub-scription. Psalm 24 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **23:1** *The LORD [Jehovah] is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

The LORD [Jehovah] is my shepherd. *Jehovah Roʿî*: Jehovah my Shepherd. Bullinger noted that the Psalm gathers up the blessings expressed in the Jehovah titles of the Old Testament. In this verse, *Jehovah-Roʿî*. **I shall not want.** *Jehovah-Jireh*, Jehovah will see and provide (Gen. 22:14). "Thou hast lacked nothing" (Deut. 2:7).

> **23:2** *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. *Pastures of tender grass*. Sheep lie down only when they are fed and unafraid. **he leadeth me beside the still waters.** *Waters of rest*, quiet waters: *Jehovah-Shalom*, Jehovah our peace (Judg. 6:24). The shepherd leads; he does not drive.

> **23:3** *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

He restoreth my soul. *Brings me back*: when the sheep strays, He brings it back; when it is weary, He refreshes it (*Jehovah-Rophecha*, Jehovah that healeth thee, Ex. 15:26). **he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness.** *Right tracks*, the paths that lead somewhere (*Jehovah-Tsidkenu*, Jehovah our righteousness, Jer. 23:6). **for his name's sake.** For the sake of His own reputation as a Shepherd.

> **23:4** *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. *Tsalmāweth*: deep darkness, death-shadow. A gorge where the sun never reaches and dangers lurk. **I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.** Now "Thou" (B): *Jehovah-Shammah*, Jehovah is there (Ezek. 48:35). The valley is walked *through*: it is a passage, not a dwelling. For the believer, death is a sleep in the grave until the Shepherd calls His sheep by name in the resurrection (John 5:28, 29; 1 Thess. 4:16). **thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.** The *rod* (*shēbeṭ*): a short club to drive off wild beasts. The *staff* (*mishʿeneth*): the long crook to lean on and to guide the sheep.

> **23:5** *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. The figure changes from shepherd to host (*B*). The enemies watch, unable to touch the guest (*Jehovah-Nissi*, Jehovah my banner, Ex. 17:15). **thou anointest my head with oil.** The host's welcome to an honoured guest (Luke 7:46). *Anointest* is *makest fat*, refreshes. **my cup runneth over.** *My cup is abundance*. Compare 16:5.

> **23:6** *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] for ever.*

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. *Only* goodness and loving-kindness. *Follow*: *pursue* me. The enemies once pursued him (7:1; 18:37); now goodness and mercy pursue him. **and I will dwell in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] for ever.** *For length of days*. Bullinger completes the list here with *Jehovah-Mekaddishkem*, Jehovah that sanctifieth you (Ex. 31:13): the people set apart to dwell with Him. The end of the shepherd's road is the Father's house.

Its close

Psalm 23 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 23 is member W, the Great Shepherd in resurrection, and answers to Psalm 37 (*W*), with its instruction for present blessing. The Good Shepherd died (22); raised and ascended, He leads His flock now (23); and He will appear as the Chief Shepherd (24).

Psalm 24 — The Chief Shepherd in Glory: "The King of Glory Shall Come In"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member X (the Chief Shepherd in glory; 1 Pet. 5:4). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** generally taken to be the bringing up of the Ark of Jehovah to Mount Zion (2 Sam. 6:12–19; 1 Chron. 15–16).

Introduction

When David brought the Ark up to Zion, it came with shouting and trumpets to the gates of the city. The Psalm seems to have been sung by two choirs: one outside calling on the gates to open, one within asking, "Who is this King of glory?" The answer: "The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory" (v. 10).

The Ark was the throne of Jehovah among His people. Its going up to Zion pictures the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven, and His return in glory to reign. When He comes, He comes "in the glory of his Father" (Matt. 16:27), as the one in whom God Himself is present with His people. The King of glory is Jehovah of hosts; the one who comes in His name is His Son, "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8), who has gone in through the gates to the Father's presence and will come out again to reign.

Structure

- C^1 | 1, 2. Jehovah's right to the earth: Creation.
- D^1 | 3. Question: "Who shall ascend?"
- E^1 | 4–6. Answer: the one with clean hands. **Selah.**
- C^2 | 7. His own right to enter.
- D^2 | 8-. Question: "Who is this King of glory?"
- E^2 | -8. Answer: "Jehovah strong and mighty."
- C^3 | 9. His right with His people to enter.
- D^3 | 10-. Question: "Who is this King of glory?"
- E^3 | -10. Answer: "Jehovah of hosts." **Selah.**

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *The earth is the LORD's [Jehovah's], and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*
> **2** *For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.*
> **3** *Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD [Jehovah]? or who shall stand in his holy place?*

> **4** *He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*
>
> **5** *He shall receive the blessing from the LORD [Jehovah], and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*
>
> **6** *This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.*
>
> **7** *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*
>
> **8** *Who is this King of glory? The LORD [Jehovah] strong and mighty, the LORD [Jehovah] mighty in battle.*
>
> **9** *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*
>
> **10** *Who is this King of glory? The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.*

Psalm 24 has no sub-scription. Psalm 25 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **24:1** *The earth is the LORD's [Jehovah's], and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*

The earth is the LORD's [Jehovah's], and the fulness thereof. All it contains. Paul quoted this to show that a believer may eat whatever is sold in the market (1 Cor. 10:26). **the world, and they that dwell therein.** *Tēbēl*, the inhabited world.

> **24:2** *For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.*

For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. *Upon the rivers.* The dry land was raised out of the waters at creation (Gen. 1:9, 10; 2 Pet. 3:5). His right to the earth rests on His having made it.

> **24:3** *Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD [Jehovah]? or who shall stand in his holy place?*

Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD [Jehovah]? The question of Psalm 15:1, now asked as the Ark goes up. **or who shall stand in his holy place?** Who may stand before Him there?

> **24:4** *He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart. Clean in deed and in heart. **who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity.** *Has not set his desire on what is false*, empty, idols. **nor sworn deceitfully.** The perfect man of Psalm 15 again. Only One has fully ascended the hill of God on His own merit: "he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens" (Eph. 4:10). Others ascend in Him.

> **24:5** *He shall receive the blessing from the LORD [Jehovah], and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

He shall receive the blessing from the LORD [Jehovah], and righteousness from the God of his salvation. *Righteousness* is received from God, not produced by man.

> **24:6** *This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.*

This is the generation of them that seek him. *This is the kind of men* who seek Him. **that seek thy face, O Jacob.** The Septuagint and Syriac read *O God of Jacob*, and so does the Revised Version margin; the words "God of" appear to have dropped out. *That seek Thy face, O God of Jacob*. **Selah.** Pause: the procession reaches the gates.

> **24:7** *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*

Lift up your heads, O ye gates. The gates are personified (the figure *Prosopopœia*), called on to lift their lintels high for so great a King to come in. **and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors.** *Ancient doors*. **and the King of glory shall come in.**

> **24:8** *Who is this King of glory? The LORD [Jehovah] strong and mighty, the LORD [Jehovah] mighty in battle.*

Who is this King of glory? The question from within. **The LORD [Jehovah] strong and mighty, the LORD [Jehovah] mighty in battle.** The answer: Jehovah, the warrior who fought for Israel (Ex. 15:3), whose throne the Ark is.

> **24:9** *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. The call is repeated (C^3), now with His people in the procession behind Him.

> **24:10** *Who is this King of glory? The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.*

Who is this King of glory? The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, he is the King of glory. *Jehovah Tsebāʾôth*: Jehovah of armies, the Commander of all the hosts of heaven. This is the first time the title appears in the Psalms. **Selah.**

The Psalm ends with the King inside the gates. The Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19; Heb. 1:3), "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22). He will come again "in his own glory, and in his Father's" (Luke 9:26), and then "the LORD shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9), and "when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:4).

Its close

Psalm 24 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 24 is member X, the Chief Shepherd in glory, and answers to Psalms 38–41 (*X*), which look to future blessing. It ends the first half of the division as Psalm 16 began it: with the ascent to God's presence.

Looking Back on Psalms 16–24

The first half of the third division presents "the man Christ Jesus" in three groups of three.

- **The Man Himself** (16–18). He trusts God for His lot and walks the path of life through death, resurrection and ascension to God's right hand (16). He prays as the righteous sufferer and will be satisfied when He awakes (17). He is answered and delivered, and the nations are made subject to Him (18).
- **His people** (19–21). They see God's glory in the heavens and in His Word (19), they pray for their King before the battle (20), and they rejoice when He is crowned with life for ever (21).
- **The Shepherd** (22–24). The Good Shepherd dies for the sheep (22). The Great Shepherd, brought again from the dead, leads them now (23). The Chief Shepherd ascends through the everlasting doors and will appear in glory (24).

The same order runs through all three groups: suffering, then answer, then glory. The second half of the division (Psalms 25–41) follows the same pattern again, as the structure at the head of this division shows.

Psalms 25–41: The Second Half of the Division

The second half of "The Man Christ Jesus" follows the same three stages as the first (see the structure at the head of the division). Psalms 16–24 set out the Man Himself, His people, and the Shepherd. Psalms 25–41 return to each of them in turn, now mostly in prayer and in teaching:

- **Prayers of the Man (25–28),** answering to Psalms 16–18.
- **The praise of His people (29–34),** answering to Psalms 19–21.
- **Prayer and teaching in view of the Shepherd's work (35–41),** answering to Psalms 22–24: His death (35–36), His present care (37), and the future blessing (38–41).

The division, and with it Book I, ends with a Psalm of betrayal and of being raised up (41), and the first of the five doxologies: "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen" (41:13).

Psalm 25 — "Unto Thee, O Jehovah, Do I Lift Up My Soul"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *P* (prayer in view of Psalm 16). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named; the "sins of my youth" (v. 7) suggest his later years.

Introduction

Psalm 25 is an acrostic, the second in the Psalter (the first is 9–10). Each verse begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet, though *Waw* is joined to *He* in verse 5 and *Qoph* is missing. The last verse (22) stands outside the alphabet, beginning with *Pe*, as a prayer for all Israel.

It answers to Psalm 16. There David said, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life" (16:11); here he prays, "Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths" (v. 4). It is also a prayer for forgiveness (vv. 7, 11, 18), and the word "pardon" appears here for the first time in the Psalms (v. 11). The Psalm is David's, the prayer of a sinful man, and is not put in Messiah's mouth.

Structure

- F^1 | 1–7. Prayer and worship.
- G^1 | 8–10. Teaching. The worshippers.
- F^2 | 11. Prayer and worship.
- G^2 | 12–14. Teaching. The worshippers.
- F^3 | 15–22. Prayer and worship.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I lift up my soul.*
> **2** *O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.*
> **3** *Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.*
> **4** *Shew me thy ways, O LORD [Jehovah]; teach me thy paths.*
> **5** *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.*
> **6** *Remember, O LORD [Jehovah], thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.*
> **7** *Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD [Jehovah].*

> **8** *Good and upright is the LORD [Jehovah]: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*
>
> **9** *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.*
>
> **10** *All the paths of the LORD [Jehovah] are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*
>
> **11** *For thy name's sake, O LORD [Jehovah], pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*
>
> **12** *What man is he that feareth the LORD [Jehovah]? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*
>
> **13** *His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.*
>
> **14** *The secret of the LORD [Jehovah] is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.*
>
> **15** *Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD [Jehovah]; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.*
>
> **16** *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.*
>
> **17** *The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.*
>
> **18** *Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*
>
> **19** *Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.*
>
> **20** *O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.*
>
> **21** *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.*
>
> **22** *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*

Psalm 25 has no sub-scription. Psalm 26 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **25:1** *Unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I lift up my soul.*
>
> **25:2** *O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.*
>
> **25:3** *Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.*

Unto thee . . . do I lift up my soul. The worshipper lifts his whole self to God, as the hands are lifted in prayer (28:2; 143:8). **let me not be ashamed.** Disappointed in his trust. The word "ashamed" comes three times in verses 2 and 3: none who wait on God will be put to shame, but those who are treacherous *without cause* will be (v. 3).

> **25:4** *Shew me thy ways, O LORD [Jehovah]; teach me thy paths.*
>
> **25:5** *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.*

Shew me thy ways . . . teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth. Three requests, the heart of the Psalm. The way is God's, and He must show it. **on thee do I wait all the day.** Waiting is part of trusting.

> **25:6** *Remember, O LORD [Jehovah], thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.*

> **25:7** *Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD [Jehovah].*

Remember . . . thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses . . . Remember not the sins of my youth . . . according to thy mercy remember thou me. Three "remembers": God is asked to remember His mercy, to forget David's sins, and to remember David. *Sins* (*ḥaṭṭāʾôth*) are failings, missing the mark; *transgressions* (*pĕshāʿîm*) are rebellions.

> **25:8** *Good and upright is the LORD [Jehovah]: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*
>
> **25:9** *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.*
>
> **25:10** *All the paths of the LORD [Jehovah] are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

Good and upright is the LORD [Jehovah]: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. Because He is good, He teaches sinners; because He is upright, He teaches them *in the way*, His way (G[1]). **The meek will he guide in judgment.** *The humble.* **All the paths of the LORD [Jehovah] are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant.** This is the first mention of "covenant" in the Psalms.

> **25:11** *For thy name's sake, O LORD [Jehovah], pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*

For thy name's sake, O LORD [Jehovah], pardon mine iniquity; for it is great. The central prayer (F[2]). *Pardon* (*sālaḥ*) appears here for the first time in the Psalms. He gives no reason why he should be forgiven except God's own name, and he gives the size of his sin as the reason to ask.

> **25:12** *What man is he that feareth the LORD [Jehovah]? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*
>
> **25:13** *His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.*
>
> **25:14** *The secret of the LORD [Jehovah] is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.*

What man is he that feareth the LORD [Jehovah]? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. (G[2].) **His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.** *The land* (compare 37:11; Matt. 5:5). **The secret of the LORD [Jehovah] is with them that fear him.** *Secret* (*sôd*): intimate counsel, the confidence of a friend (Prov. 3:32; John 15:15). **and he will shew them his covenant.** He will make it known to them.

> **25:15** *Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD [Jehovah]; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.*
>
> **25:16** *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.*
>
> **25:17** *The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.*
>
> **25:18** *Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*
>
> **25:19** *Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.*
>
> **25:20** *O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.*
>
> **25:21** *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.*

Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD [Jehovah]; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. The third prayer (F[3]) is the longest. He is *desolate and afflicted* (v. 16), his troubles *enlarged* (v. 17), his enemies

many and full of *cruel hatred* (v. 19). **Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins** (v. 18). **Let integrity and uprightness preserve me** (v. 21): integrity and uprightness are asked for as guards to watch over him.

> **25:22** *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*

Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. *Pedeh*: ransom, set free by paying the price. This verse stands outside the alphabet, and turns David's private prayer into a prayer for the whole nation.

Its close

Psalm 25 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 25 is member *P*, answering to Psalm 16: the prayer for "the path." It shows the man who walks God's way as one who is taught, forgiven and guided, and it opens the second half of the division.

Psalm 26 — "Judge Me, O Jehovah": The Appeal to Integrity

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *Q* (prayer with reference to Psalm 17). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

As in Psalm 17, David appeals to God against false accusation. He does not claim to be sinless (Psalm 25 has just confessed his sin); he claims to be innocent of the charges brought against him, and asks God to examine him. He loves God's house and refuses the company of evil men.

Structure

- H^1 | 1-. Prayer.
- J^1 | -1. Plea: "For . . ."
- H^2 | 2. Prayer.
- J^2 | 3–8. Plea: "For . . ."
- H^3 | 9, 10. Prayer.
- J^3 | 11-. Plea. Profession.
- H^4 | -11. Prayer.
- J^4 | 12. Plea. Profession.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Judge me, O LORD [Jehovah]; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD [Jehovah]; therefore I shall not slide.*
> **2** *Examine me, O LORD [Jehovah], and prove me; try my reins and my heart.*
> **3** *For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.*
> **4** *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.*
> **5** *I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.*
> **6** *I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD [Jehovah]:*
> **7** *That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.*
> **8** *LORD [Jehovah], I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.*
> **9** *Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:*

> **10** *In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.*
>
> **11** *But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.*
>
> **12** *My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD [Jehovah].*

Psalm 26 has no sub-scription. Psalm 27 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **26:1** *Judge me, O LORD [Jehovah]; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD [Jehovah]; therefore I shall not slide.*

Judge me. *Vindicate me*, do me justice (as 7:8). **for I have walked in mine integrity.** In my wholeness, blamelessness. **I have trusted also in the LORD [Jehovah]; therefore I shall not slide.** *I shall not waver.*

> **26:2** *Examine me, O LORD [Jehovah], and prove me; try my reins and my heart.*

Examine me . . . and prove me; try my reins and my heart. Three words for testing: *examine* (as metal is tested), *prove* (put to the trial), *try* (refine). *Reins* (kidneys) and *heart* are the inmost thoughts and feelings (7:9).

> **26:3** *For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.*
>
> **26:4** *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.*
>
> **26:5** *I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.*

For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth. God's loving-kindness is what he keeps in view. **I have not sat with vain persons.** *Men of falsehood*. **neither will I go in with dissemblers.** *Those who hide* what they are. **I have hated the congregation of evil doers.** Compare 1:1, where the blessed man does not sit in the seat of the scornful.

> **26:6** *I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD [Jehovah]:*
>
> **26:7** *That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.*
>
> **26:8** *LORD [Jehovah], I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.*

I will wash mine hands in innocency. As the priests washed before they came to the altar (Ex. 30:19–21; compare Deut. 21:6). **so will I compass thine altar.** Go round it in worship. **That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving. LORD [Jehovah], I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.** *The place of the tabernacle of Thy glory*: the tent David pitched for the Ark on Zion (2 Sam. 6:17), where the glory of God was among His people.

> **26:9** *Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:*
>
> **26:10** *In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.*

Gather not my soul with sinners. *Do not sweep me away with them*, when God gathers the wicked to judgment. **In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.** Their hands are full of evil and of bribes; David's are washed (v. 6).

> **26:11** *But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.*

> **26:12** *My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD [Jehovah].*

But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity. The Psalm ends as it began (v. 1). **redeem me, and be merciful unto me.** Integrity does not remove the need for redemption and mercy. **My foot standeth in an even place.** *Level ground*: firm footing, where he will not slide (v. 1). **in the congregations will I bless the LORD [Jehovah].** In the assemblies: compare 22:22, 25.

Its close

Psalm 26 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 26 is member *Q*, answering to Psalm 17. Both appeal to God's examination. Psalm 17 ended beholding God's face; Psalm 26 ends standing on level ground, blessing Jehovah in the congregations.

Psalm 27 — "Jehovah Is My Light and My Salvation"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *R* (prayer with reference to Psalm 18, with Psalm 28). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. The Septuagint adds "before he was anointed," but that is not in the Hebrew.

Introduction

Psalms 27 and 28 are a pair answering to Psalm 18, where Jehovah was David's rock and deliverer. Psalm 27 opens with confidence (vv. 1–3), and the rest of it is prayer that grows out of that confidence. The heart of it is verse 4: "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life."

Structure

- K^1 | 1–3. Confidence: the basis of the prayer.
- K^2 | 4–14. Prayer resulting from the confidence.
- L | l | 4. Seeking.
- m | 5. Hiding.
- n | 6-. Enemies.
- o | -6. Joy.
- *L* | *l* | 7, 8. Seeking.
- *m* | 9, 10. Hiding.
- *n* | 11, 12. Enemies.
- *o* | 13, 14. Hope.

The first set (4–6) is prayer meditated, spoken of God; the second (7–14) is prayer offered, spoken to Him.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *The LORD [Jehovah] is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD [Jehovah] is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*
>
> **2** *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*
>
> **3** *Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*

> **4** *One thing have I desired of the LORD [Jehovah], that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD [Jehovah], and to enquire in his temple.*
>
> **5** *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*
>
> **6** *And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **7** *Hear, O LORD [Jehovah], when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.*
>
> **8** *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD [Jehovah], will I seek.*
>
> **9** *Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.*
>
> **10** *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD [Jehovah] will take me up.*
>
> **11** *Teach me thy way, O LORD [Jehovah], and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*
>
> **12** *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*
>
> **13** *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD [Jehovah] in the land of the living.*
>
> **14** *Wait on the LORD [Jehovah]: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD [Jehovah].*

Psalm 27 has no sub-scription. Psalm 28 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **27:1** *The LORD [Jehovah] is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD [Jehovah] is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

The LORD [Jehovah] is my light and my salvation. This is the only place in the Old Testament where God is called "my light" in these words (compare Isa. 60:19, 20; Micah 7:8). Light drives out fear; salvation drives out danger. **the LORD [Jehovah] is the strength of my life.** *The stronghold*, the place of refuge. **of whom shall I be afraid?** The figure *Erotesis*: of no one.

> **27:2** *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*
>
> **27:3** *Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*

When the wicked . . . came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Like beasts of prey (compare 14:4). **Though an host should encamp against me . . . in this will I be confident.** *In this*: in what was said in verse 1.

> **27:4** *One thing have I desired of the LORD [Jehovah], that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD [Jehovah], and to enquire in his temple.*

One thing have I desired of the LORD [Jehovah], that will I seek after. (L, l.) Single-minded desire, as Mary chose "that good part" (Luke 10:42) and Paul said "this one thing I do" (Phil. 3:13). **that I may dwell in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] all the days of my life.** Compare 23:6. **to behold the beauty of the LORD [Jehovah].** *The pleasantness*, the delightfulness of Jehovah. **and to enquire in his temple.** *To contemplate*, to consider with admiration. *Temple* (*hêkāl*): palace, here the tent on Zion.

> **27:5** *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion. *His booth*, His covering (m). **in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me. he shall set me up upon a rock.** High out of reach.

> **27:6** *And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD [Jehovah].*

And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me. (n.) **therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy.** *Of shouting*: offerings with shouts of joy (o). **I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD [Jehovah].**

> **27:7** *Hear, O LORD [Jehovah], when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.*
>
> **27:8** *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD [Jehovah], will I seek.*

Hear, O LORD [Jehovah], when I cry with my voice. Now prayer offered (*L*). **When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD [Jehovah], will I seek.** The heart answers God's invitation immediately, word for word.

> **27:9** *Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.*
>
> **27:10** *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD [Jehovah] will take me up.*

Hide not thy face far from me. (*m*.) **When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD [Jehovah] will take me up.** *Will gather me in*, as one takes in a stranger. Even if the closest earthly ties fail, God does not (Isa. 49:15).

> **27:11** *Teach me thy way, O LORD [Jehovah], and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*
>
> **27:12** *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*

Teach me thy way, O LORD [Jehovah], and lead me in a plain path. *A level path* (compare 25:4; 26:12). **because of mine enemies.** *Those who watch me*, waiting for him to stumble. **for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.** As against the Lord Jesus (Matt. 26:59, 60).

> **27:13** *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD [Jehovah] in the land of the living.*

I had fainted, unless I had believed. The words *I had fainted* are supplied; the Hebrew breaks off: "Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living . . . !" The figure *Aposiopesis*: the thought is too terrible to finish. The Masoretes marked the word "unless" with special points, showing they doubted it, and some ancient versions leave it out; but the broken sentence is in keeping with the feeling of the verse. **to see the goodness of the LORD [Jehovah] in the land of the living.** In this life, before he goes down to the grave (compare 116:9).

> **27:14** *Wait on the LORD [Jehovah]: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD [Jehovah].*

Wait on the LORD [Jehovah]: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD [Jehovah]. He speaks to himself (the figure *Apostrophe*). "Wait" opens and closes the verse.

Its close

Psalm 27 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 27, with Psalm 28, is member *R*, answering to Psalm 18. It is the prayer of a confident heart: Jehovah is light, salvation and stronghold, and one thing is desired, to dwell with Him.

Psalm 28 — "Unto Thee Will I Cry, O Jehovah My Rock"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *R* (with Psalm 27). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 28 continues Psalm 27. It begins in prayer and ends in praise, and the turning point is verse 6: "Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications." Its last verse extends the prayer from David to all God's people: "Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever."

Structure

- M | p | 1, 2. Prayer: for audience.
- q | 3. Prayer: for discrimination.
- N | 4, 5. Enemies. Imprecation.
- *M* | *p* | 6. Praise: for audience.
- *q* | 7, 8. Praise: for help.
- *N* | 9. His people. Intercession.

The Companion Bible labels the last member "Enemies. Imprecation," but verse 9 is a prayer for God's people, not against His enemies. The label has been corrected here so that the structure fits the text.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Unto thee will I cry, O LORD [Jehovah] my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.*
>
> **2** *Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.*
>
> **3** *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.*
>
> **4** *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.*
>
> **5** *Because they regard not the works of the LORD [Jehovah], nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*
>
> **6** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah], because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.*

> **7** *The LORD [Jehovah] is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*
>
> **8** *The LORD [Jehovah] is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.*
>
> **9** *Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.*

Psalm 28 has no sub-scription. Psalm 29 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **28:1** *Unto thee will I cry, O LORD [Jehovah] my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.*

Unto thee will I cry, O LORD [Jehovah] my rock. *Tsûr*, as in 18:2. **be not silent to me.** *Deaf*: do not turn a deaf ear. **lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.** The grave. If God does not answer, he is as good as dead.

> **28:2** *Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.*

Hear the voice of my supplications . . . when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle. *Dĕbîr*: the innermost room, the Holy of Holies, where God spoke (1 Kings 6:5, 19). This is the only place in the Psalms where the word occurs.

> **28:3** *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.*

Draw me not away with the wicked. *Do not drag me off* with them (compare 26:9). **which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.** Smooth words, evil hearts (12:2).

> **28:4** *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.*
>
> **28:5** *Because they regard not the works of the LORD [Jehovah], nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*

Give them according to their deeds. (N.) David asks God to do what God has said He will do: render to every man according to his works (62:12; Rom. 2:6). It is the prayer of one who leaves vengeance to God, not one who takes it himself. **Because they regard not the works of the LORD [Jehovah] . . . he shall destroy them, and not build them up.**

> **28:6** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah], because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.*

Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah], because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. The answer to verse 2, in the same words. Prayer becomes praise (*M*).

> **28:7** *The LORD [Jehovah] is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*
>
> **28:8** *The LORD [Jehovah] is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.*

The LORD [Jehovah] is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped. Trust, then help, then joy: **therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. The LORD**

[Jehovah] is their strength. *The strength of His people*: some manuscripts, with the Septuagint and Syriac, read "the strength of His people" (*lĕʿammô*). **and he is the saving strength of his anointed.** *The stronghold of salvation of His Messiah* (compare 20:6).

> **28:9** *Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.*

Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever. *Feed them*: *shepherd them* (as 23:1). *Lift them up*: *carry them*, as a shepherd carries his lambs (Isa. 40:11; 63:9). The prayer that began with one man ends with the whole flock.

Its close

Psalm 28 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalms 27 and 28 together form member *R*, answering to Psalm 18. Jehovah is light (27:1), rock (28:1), strength and shield (28:7), and the Shepherd of His people (28:9). This ends the prayers of the Man (25–28).

Psalm 29 — The Voice of Jehovah

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *S* (His people's praise for God's glory in creation; compare Psalm 19). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** a great storm.

Introduction

Psalm 19 heard God's glory in the silent heavens; Psalm 29 hears it in the thunder. A storm rolls in from the Mediterranean ("upon the waters," v. 3), breaks over the cedars of Lebanon in the north (vv. 5, 6), and passes south to the wilderness of Kadesh (v. 8). Seven times the Psalm says "the voice of the LORD." The name Jehovah occurs eighteen times in eleven verses: four in the opening call (vv. 1, 2) and fourteen in the praise that follows.

The Psalm ends, after all the noise, with one word: "peace" (v. 11).

Structure

- O^1 | 1, 2. The call to praise.
- O^2 | 3–11. Praise rendered.
- P | 3–9-. Jehovah's power in nature.
- Q | -9. In His temple: grace.
- *P* | 10. Jehovah's power in nature: the flood.
- *Q* | 11. To His people: grace.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Give unto the LORD [Jehovah], O ye mighty, give unto the LORD [Jehovah] glory and strength.*
> **2** *Give unto the LORD [Jehovah] the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD [Jehovah] in the beauty of holiness.*
> **3** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD [Jehovah] is upon many waters.*
> **4** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] is powerful; the voice of the LORD [Jehovah] is full of majesty.*
> **5** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.*
> **6** *He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.*
> **7** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] divideth the flames of fire.*
> **8** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] shaketh the wilderness; the LORD [Jehovah] shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.*

> **9** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.*
>
> **10** *The LORD [Jehovah] sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] sitteth King for ever.*
>
> **11** *The LORD [Jehovah] will give strength unto his people; the LORD [Jehovah] will bless his people with peace.*

Psalm 29 has no sub-scription. Psalm 30 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David."

Verse by verse

> **29:1** *Give unto the LORD [Jehovah], O ye mighty, give unto the LORD [Jehovah] glory and strength.*
>
> **29:2** *Give unto the LORD [Jehovah] the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD [Jehovah] in the beauty of holiness.*

Give unto the LORD [Jehovah], O ye mighty. *Sons of the mighty* (*bĕnê ʾēlîm*): the great ones, perhaps the angels (compare 89:6). The figure *Anaphora*: "Give unto Jehovah" three times. **Worship the LORD [Jehovah] in the beauty of holiness.** *In holy array*, as the priests in their garments "for glory and for beauty" (Ex. 28:2).

> **29:3** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD [Jehovah] is upon many waters.*
>
> **29:4** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] is powerful; the voice of the LORD [Jehovah] is full of majesty.*

The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] is upon the waters. Thunder is God's voice (18:13; Job 37:2–5). *The waters* are the Mediterranean. **the God of glory thundereth.** *El*. **the voice of the LORD [Jehovah] is powerful . . . full of majesty.**

> **29:5** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.*
>
> **29:6** *He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.*

The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The strongest trees are split by the lightning. **He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.** The mountains themselves seem to leap. *Sirion* is Mount Hermon (Deut. 3:9). *Unicorn*: the wild ox (as 22:21).

> **29:7** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] divideth the flames of fire.*

The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] divideth the flames of fire. *Cleaves out* flames: the forked lightning.

> **29:8** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] shaketh the wilderness; the LORD [Jehovah] shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.*

The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] shaketh the wilderness; the LORD [Jehovah] shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The storm has passed from the far north to the far south.

> **29:9** *The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.*

The voice of the LORD [Jehovah] maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests. *Strips the forests bare.* **and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.** *In His palace everything says, "Glory!"* While the storm rages on earth, in God's heavenly palace all cry "Glory" (Q).

> **29:10** *The LORD [Jehovah] sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] sitteth King for ever.*

The LORD [Jehovah] sitteth upon the flood. *Sat* (enthroned) *at the Flood*. The word *mabbûl* is used elsewhere only of Noah's Flood (Gen. 6–11). Jehovah was King then, over the greatest storm of all. **yea, the LORD [Jehovah] sitteth King for ever.**

> **29:11** *The LORD [Jehovah] will give strength unto his people; the LORD [Jehovah] will bless his people with peace.*

The LORD [Jehovah] will give strength unto his people; the LORD [Jehovah] will bless his people with peace. The God of the storm is the God who gives strength and peace to His own (*Q*). Compare the Lord Jesus, who stilled the storm with a word (Mark 4:39).

Its close

Psalm 29 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 29 is member *S*, answering to Psalm 19. There God's glory was declared in silence; here it thunders. Both end with God's own people: "thy servant" (19:11–14) and "his people" (29:11).

Psalm 30 — "Thou Hast Turned My Mourning into Dancing"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *T*[1] (His people's praise in view of Psalm 20). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "the dedication of the house of David" (Title).

Introduction

The Title connects this Psalm with the dedication of David's own house, the cedar palace built for him by Hiram's workmen (2 Sam. 5:11; 7:1, 2), not the Temple, which was built after David's death. The Psalm itself tells of a time when David was secure ("I shall never be moved," v. 6), then brought near to death (vv. 2, 3, 9), and then healed. He praises God that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (v. 5).

Psalms 30–33 form member *T*, the praise of God's people as they see the answer to the prayer of Psalm 20.

Structure

- T | 1-. Thanksgiving promised.
- U | t | -1, 2. David's cry to Jehovah.
- u | 3. The relief obtained.
- v | 4. Songs of praise.
- V | 5. Joy succeeds weeping.
- *V* | 6, 7. Prosperity precedes trouble.
- *U* | *t* | 8–10. David's cry to Jehovah.
- *u* | 11. The relief obtained.
- *v* | 12-. Songs of praise.
- *T* | -12. Thanksgiving promised.

The Psalm

A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David.

> **1** *I will extol thee, O LORD [Jehovah]; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.*
>
> **2** *O LORD [Jehovah] my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.*
>
> **3** *O LORD [Jehovah], thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.*

> **4** *Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*
>
> **5** *For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*
>
> **6** *And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.*
>
> **7** *LORD [Jehovah], by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*
>
> **8** *I cried to thee, O LORD [Jehovah]; and unto the LORD [Jehovah] I made supplication.*
>
> **9** *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?*
>
> **10** *Hear, O LORD [Jehovah], and have mercy upon me: LORD [Jehovah], be thou my helper.*
>
> **11** *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;*
>
> **12** *To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD [Jehovah] my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 31.

Verse by verse

> **30:1** *I will extol thee, O LORD [Jehovah]; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.*

I will extol thee, O LORD [Jehovah]; for thou hast lifted me up. *Drawn me up*, as a bucket is drawn from a well. **and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.**

> **30:2** *O LORD [Jehovah] my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.*
>
> **30:3** *O LORD [Jehovah], thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.*

O LORD [Jehovah] my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. thou hast brought up my soul from the grave. *From Sheol*: he had been as good as dead. **thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.** Some manuscripts read "from among them that go down to the pit."

> **30:4** *Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*

Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], O ye saints of his. *His favoured ones*, those who have received His loving-kindness. **give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.** *To His holy memorial*: His holy name (Ex. 3:15).

> **30:5** *For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life. *A moment is in His anger; a lifetime in His favour.* **weeping may endure for a night.** *May lodge* for the night, like a traveller who moves on in the morning. **but joy cometh in the morning.** *A shout of joy.*

> **30:6** *And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.*
>
> **30:7** *LORD [Jehovah], by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. David's self-confidence. **LORD [Jehovah], by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong.** *Zion*, his stronghold. **thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.** His security was God's favour, not his mountain.

> **30:8** *I cried to thee, O LORD [Jehovah]; and unto the LORD [Jehovah] I made supplication.*
>
> **30:9** *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?*
>
> **30:10** *Hear, O LORD [Jehovah], and have mercy upon me: LORD [Jehovah], be thou my helper.*

I cried to thee, O LORD [Jehovah]; and unto the LORD [Jehovah] I made supplication. The second "LORD" in this verse is one of the places where the scribes changed "Jehovah" to "Adonai"; some manuscripts still read "Jehovah." **What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?** In death there is no praise (6:5; 88:10–12; Isa. 38:18). The dead are silent in the grave; that is why David pleads to live. **Hear, O LORD [Jehovah], and have mercy upon me.**

> **30:11** *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;*

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing. thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness. Sackcloth was the dress of mourning; it is loosed, and he is clothed with joy instead.

> **30:12** *To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD [Jehovah] my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*

To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. *My glory*: my soul (as 16:9). The living praise God, as the dead cannot (v. 9). **O LORD [Jehovah] my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 31 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 30. A Psalm written for a particular occasion, the dedication of David's house, was handed to the chief musician for use in public worship.

Looking back

Psalm 30 is member T^1. It moves, like the whole division, from distress to deliverance, from night to morning.

Psalm 31 — "Into Thine Hand I Commit My Spirit"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member T^2. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. Verse 13, "fear was on every side," fits the days of Saul's pursuit; Jeremiah uses the same phrase (Jer. 20:10).

Introduction

On the cross, the last words of the Lord Jesus were taken from this Psalm: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46; Ps. 31:5). The Psalm alternates between prayer and praise. It twice asks "let me not be ashamed" (vv. 1, 17), twice gives the reason "For . . ." (vv. 3, 9), and twice ends in praise for blessing received (vv. 7, 8 and 19–24).

Structure

- W | Y | 1, 2. "Let me not be ashamed." "Thine ear."
- Z | A | 3, 4. The reason: "For . . ." (three times).
- B | w | 5. "Into thine hand."
- x | 6. "I trust."
- X | 7, 8. Praise for benefits received.
- *W* | *Z* | *A* | 9–13. The reason: "For . . ." (three times).
- *B* | *x* | 14. "I trusted."
- *w* | 15. "In thy hand."
- *Y* | 16–18. "Let me not be ashamed." "Thy face."
- *X* | 19–24. Praise for benefits received.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *In thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.*
> **2** *Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.*
> **3** *For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.*
> **4** *Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.*
> **5** *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD [Jehovah] God of truth.*
> **6** *I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **7** *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;*

> **8** *And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.*
>
> **9** *Have mercy upon me, O LORD [Jehovah], for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.*
>
> **10** *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.*
>
> **11** *I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.*
>
> **12** *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.*
>
> **13** *For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.*
>
> **14** *But I trusted in thee, O LORD [Jehovah]: I said, Thou art my God.*
>
> **15** *My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.*
>
> **16** *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.*
>
> **17** *Let me not be ashamed, O LORD [Jehovah]; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.*
>
> **18** *Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*
>
> **19** *Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!*
>
> **20** *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*
>
> **21** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah]: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.*
>
> **22** *For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.*
>
> **23** *O love the LORD [Jehovah], all ye his saints: for the LORD [Jehovah] preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.*
>
> **24** *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD [Jehovah].*

Psalm 31 has no sub-scription. Psalm 32 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David, Maschil."

Verse by verse

> **31:1** *In thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.*
>
> **31:2** *Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.*

In thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I put my trust. *I have fled for refuge.* **let me never be ashamed.** Verses 1–3 are almost the same as 71:1–3. **bow down thine ear to me. be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.** *A house of fortresses.*

> **31:3** *For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.*
>
> **31:4** *Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.*

For thou art my rock and my fortress. The first "For" (A). **therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.**

> **31:5** *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD [Jehovah] God of truth.*

Into thine hand I commit my spirit. *Rûaḥ*: the breath of life, which God gave and to which a man has no claim except as God keeps it. David entrusted his life to God's keeping. The Lord Jesus, dying, used these words of His last breath: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46). He committed His life to the Father, to be given back in resurrection. Stephen did the same (Acts 7:59), and Peter tells believers to "commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Pet. 4:19). **thou hast redeemed me, O LORD [Jehovah] God of truth.** *El* of truth: the faithful God, who keeps what is entrusted to Him.

> **31:6** *I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD [Jehovah].*

I have hated them that regard lying vanities. *Vanities of falsehood*: idols (Jonah 2:8). Some manuscripts, with the Septuagint, read "Thou hatest." **but I trust in the LORD [Jehovah].**

> **31:7** *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;*
>
> **31:8** *And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.*

I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. (X.) **thou hast known my soul in adversities.** God took notice of him in his troubles. **thou hast set my feet in a large room.** Room, the opposite of distress (18:19).

> **31:9** *Have mercy upon me, O LORD [Jehovah], for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.*
>
> **31:10** *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.*
>
> **31:11** *I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.*
>
> **31:12** *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.*
>
> **31:13** *For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.*

Have mercy upon me, O LORD [Jehovah], for I am in trouble. The second set of reasons (*A*). His eye, soul and body are wasted with grief (v. 9); his life is spent with sorrow and his strength fails *because of mine iniquity* (v. 10). He is a reproach among his enemies, a fear to his acquaintance; **I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel** (v. 12). **fear was on every side** (v. 13): *Magor-missabib*, the very name Jeremiah gave to Pashur (Jer. 20:3, 10). **they devised to take away my life.**

> **31:14** *But I trusted in thee, O LORD [Jehovah]: I said, Thou art my God.*
>
> **31:15** *My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.*

But I trusted in thee, O LORD [Jehovah]: I said, Thou art my God. (*x*.) **My times are in thy hand.** (*w*.) All the events of his life, its seasons and its length, are in God's hand. The same hand that receives the spirit (v. 5) holds the times. **deliver me from the hand of mine enemies.**

> **31:16** *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.*
>
> **31:17** *Let me not be ashamed, O LORD [Jehovah]; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.*
>
> **31:18** *Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. The priestly blessing (Num. 6:25). **Let me not be ashamed . . . let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.** *In Sheol*. **Let the lying lips be put to silence.**

> **31:19** *Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!*
>
> **31:20** *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*
>
> **31:21** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah]: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.*
>
> **31:22** *For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.*
>
> **31:23** *O love the LORD [Jehovah], all ye his saints: for the LORD [Jehovah] preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.*
>
> **31:24** *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD [Jehovah].*

Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee. (*X*.) God's goodness is stored up, like treasure. **Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man** (v. 20). **Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah]: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city** (v. 21). **For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest** (v. 22): he had spoken too soon, in alarm, and God heard him anyway. **O love the LORD [Jehovah], all ye his saints** (v. 23). **Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD [Jehovah]** (v. 24). What David said to himself in 27:14, he now says to all.

Its close

Psalm 31 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 31 is member T^2. It is the Psalm of trust in God's hand: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit" (v. 5), "My times are in thy hand" (v. 15). The Lord Jesus made its words His own at His death, and God, into whose hand He committed His life, raised Him from the dead.

Psalm 32 — "Blessed Is He Whose Transgression Is Forgiven"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member T^3. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** his confession after his sin with Bathsheba, it seems (2 Sam. 12:13; compare Psalm 51).

Introduction

Psalm 32 is the first of thirteen Psalms called *Maschil*, "giving instruction" (Part One, Chapter 1; the others are 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89 and 142). Its instruction is how a sinner is forgiven. Paul quoted its first two verses to show that righteousness is reckoned by God apart from works: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. 4:6–8).

Psalm 1 began with "Blessed is the man" who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Psalm 32 begins with a second blessing, for the man who has sinned and been forgiven.

Structure

- C | y | 1, 2-. The justified.
- z | -2. The sanctified.
- D | a | 3, 4. Trouble. (David speaks.)
- b | 5–7. Deliverance. (David speaks.)
- E | 8. Promise. (God speaks.)
- *E* | 9. Injunction. (God speaks.)
- *D* | *a* | 10-. Trouble. (David speaks.)
- *b* | -10. Deliverance. (David speaks.)
- *C* | *y* | 11-. The justified.
- *z* | -11. The sanctified.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David, Maschil.

> **1** *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*
>
> **2** *Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD [Jehovah] imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*
>
> **3** *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

> **4** *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.*
>
> **5** *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD [Jehovah]; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*
>
> **6** *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*
>
> **7** *Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.*
>
> **8** *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*
>
> **9** *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*
>
> **10** *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD [Jehovah], mercy shall compass him about.*
>
> **11** *Be glad in the LORD [Jehovah], and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*

Psalm 32 has no sub-scription. Psalm 33 has no super-scription.

Verse by verse

> **32:1** *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

Blessed is he. *Oh the happiness of* (as 1:1). **whose transgression is forgiven.** *Transgression* (*pesha*ʿ): rebellion. *Forgiven*: *lifted off*, carried away, as the scapegoat carried away Israel's sins (Lev. 16:22). **whose sin is covered.** *Sin* (*ḥăṭāʾāh*): missing the mark. *Covered*: hidden from God's sight, atoned for.

> **32:2** *Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD [Jehovah] imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD [Jehovah] imputeth not iniquity. *Iniquity* (*ʿāwōn*): perversity, crookedness. *Imputeth not*: does not reckon it to his account. Three words for sin (transgression, sin, iniquity) and three for forgiveness (lifted off, covered, not reckoned). **and in whose spirit there is no guile.** No deceit: he has stopped hiding. This is the sanctified man (z): the forgiven sinner who no longer covers up.

> **32:3** *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*
>
> **32:4** *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.*

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. While he hid his sin, it wasted him (a). **For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.** His strength dried up like the land in summer heat. **Selah.**

> **32:5** *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD [Jehovah]; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD [Jehovah]; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. All three words for sin again. As soon as he said "I will confess," God forgave. Compare 2 Sam. 12:13: "I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin." **Selah.**

> **32:6** *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*
>
> **32:7** *Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.*

For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found. *Godly* (*ḥāsîd*): one who has received God's loving-kindness. **surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place . . . thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.** He who once hid his sin now hides in God. **Selah.**

> **32:8** *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Now God speaks (E). *With mine eye upon thee*: God's watchful counsel.

> **32:9** *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*

Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding. The injunction (*E*). **whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.** *Else they will not come near thee.* God would rather lead by His eye than drive by the bridle.

> **32:10** *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD [Jehovah], mercy shall compass him about.*

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD [Jehovah], mercy shall compass him about. Sorrow surrounds the one; loving-kindness the other (compare v. 7).

> **32:11** *Be glad in the LORD [Jehovah], and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*

Be glad in the LORD [Jehovah], and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart. The justified and the sanctified. Psalm 33 opens with the same call.

Its close

Psalm 32 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 32 is member T^3. It teaches the way of forgiveness: confess and be forgiven; reckoned righteous not by works but by God's gift. In the Grace Administration this is the righteousness of God by faith of

Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21–26; 4:6–8), "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).

Psalm 33 — "Rejoice in Jehovah, O Ye Righteous"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member T^4. **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 33 has no title. It takes up the last words of Psalm 32 ("Be glad in the LORD . . . ye righteous") and turns them into a new song of praise. It praises Jehovah as the Creator who made the heavens by His word (v. 6) and as the Ruler whose counsel stands for ever (v. 11), who looks on all mankind (vv. 13–15), and whose eye is upon those who fear Him (v. 18).

Structure

- F^1 | 1–9. Exhortation to praise Jehovah.
- G | 1–3. Exhortation to the righteous to praise.
- H | 4–7. The reason: "For . . ." (His word and works).
- *G* | 8. Exhortation to all to fear Jehovah.
- *H* | 9. The reason: "For . . ." (His word and works).
- F^2 | 10–22. Declarations concerning Jehovah.
- J | 10, 11. Mankind's relation to Jehovah.
- K | 12. Jehovah's relation to His people.
- *J* | 13–17. Results of J.
- *K* | 18–22. Results of K.

The Psalm

> **1** *Rejoice in the LORD [Jehovah], O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.*
> **2** *Praise the LORD [Jehovah] with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.*
> **3** *Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.*
> **4** *For the word of the LORD [Jehovah] is right; and all his works are done in truth.*
> **5** *He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **6** *By the word of the LORD [Jehovah] were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*
> **7** *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.*
> **8** *Let all the earth fear the LORD [Jehovah]: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.*
> **9** *For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

> **10** *The LORD [Jehovah] bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.*
>
> **11** *The counsel of the LORD [Jehovah] standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*
>
> **12** *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD [Jehovah]; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.*
>
> **13** *The LORD [Jehovah] looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.*
>
> **14** *From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.*
>
> **15** *He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.*
>
> **16** *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.*
>
> **17** *An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.*
>
> **18** *Behold, the eye of the LORD [Jehovah] is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;*
>
> **19** *To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.*
>
> **20** *Our soul waiteth for the LORD [Jehovah]: he is our help and our shield.*
>
> **21** *For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.*
>
> **22** *Let thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], be upon us, according as we hope in thee.*

Psalm 33 has no sub-scription. Psalm 34 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed."

Verse by verse

> **33:1** *Rejoice in the LORD [Jehovah], O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.*
>
> **33:2** *Praise the LORD [Jehovah] with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.*
>
> **33:3** *Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.*

Rejoice in the LORD [Jehovah], O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. *Fitting.* **Praise the LORD [Jehovah] with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song.** The first of six "new songs" in the Psalms (33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1); compare Isa. 42:10 and Rev. 5:9; 14:3. **play skilfully with a loud noise.** *With a shout.*

> **33:4** *For the word of the LORD [Jehovah] is right; and all his works are done in truth.*
>
> **33:5** *He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD [Jehovah].*

For the word of the LORD [Jehovah] is right; and all his works are done in truth. *In faithfulness.* **He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD [Jehovah].** *Loving-kindness.*

> **33:6** *By the word of the LORD [Jehovah] were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

> **33:7** *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.*

By the word of the LORD [Jehovah] were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. Creation by God's spoken word (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9; Heb. 11:3; 2 Pet. 3:5). *Breath* (*rûaḥ*): the word and breath are one act of speaking. **He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap.** As at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:8). **he layeth up the depth in storehouses.**

> **33:8** *Let all the earth fear the LORD [Jehovah]: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.*
>
> **33:9** *For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

Let all the earth fear the LORD [Jehovah]. (*G.*) **For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.** Nine words in Hebrew for the whole of creation.

> **33:10** *The LORD [Jehovah] bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.*
>
> **33:11** *The counsel of the LORD [Jehovah] standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*

The LORD [Jehovah] bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought. Nations plan; God frustrates (2:1–4). **The counsel of the LORD [Jehovah] standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.**

> **33:12** *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD [Jehovah]; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.*

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD [Jehovah]; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. Israel (Deut. 7:6).

> **33:13** *The LORD [Jehovah] looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.*
>
> **33:14** *From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.*
>
> **33:15** *He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.*
>
> **33:16** *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.*
>
> **33:17** *An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.*

The LORD [Jehovah] looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. He fashioneth their hearts alike. *He who formed the hearts of them all*, and so knows them. **There is no king saved by the multitude of an host . . . An horse is a vain thing for safety.** Compare 20:7.

> **33:18** *Behold, the eye of the LORD [Jehovah] is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;*
>
> **33:19** *To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.*
>
> **33:20** *Our soul waiteth for the LORD [Jehovah]: he is our help and our shield.*
>
> **33:21** *For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.*
>
> **33:22** *Let thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], be upon us, according as we hope in thee.*

Behold, the eye of the LORD [Jehovah] is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy. God's eye on the whole world (v. 13) rests specially on His own. **To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the LORD [Jehovah]: he is our help and our shield . . . Let thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], be upon us, according as we hope in thee.**

Its close

Psalm 33 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 33 completes member *T* (Psalms 30–33), the praise of God's people as they see the answer to the prayer of Psalm 20. In Psalm 20 they said, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses" (20:7); in Psalm 33 they have learned that "An horse is a vain thing for safety" (33:17), and that their help is Jehovah.

Psalm 34 — "O Taste and See That Jehovah Is Good"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *U* (His people's exultation, in view of Psalm 21). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed" (Title; 1 Sam. 21:10–22:1).

Introduction

Fleeing from Saul, David went to Achish, king of Gath. When the servants of Achish recognised him, he was afraid and pretended to be mad, and was driven away. He escaped to the cave of Adullam, where his family and four hundred men gathered to him (1 Sam. 21:10–22:2). *Abimelech* ("my father the king") was the royal title of the Philistine kings, as Pharaoh was of Egypt's; Achish was his personal name.

The Psalm is an acrostic, the third in the Psalter. As in Psalm 25, *Waw* is missing and an extra verse beginning with *Pe* closes it (v. 22). It has two halves: praise (vv. 1–10) and instruction (vv. 11–22). Peter quoted it twice (1 Pet. 2:3; 3:10–12), and John saw verse 20 fulfilled at the cross (John 19:36).

Structure

- L^1 | 1–10. Praise.
- M | c | 1, 2. The oppressed: "I" and "they."
- d | 3. Invitation: "O magnify." "Ye."
- N | 4. Acknowledgment: "I."
- *M* | *c* | 5–7. The oppressed: "I" and "they."
- *d* | 8–10. Invitation: "O taste and see." "Ye."
- L^2 | 11–22. Instruction.
- e^1 | 11–15. The righteous.
- f^1 | 16. The evil-doers.
- e^2 | 17–20. The righteous.
- f^2 | 21. The evil-doers.
- e^3 | 22. The righteous.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

> **1** *I will bless the LORD [Jehovah] at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*
> **2** *My soul shall make her boast in the LORD [Jehovah]: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.*

> **3** *O magnify the LORD [Jehovah] with me, and let us exalt his name together.*
>
> **4** *I sought the LORD [Jehovah], and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*
>
> **5** *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.*
>
> **6** *This poor man cried, and the LORD [Jehovah] heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*
>
> **7** *The angel of the LORD [Jehovah] encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*
>
> **8** *O taste and see that the LORD [Jehovah] is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*
>
> **9** *O fear the LORD [Jehovah], ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.*
>
> **10** *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD [Jehovah] shall not want any good thing.*
>
> **11** *Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **12** *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?*
>
> **13** *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*
>
> **14** *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*
>
> **15** *The eyes of the LORD [Jehovah] are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*
>
> **16** *The face of the LORD [Jehovah] is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*
>
> **17** *The righteous cry, and the LORD [Jehovah] heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*
>
> **18** *The LORD [Jehovah] is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*
>
> **19** *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD [Jehovah] delivereth him out of them all.*
>
> **20** *He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*
>
> **21** *Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*
>
> **22** *The LORD [Jehovah] redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

Psalm 34 has no sub-scription. Psalm 35 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **34:1** *I will bless the LORD [Jehovah] at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*
>
> **34:2** *My soul shall make her boast in the LORD [Jehovah]: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.*
>
> **34:3** *O magnify the LORD [Jehovah] with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

I will bless the LORD [Jehovah] at all times. Even after the humiliation at Gath. **My soul shall make her boast in the LORD [Jehovah]: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.** The *afflicted* hear and take heart. **O magnify the LORD [Jehovah] with me, and let us exalt his name together.**

> **34:4** *I sought the LORD [Jehovah], and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

I sought the LORD [Jehovah], and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. At Gath David "was sore afraid" (1 Sam. 21:12). He acknowledges that God, not his own cleverness, delivered him (N).

> **34:5** *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.*
>
> **34:6** *This poor man cried, and the LORD [Jehovah] heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*
>
> **34:7** *The angel of the LORD [Jehovah] encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

They looked unto him, and were lightened. *Were radiant*: their faces shone. **and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD [Jehovah] heard him.** David points to himself. **The angel of the LORD [Jehovah] encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.** In the Psalms "the angel of the LORD" appears only here and in 35:5, 6. *Encampeth*: as the angel host at Mahanaim, "God's host," that met Jacob (Gen. 32:1, 2), and the horses and chariots of fire round Elisha (2 Kings 6:17).

> **34:8** *O taste and see that the LORD [Jehovah] is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*
>
> **34:9** *O fear the LORD [Jehovah], ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.*
>
> **34:10** *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD [Jehovah] shall not want any good thing.*

O taste and see that the LORD [Jehovah] is good. Experience it for yourselves. Peter wrote, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Pet. 2:3). **blessed is the man that trusteth in him.** *Takes refuge in Him.* **O fear the LORD [Jehovah], ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.** Compare 23:1. **The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD [Jehovah] shall not want any good thing.** Even the strongest beasts go hungry.

> **34:11** *Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **34:12** *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?*
>
> **34:13** *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*
>
> **34:14** *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD [Jehovah]. The second half, instruction (L^2), as a teacher to his pupils. **What man is he that desireth life . . . that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil . . . Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.** Peter quoted verses 12–16 to teach believers how to live among those who oppose them (1 Pet. 3:10–12). David's own tongue had been put to a hard test at Gath.

> **34:15** *The eyes of the LORD [Jehovah] are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*
>
> **34:16** *The face of the LORD [Jehovah] is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

The eyes of the LORD [Jehovah] are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the LORD [Jehovah] is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. His eyes toward the one, His face against the other.

> **34:17** *The righteous cry, and the LORD [Jehovah] heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*
>
> **34:18** *The LORD [Jehovah] is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*
>
> **34:19** *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD [Jehovah] delivereth him out of them all.*

The righteous cry, and the LORD [Jehovah] heareth. "The righteous" is supplied; the Hebrew says simply *They cry*. **The LORD [Jehovah] is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.** *Crushed in spirit*. **Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD [Jehovah] delivereth him out of them all.** The righteous are not spared afflictions; they are delivered out of them.

> **34:20** *He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*

He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. When the soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves, they found the Lord Jesus already dead and did not break His. "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:36; compare Ex. 12:46, of the Passover lamb). The righteous one of verse 19, delivered out of all His afflictions, is in the fullest sense the Son, who was raised from the dead.

> **34:21** *Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*
>
> **34:22** *The LORD [Jehovah] redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

Evil shall slay the wicked. Their own evil destroys them. **and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.** *Held guilty*. **The LORD [Jehovah] redeemeth the soul of his servants.** The extra *Pe* verse, as in 25:22. **and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.** Shall not be held guilty: those who take refuge in Him are acquitted.

Its close

Psalm 34 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 34 is member *U*, the exultation of God's people, answering to Psalm 21. In Psalm 21 they rejoiced in the king's crowning; in Psalm 34 they rejoice in the deliverance of the righteous one, whose bones are kept. This ends the people's praise (29–34).

Psalm 35 — "Plead My Cause, O Jehovah"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *V*, with Psalm 36 (Messiah's prayer and praise in view of Psalm 22). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named. The false witnesses and the friends who repaid good with evil (vv. 11–16) fit the days of Saul's court (1 Sam. 24; 26).

Introduction

Psalm 35 is the prayer of a man repaid evil for good. He had prayed and fasted for his enemies when they were sick (v. 13); when he stumbled, they gathered and mocked him (v. 15). The Lord Jesus applied verse 19 to Himself: "They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25). The Psalm answers to Psalm 22: the false witnesses, the mockers who "gnashed upon me with their teeth" (v. 16), and the hatred without cause belong to His sufferings.

It is one of the Psalms that ask God to act against enemies (vv. 4–8, 26). These prayers are discussed in Part One. David asks God to do what God has said He will do, and does not take vengeance himself (v. 1; compare 1 Sam. 24:12).

Structure

- O | g | 1–3. Appeal for help.
- h | 4–8. Imprecation.
- i | 9, 10. Praise.
- P | 11. Evil-doers: their words.
- Q | 12. Their evil for good.
- R | 13. His good for evil.
- *R* | 14. His good for evil.
- *Q* | 15. Their evil for good.
- *P* | 16. Evil-doers: their words.
- *O* | *g* | 17, 18. Appeal for help.
- *h* | 19–26. Deprecation.
- *i* | 27, 28. Praise.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Plead my cause, O LORD [Jehovah], with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.*

2 *Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.*

3 *Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*

4 *Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.*

5 *Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD [Jehovah] chase them.*

6 *Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD [Jehovah] persecute them.*

7 *For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.*

8 *Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.*

9 *And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD [Jehovah]: it shall rejoice in his salvation.*

10 *All my bones shall say, LORD [Jehovah], who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?*

11 *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.*

12 *They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.*

13 *But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.*

14 *I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.*

15 *But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not:*

16 *With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.*

17 *Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.*

18 *I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.*

19 *Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.*

20 *For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.*

21 *Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.*

22 *This thou hast seen, O LORD [Jehovah]: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.*

23 *Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.*

24 *Judge me, O LORD [Jehovah] my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.*

25 *Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.*

> **26** *Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.*
>
> **27** *Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD [Jehovah] be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*
>
> **28** *And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 36.

Verse by verse

> **35:1** *Plead my cause, O LORD [Jehovah], with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.*
>
> **35:2** *Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.*
>
> **35:3** *Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*

Plead my cause, O LORD [Jehovah], with them that strive with me. *Contend with my contenders*: a word used of a legal case. **fight against them that fight against me.** The case moves from the courtroom to the battlefield. **Take hold of shield and buckler . . . Draw out also the spear, and stop the way.** The figure *Anthropopatheia*: God pictured as a warrior. *Stop the way* may be read "and the battle-axe." **say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.** One word from God is enough.

> **35:4** *Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.*
>
> **35:5** *Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD [Jehovah] chase them.*
>
> **35:6** *Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD [Jehovah] persecute them.*
>
> **35:7** *For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.*
>
> **35:8** *Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.*

Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul. (h.) **Let them be as chaff before the wind** (as 1:4): **and let the angel of the LORD [Jehovah] chase them . . . let their way be dark and slippery, and let the angel of the LORD [Jehovah] persecute them. For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit . . . Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself** (as 7:15, 16; 9:15).

> **35:9** *And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD [Jehovah]: it shall rejoice in his salvation.*
>
> **35:10** *All my bones shall say, LORD [Jehovah], who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?*

And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD [Jehovah]. (i.) **All my bones shall say, LORD [Jehovah], who is like unto thee.** His whole being praises God (compare 34:20). **which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him.** David from Saul; the Lord from death (compare 18:17).

> **35:11** *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.*
>
> **35:12** *They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.*
>
> **35:13** *But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.*
>
> **35:14** *I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.*
>
> **35:15** *But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not:*
>
> **35:16** *With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.*

False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. At His trial "many bare false witness against him" (Mark 14:56). **They rewarded me evil for good** (v. 12). **But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom** (v. 13): he prayed for them with bowed head, and his prayer came back to him. **I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother** (v. 14). **But in mine adversity they rejoiced . . . the abjects gathered themselves together against me . . . they did tear me, and ceased not** (v. 15): *the smiters*, the lowest of men. **With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth** (v. 16).

> **35:17** *Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.*
>
> **35:18** *I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.*

Lord, how long wilt thou look on? *Adonai*. This is one of the places where the scribes changed "Jehovah" to "Adonai" (also v. 22). **rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.** *My only one*: my life (as 22:20, 21). **I will give thee thanks in the great congregation** (as 22:22, 25).

> **35:19** *Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.*
>
> **35:20** *For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.*
>
> **35:21** *Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.*

Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause. The Lord Jesus said, "this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25; also Ps. 69:4). The same word is used by Paul: we are "justified freely by his grace" (Rom. 3:24): *freely*, without cause on our side. **They opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.** Gloating.

> **35:22** *This thou hast seen, O LORD [Jehovah]: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.*

> **35:23** *Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.*
>
> **35:24** *Judge me, O LORD [Jehovah] my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.*
>
> **35:25** *Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.*
>
> **35:26** *Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.*

This thou hast seen, O LORD [Jehovah]: keep not silence. They said "our eye hath seen it"; but God has seen too. **Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.** *My Elohim and my Adonai.* **Judge me, O LORD [Jehovah] my God, according to thy righteousness** (v. 24). **Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up** (v. 25). **Let them be ashamed . . . let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me** (v. 26).

> **35:27** *Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD [Jehovah] be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*
>
> **35:28** *And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.*

Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause. (*i.*) **Let the LORD [Jehovah] be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.** *In the peace of His servant.* **And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 36 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 35.

Looking back

Psalm 35 is the first part of member *V*, answering to Psalm 22. It is the prayer of the one hated without a cause, who returned good for evil and committed His cause to God.

Psalm 36 — "With Thee Is the Fountain of Life"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *V* (with Psalm 35). **Writer:** David, "the servant of the LORD" (Title). **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

David is called "the servant of the LORD" only here and in the Title of Psalm 18. The Psalm sets two things side by side: the wickedness of the wicked man (vv. 1–4) and the loving-kindness of Jehovah (vv. 5–9). Then it prays that the loving-kindness may continue to those who know God (v. 10), and sees the wicked fallen (vv. 11, 12). Paul quoted verse 1 among the texts that show "there is none righteous" (Rom. 3:18).

Structure

- S | 1–4. The wicked: their misdeeds.
- T | 5–9. The lovingkindness of Jehovah. Declaration.
- *T* | 10. The lovingkindness of Jehovah. Prayer.
- *S* | 11, 12. The wicked: their end.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD [Jehovah].

> **1** *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*
> **2** *For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.*
> **3** *The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.*
> **4** *He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.*
> **5** *Thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.*
> **6** *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD [Jehovah], thou preservest man and beast.*
> **7** *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*
> **8** *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.*
> **9** *For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.*
> **10** *O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.*

> **11** *Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.*
>
> **12** *There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.*

Psalm 36 has no sub-scription. Psalm 37 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **36:1** *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*

The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart. The Hebrew begins: *An oracle of transgression to the wicked within his heart*. Rebellion speaks to the wicked man like a prophet's oracle. Some manuscripts, with the Septuagint and Syriac, read "his heart." **that there is no fear of God before his eyes.** Paul quotes this (Rom. 3:18).

> **36:2** *For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.*
>
> **36:3** *The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.*
>
> **36:4** *He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.*

For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. He deceives himself until his sin is found out. **The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good. He deviseth mischief upon his bed.** Contrast the man of Psalm 4:4, who communes with his heart upon his bed. **he abhorreth not evil.**

> **36:5** *Thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.*
>
> **36:6** *Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD [Jehovah], thou preservest man and beast.*

Thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Loving-kindness, faithfulness, righteousness, judgment: four attributes, measured by the heavens, the clouds, the mountains, and the deep. **Thy righteousness is like the great mountains.** *The mountains of El*: the mightiest mountains. **thy judgments are a great deep. O LORD [Jehovah], thou preservest man and beast.**

> **36:7** *How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*
>
> **36:8** *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.*
>
> **36:9** *For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.*

How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings (as 17:8). **They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.** *Of Thy Edens*: the word is *ʿădānêkā*, the plural of Eden, the garden with its river (Gen. 2:10). **For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.** Life and light come from God alone. The Lord Jesus spoke of the "living water" (John 4:10, 14)

and said "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). John wrote, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

> **36:10** *O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.*

O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee. *Prolong it*, draw it out. (*T.*)

> **36:11** *Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.*
> **36:12** *There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.*

Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me. There are the workers of iniquity fallen. *There*: the Psalmist points, as though he sees it. **they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.**

Its close

Psalm 36 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalms 35 and 36 together form member *V*, answering to Psalm 22. The one hated without a cause (35) finds in God the fountain of life (36). In the light of God, those who trust Him see light.

Psalm 37 — "Fret Not Thyself Because of Evildoers"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *W* (instruction as to present blessing, in view of Psalm 23). **Writer:** David, "now . . . old" (v. 25). **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 37 is an acrostic, the fourth in the Psalter, built mostly of four-line stanzas, one for each letter. It is not a prayer but teaching: an old man's instruction to those troubled by the prosperity of the wicked. Its theme is in its first line, "Fret not," and its answer in the repeated promise, "shall inherit the earth" (vv. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34). The Lord Jesus took verse 11 into the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

It answers to Psalm 23. There the Shepherd leads His flock; here the flock is taught how to walk while the wicked prosper.

As Psalm 37 is long, the commentary takes it in groups of verses, giving more space to what it teaches.

Structure

- U^1 | 1–11. Admonitions and reasons.
- V^1 | 12–26. Contrasts: the lawless and the righteous.
- U^2 | 27–29. Admonition and reason.
- V^2 | 30–33. Contrasts: the righteous and the lawless.
- U^3 | 34. Admonition and reason.
- V^3 | 35–40. Contrasts: the lawless and the righteous.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.*
> **2** *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*
> **3** *Trust in the LORD [Jehovah], and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*
> **4** *Delight thyself also in the LORD [Jehovah]; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*
> **5** *Commit thy way unto the LORD [Jehovah]; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*
> **6** *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.*
> **7** *Rest in the LORD [Jehovah], and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*
> **8** *Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*

9 *For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD [Jehovah], they shall inherit the earth.*

10 *For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*

11 *But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

12 *The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.*

13 *The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.*

14 *The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.*

15 *Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.*

16 *A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.*

17 *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD [Jehovah] upholdeth the righteous.*

18 *The LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.*

19 *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*

20 *But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD [Jehovah] shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.*

21 *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.*

22 *For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.*

23 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD [Jehovah]: and he delighteth in his way.*

24 *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD [Jehovah] upholdeth him with his hand.*

25 *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

26 *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*

27 *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.*

28 *For the LORD [Jehovah] loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*

29 *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

30 *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.*

31 *The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*

32 *The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.*

33 *The LORD [Jehovah] will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.*

34 *Wait on the LORD [Jehovah], and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*

35 *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.*

36 *Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.*

37 *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*

> **38** *But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.*
>
> **39** *But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD [Jehovah]: he is their strength in the time of trouble.*
>
> **40** *And the LORD [Jehovah] shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.*

Psalm 37 has no sub-scription. Psalm 38 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance."

Verse by verse

> **37:1** *Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.*
>
> **37:2** *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*

Fret not thyself. *Do not heat yourself*: do not let anger burn within you. **neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass.** The first reason: the wicked do not last (compare 90:5, 6; Isa. 40:6–8).

> **37:3** *Trust in the LORD [Jehovah], and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*
>
> **37:4** *Delight thyself also in the LORD [Jehovah]; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*
>
> **37:5** *Commit thy way unto the LORD [Jehovah]; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*
>
> **37:6** *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.*
>
> **37:7** *Rest in the LORD [Jehovah], and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*
>
> **37:8** *Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*

Four commands follow, each a step further in rest. **Trust in the LORD [Jehovah], and do good** (v. 3). **Delight thyself also in the LORD [Jehovah]; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart** (v. 4): the one who delights in God finds that his desires are God's to give. **Commit thy way unto the LORD [Jehovah]** (v. 5): *Roll* it upon Him (as 22:8). **trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light** (v. 6): what is hidden now will shine like noon. **Rest in the LORD [Jehovah], and wait patiently for him** (v. 7): *Be silent to Jehovah*. **Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil** (v. 8): fretting leads to evil.

> **37:9** *For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD [Jehovah], they shall inherit the earth.*
>
> **37:10** *For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*
>
> **37:11** *But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD [Jehovah], they shall inherit the earth. *The land*: the land of promise, and in the end the whole earth under Messiah's reign. **For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.** This is the verse the Lord quoted in Matthew 5:5.

37:12 *The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.*

37:13 *The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.*

37:14 *The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.*

37:15 *Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.*

37:16 *A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.*

37:17 *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD [Jehovah] upholdeth the righteous.*

37:18 *The LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.*

37:19 *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*

37:20 *But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD [Jehovah] shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.*

The contrasts begin (V^1). The wicked plots and gnashes with his teeth, **The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming** (v. 13; compare 2:4). *Lord* here is one of the scribes' changes from "Jehovah." The wicked draw the sword, **Their sword shall enter into their own heart** (v. 15). **A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked** (v. 16). **The LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever** (v. 18). **But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD [Jehovah] shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away** (v. 20): like the fat burned on the altar.

37:21 *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.*

37:22 *For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.*

37:23 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD [Jehovah]: and he delighteth in his way.*

37:24 *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD [Jehovah] upholdeth him with his hand.*

37:25 *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

37:26 *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*

The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth (v. 21). **The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD [Jehovah]** (v. 23): *established*. **Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD [Jehovah] upholdeth him with his hand** (v. 24). **I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread** (v. 25). This is David's own experience over a lifetime, not a promise that no believer will ever suffer want; Paul knew hunger (Phil. 4:12). The righteous man is not *forsaken*: God provides.

37:27 *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.*

37:28 *For the LORD [Jehovah] loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*

37:29 *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore (U^2). **For the LORD [Jehovah] loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever** (v. 28). In this verse the letter *Ayin* is hidden: the line beginning with it ("for ever," *lĕʿôlām*) has a preposition placed before it. **The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever** (v. 29).

> **37:30** *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.*
>
> **37:31** *The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*
>
> **37:32** *The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.*
>
> **37:33** *The LORD [Jehovah] will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.*

The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom . . . The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide (vv. 30, 31). As the blessed man of Psalm 1 (V^2). **The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him. The LORD [Jehovah] will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged** (vv. 32, 33).

> **37:34** *Wait on the LORD [Jehovah], and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*

Wait on the LORD [Jehovah], and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. The third admonition (U^3), gathering up the whole: wait, keep, inherit, see.

> **37:35** *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.*
>
> **37:36** *Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.*
>
> **37:37** *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*
>
> **37:38** *But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.*
>
> **37:39** *But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD [Jehovah]: he is their strength in the time of trouble.*
>
> **37:40** *And the LORD [Jehovah] shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.*

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. *Like a native tree in its own soil*, at home and flourishing. **Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not** (v. 36). **Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace** (v. 37). *The end*: the after-part, the future. The wicked have no future (v. 38). **But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD [Jehovah] . . . And the LORD [Jehovah] shall help them, and deliver them . . . because they trust in him** (vv. 39, 40). The Psalm ends where it began: do not fret, but trust.

Its close

Psalm 37 has no sub-scription.

What Psalm 37 imparts

Psalm 37 answers the question every believer asks: why do the wicked prosper? Its answer is time. The wicked flourish for a season and are cut off; the meek wait and inherit. The promise of the land looks beyond David's day to the kingdom, when "the meek shall inherit the earth" in the fullest sense under the reign of Christ. Until then the believer is to trust, delight, commit, and rest.

Looking back

Psalm 37 is member *W*, answering to Psalm 23. The Great Shepherd leads His flock by still waters; Psalm 37 teaches the flock not to fret while the wolves seem to prosper.

Psalm 38 — "To Bring to Remembrance"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member X^1 (prayer and praise in view of future blessing, Psalm 24). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** a time of severe illness, which David traced to his own sin.

Introduction

"To bring to remembrance" (Title) is used also of Psalm 70. It may refer to the memorial offering (Lev. 2:2), or simply mean that the Psalm is a reminder, to God and to man. David is sick, in pain, deserted by friends, and attacked by enemies. He makes no excuses: "I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin" (v. 18).

Psalms 38–41 form member *X*, the last group of Book I, answering to Psalm 24. They are prayers in sickness and distress which look beyond the suffering to God's deliverance.

Structure

- W | 1. Prayer: "Rebuke me not."
- X | u | 2–10. Sin and suffering: "For . . ."
- v | 11–16. Treatment from friends.
- *X* | *u* | 17, 18. Sin and suffering: "For . . ."
- *v* | 19, 20. Treatment from enemies.
- *W* | 21, 22. Prayer: "Forsake me not."

The Psalm

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

> **1** *O LORD [Jehovah], rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*
> **2** *For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.*
> **3** *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*
> **4** *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*
> **5** *My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.*
> **6** *I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.*
> **7** *For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh.*
> **8** *I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*
> **9** *Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.*
> **10** *My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.*
> **11** *My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.*

> **12** *They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.*
>
> **13** *But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.*
>
> **14** *Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.*
>
> **15** *For in thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.*
>
> **16** *For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.*
>
> **17** *For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.*
>
> **18** *For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.*
>
> **19** *But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.*
>
> **20** *They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.*
>
> **21** *Forsake me not, O LORD [Jehovah]: O my God, be not far from me.*
>
> **22** *Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.*

To the chief Musician, even to Jeduthun.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 39.

Verse by verse

> **38:1** *O LORD [Jehovah], rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*

O LORD [Jehovah], rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Almost the same as 6:1. He does not ask to escape correction, only that it come without wrath.

> **38:2** *For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.*
>
> **38:3** *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*
>
> **38:4** *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*
>
> **38:5** *My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.*
>
> **38:6** *I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.*
>
> **38:7** *For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh.*
>
> **38:8** *I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*

For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore (v. 2). God's arrows are His judgments (Job 6:4). **There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin** (v. 3). **For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me** (v. 4): like floodwaters, like a load. His wounds stink (v. 5); he is bowed down and mourns all day (v. 6); **my loins are filled with a loathsome disease** (v. 7): *burning*, inflammation; **I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart** (v. 8).

> **38:9** *Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.*

> **38:10** *My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.*

Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. *Lord* here is one of the scribes' changes from "Jehovah" (also vv. 15, 22). God knows every unspoken desire. **My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.**

> **38:11** *My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.*
>
> **38:12** *They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.*
>
> **38:13** *But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.*
>
> **38:14** *Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.*
>
> **38:15** *For in thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.*
>
> **38:16** *For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.*

My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off (v. 11). At the cross, "all his acquaintance . . . stood afar off" (Luke 23:49). His enemies lay snares (v. 12). **But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth** (v. 13). He does not answer them back: compare Isa. 53:7 and the Lord before His accusers (Matt. 26:63; 27:14). **For in thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God** (v. 15). He is silent before men because he has committed his cause to God.

> **38:17** *For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.*
>
> **38:18** *For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.*
>
> **38:19** *But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.*
>
> **38:20** *They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.*

For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me (v. 17): *ready to fall*. **For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin** (v. 18). His enemies are lively and strong; **They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is** (v. 20; compare 35:12).

> **38:21** *Forsake me not, O LORD [Jehovah]: O my God, be not far from me.*
>
> **38:22** *Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.*

Forsake me not, O LORD [Jehovah]: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation. "Be not far from me" was the prayer of 22:11, 19.

Its close: "To the chief Musician, even to Jeduthun"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 39 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 38. Jeduthun was one of David's three chief singers, with Asaph and Heman (1 Chron. 16:41, 42; 25:1). This Psalm was given to his choir.

Looking back

Psalm 38 is member X^1. It is the prayer of a sufferer who confesses his sin, is deserted by his friends, keeps silent before his enemies, and waits for God.

Psalm 39 — "Lord, Make Me to Know Mine End"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member X^2. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** continuing the affliction of Psalm 38.

Introduction

Psalm 39 begins with a resolution to keep silent (vv. 1, 2; compare 38:13), but the silence becomes unbearable: "while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue" (v. 3). What he says is a prayer to understand how short life is. Every man at his best is "altogether vanity," a breath (v. 5). The Psalm teaches what the whole of Scripture teaches: man's life is brief, and his hope is in God alone (v. 7).

Structure

- Y | 1–3. Silent meditation.
- Z | 4. Speech. Prayer.
- A | 5-. The fading of life: "I."
- B | -5, 6. The vanity of man. **Selah.**
- C | 7, 8. Hope in Thee; supplication and deprecation.
- *Y* | 9. Silent meditation.
- *Z* | 10-. Speech. Prayer.
- *A* | -10. The fading of beauty: "I."
- *B* | 11. The vanity of man. **Selah.**
- *C* | 12, 13. Supplication, deprecation, and hope; departure.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*
> **2** *I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.*
> **3** *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,*
> **4** *LORD [Jehovah], make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.*
> **5** *Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.*
> **6** *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*
> **7** *And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.*

> **8** *Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.*
>
> **9** *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.*
>
> **10** *Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.*
>
> **11** *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah.*
>
> **12** *Hear my prayer, O LORD [Jehovah], and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*
>
> **13** *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 40.

Verse by verse

> **39:1** *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*
>
> **39:2** *I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.*
>
> **39:3** *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,*

I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. He would not complain before the wicked, lest they use it against God. **I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned.** Compare Jeremiah: "his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jer. 20:9).

> **39:4** *LORD [Jehovah], make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.*

LORD [Jehovah], make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. *How fleeting I am.* Not a complaint, but a request to see life as it is (90:12).

> **39:5** *Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.*
>
> **39:6** *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*

Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth. The smallest measure, four fingers. **and mine age is as nothing before thee.** *My lifetime.* **verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.** *Hebel*: a breath, a vapour, the word of Ecclesiastes. Even standing firm at his best, man is a breath. **Selah. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew.** *As a shadow, an image.* **he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them** (Luke 12:20).

> **39:7** *And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.*

And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. *Adonai*; the original reading was "Jehovah." Life is a breath; therefore his hope is not in life but in God. This is the turning point of the Psalm.

> **39:8** *Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.*

Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish. *The fool* (*nābāl*), as in 14:1.

> **39:9** *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.*
>
> **39:10** *Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.*
>
> **39:11** *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah.*

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it. He is silent now, not from fear of the wicked but because the trouble is God's doing. **Remove thy stroke away from me** (v. 10). **When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth** (v. 11): as a moth eats a garment, slowly and silently. **surely every man is vanity. Selah.**

> **39:12** *Hear my prayer, O LORD [Jehovah], and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*
>
> **39:13** *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*

Hear my prayer, O LORD [Jehovah] . . . hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. A guest in God's land, with no permanent home in it (Lev. 25:23; 1 Chron. 29:15; Heb. 11:13). **O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.** *Look away from me*: let the rebuke cease, *that I may brighten up*. *Be no more*: no more among the living, gone to the grave. David has no thought of going on living somewhere else at death; he will be no more until God raises the dead.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 40 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 39.

Looking back

Psalm 39 is member X^2. It sets the brevity of human life against the hope that is in God: "my hope is in thee" (v. 7).

Psalm 40 — "Lo, I Come: In the Volume of the Book It Is Written of Me"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member X^3. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 40 begins with deliverance from "an horrible pit" (v. 2) and ends with a cry for help (vv. 13–17, repeated as Psalm 70). At its centre are the words that the Epistle to the Hebrews applies to Christ coming into the world: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened . . . Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God" (vv. 6–8; Heb. 10:5–9). No animal sacrifice could take away sins; the obedience of the Son, offering His own body once for all, did what they could not (Heb. 10:10).

Structure

- F^1 | 1–5. Deliverance by Jehovah.
- G | 1–3-. Deliverance.
- H | -3. Trust.
- *H* | 4. Trust.
- *G* | 5. Deliverance.
- F^2 | 6–10. Address to Jehovah.
- J | 6. What Messiah had done, and not done.
- K | w | 7-. Messiah's delighted obedience.
- x | -7. The reason: written in the Book.
- *K* | *w* | 8-. Messiah's delighted obedience.
- *x* | -8. The reason: written in His heart.
- *J* | 9, 10. What Messiah had done, and not done.
- F^3 | 11–17. Prayer to Jehovah.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *I waited patiently for the LORD [Jehovah]; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*
> **2** *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.*

3 *And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD [Jehovah].*

4 *Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD [Jehovah] his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*

5 *Many, O LORD [Jehovah] my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*

6 *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.*

7 *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,*

8 *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*

9 *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD [Jehovah], thou knowest.*

10 *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*

11 *Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD [Jehovah]: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.*

12 *For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.*

13 *Be pleased, O LORD [Jehovah], to deliver me: O LORD [Jehovah], make haste to help me.*

14 *Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.*

15 *Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.*

16 *Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD [Jehovah] be magnified.*

17 *But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 41.

Verse by verse

40:1 *I waited patiently for the LORD [Jehovah]; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*

40:2 *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.*

40:3 *And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD [Jehovah].*

I waited patiently for the LORD [Jehovah]. *Waiting I waited*: the figure *Polyptoton*, earnest, persistent waiting. **and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay.** *A pit of tumult* or roaring waters, a pit with mud at the bottom, like Jeremiah's dungeon (Jer. 38:6). **and set my feet upon a rock. And he hath put a new song in my mouth** (as 33:3). **many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD [Jehovah].** *See* and *fear* are alike in Hebrew (*yir'û . . . yîrā'û*).

> **40:4** *Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD [Jehovah] his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*
>
> **40:5** *Many, O LORD [Jehovah] my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*

Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD [Jehovah] his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. Many, O LORD [Jehovah] my God, are thy wonderful works . . . they are more than can be numbered.

> **40:6** *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.*

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. God never desired the sacrifices for their own sake (51:16, 17; 1 Sam. 15:22; Hos. 6:6). Four kinds are named: *sacrifice* (*zebaḥ*, peace offering), *offering* (*minḥāh*, the meal offering), *burnt offering*, and *sin offering*: all the offerings of the Law. **mine ears hast thou opened.** *Ears hast Thou dug* (*kārîthā*): opened, so that he hears and obeys (Isa. 50:4, 5). Hebrews quotes this from the Greek translation: "a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5). The two say the same thing in different ways: the ear opened to hear God's will, and the body prepared to do it. The emphasis of both is obedience. **burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.**

> **40:7** *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,*
>
> **40:8** *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*

Then said I, Lo, I come. *Behold, I am come.* Hebrews places these words "when he cometh into the world" (Heb. 10:5): the Son coming to do the Father's will. **in the volume of the book it is written of me.** *In the roll of the book*: the Scriptures written about Him (Luke 24:27, 44). **I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.** *Within my inward parts.* The law not on tables of stone, but in the heart (Jer. 31:33). The Lord said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (John 4:34), and in Gethsemane, "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10).

> **40:9** *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD [Jehovah], thou knowest.*
>
> **40:10** *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*

I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. *I have proclaimed good tidings of righteousness*: the Septuagint uses the word from which "evangelise" comes. **lo, I have not refrained my**

lips, O LORD [Jehovah], thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation. Compare 22:22, 25.

> **40:11** *Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD [Jehovah]: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.*
>
> **40:12** *For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.*

Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD [Jehovah]. (F^3.) **For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.** In David's mouth these are his own sins. In the fullest sense they are the iniquities laid on the sin-bearer: "the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). **they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.**

> **40:13** *Be pleased, O LORD [Jehovah], to deliver me: O LORD [Jehovah], make haste to help me.*
>
> **40:14** *Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.*
>
> **40:15** *Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.*
>
> **40:16** *Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD [Jehovah] be magnified.*
>
> **40:17** *But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.*

Be pleased, O LORD [Jehovah], to deliver me: O LORD [Jehovah], make haste to help me. Verses 13–17 are repeated, with small changes, as Psalm 70. **Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it . . . Let them be desolate . . . that say unto me, Aha, aha** (vv. 14, 15). **Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD [Jehovah] be magnified** (v. 16). **But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God** (v. 17). *Lord* here is one of the scribes' changes from "Jehovah."

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 41 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 40.

Looking back

Psalm 40 is member X^3. It is the Psalm of the Son's obedience, "Lo, I come," set between deliverance from the pit and the prayer for help. The sacrifices of the Law are fulfilled and ended in the offering of His body once for all.

Psalm 41 — "Blessed Is He That Considereth the Poor"

Place: Book I; Psalms 16–41; member *X*[4]. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** illness, and the betrayal of a close friend; generally connected with Absalom's rebellion and Ahithophel's treachery (2 Sam. 15–17).

Introduction

Book I began with "Blessed is the man" (1:1) and ends with "Blessed is he that considereth the poor" (41:1). In between are the blessings of Psalms 2:12, 32:1, 2, 33:12, 34:8 and 40:4.

In Psalm 41 David is sick, and his enemies wait for him to die. Worst of all, "mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (v. 9). In David's life this was Ahithophel, his counsellor, who joined Absalom and afterwards hanged himself (2 Sam. 15:12, 31; 17:23). The Lord Jesus quoted it of Judas: "that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me" (John 13:18). He left out the words "in whom I trusted," for He knew from the beginning who would betray Him (John 6:64).

Structure

- Q | 1–3. Jehovah's favour to Messiah.
- R | 4. Prayer.
- S | c | 5-. Enemies: what they do.
- d | -5. What they say.
- e | 6. The traitor.
- *S* | *c* | 7. Enemies: what they do.
- *d* | 8. What they say.
- *e* | 9. The traitor.
- *R* | 10. Prayer.
- *Q* | 11, 12. Jehovah's favour to Messiah.

Verse 13 is the doxology that closes Book I.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD [Jehovah] will deliver him in time of trouble.*
>
> **2** *The LORD [Jehovah] will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*

> **3** *The LORD [Jehovah] will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*
>
> **4** *I said, LORD [Jehovah], be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.*
>
> **5** *Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?*
>
> **6** *And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.*
>
> **7** *All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.*
>
> **8** *An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.*
>
> **9** *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*
>
> **10** *But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.*
>
> **11** *By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.*
>
> **12** *And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.*
>
> **13** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 42.

Verse by verse

> **41:1** *Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD [Jehovah] will deliver him in time of trouble.*

Blessed is he that considereth the poor. *The weak*, the sick. *Considereth*: gives thoughtful attention. **the LORD [Jehovah] will deliver him in time of trouble.** The one who shows mercy will receive mercy (Matt. 5:7).

> **41:2** *The LORD [Jehovah] will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*
>
> **41:3** *The LORD [Jehovah] will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*

The LORD [Jehovah] will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth. The LORD [Jehovah] will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. *Thou turnest all his bed*: God changes his sickbed into health.

> **41:4** *I said, LORD [Jehovah], be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.*

I said, LORD [Jehovah], be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee. David confesses his own sin; the Lord Jesus did no sin (1 Pet. 2:22), and the Psalm applies to Him in the betrayal, not in this confession.

> **41:5** *Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?*
>
> **41:6** *And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.*

Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish? They want him dead and forgotten. **And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity.** The visitor at the sickbed speaks empty comfort, gathers gossip in his heart, **when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.**

> **41:7** *All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.*
>
> **41:8** *An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.*

All that hate me whisper together against me. An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him. *A thing of Belial*: something deadly. **and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.** They said he would never rise. The Psalm answers: "raise me up" (v. 10).

> **41:9** *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*

Yea, mine own familiar friend. *The man of my peace*: the one who greeted him with "peace." **in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread.** To eat a man's bread was to bind oneself in friendship. **hath lifted up his heel against me.** As a horse kicks, or as one trips another; a treacherous blow. Ahithophel in David's day; Judas, who ate the sop from the Lord's hand and went out to betray Him (John 13:26–30).

> **41:10** *But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.*

But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. David asked to be raised from his sickbed and restored to his throne, to deal with the rebels as a king must. The Son of David was raised from the dead, and will come again to judge (Acts 17:31).

> **41:11** *By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.*
>
> **41:12** *And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.*

By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me. And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever. The end of the division: set before God's face for ever (compare 16:11; 17:15).

> **41:13** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.*

Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. This is not part of Psalm 41 itself but the doxology that closes Book I. Each of the five Books ends with one (41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48; and Psalm 150 for Book V). David used the same words when he brought the Ark to Zion (1 Chron. 16:36), and Zacharias began his song with them (Luke 1:68). **Amen, and Amen.** The figure *Epizeuxis*: so be it, so be it.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 42 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 41. Book I ends with the doxology and this line; Book II begins with Psalm 42's own super-scription, "Maschil, for the sons of Korah."

Looking back

Psalm 41 is member X^4. The first half of the division ended with the King of glory entering the gates (24); the second ends with the betrayed one raised up and set before God's face for ever (41). It closes Book I.

Looking Back on Psalms 16–41

The third division of Book I presents "the man Christ Jesus" twice over, each time moving from His sufferings to His glory.

- **The Man (16–18; 25–28).** He trusts God for His lot, walks the path of life through death to resurrection and ascension, prays as the righteous sufferer, and is delivered. In the second half, David's own prayers for guidance, forgiveness, integrity and help take up the same themes.
- **His people (19–21; 29–34).** They see God's glory in the heavens, the Word and the storm. They pray for their King and rejoice in His exaltation. They learn forgiveness (32), praise the Creator (33), and taste and see that Jehovah is good (34).
- **The Shepherd (22–24; 35–41).** The Good Shepherd dies, hated without a cause (22; 35–36). The Great Shepherd teaches and leads His flock (23; 37). The Chief Shepherd comes in glory, and the Psalms that answer to it look beyond sickness, betrayal and the brevity of life to the One who said "Lo, I come," who was raised up, and who is set before God's face for ever (24; 38–41).

Looking Back on Book I

Book I, which Bullinger compared with Genesis, is about man: man as God purposed him, man as he is, and the Man through whom God's purpose will be fulfilled.

- **Psalms 1–8: God's purpose for man.** It begins with the blessed man (1) and God's King (2), passes through the night of trouble (3–7), and ends with the Son of Man crowned with glory and honour (8).
- **Psalms 9–15: man's enemy and his end.** The man of the earth oppresses and says "God hath forgotten." The perfect man, who shall never be moved, is the answer (15).
- **Psalms 16–41: "the man Christ Jesus."** He trusts, suffers, dies, rises, ascends, shepherds His people, and will come again in glory.

Book I begins "Blessed is the man" (1:1) and ends "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel" (41:13). The blessing that God purposed for man comes through the one Man, and returns to God in praise. Book II, which he compared with Exodus, follows.

Book II — Psalms 42–72: Concerning Israel

A. The subject of the Book

Book II is the "Exodus Book" of the Psalter. Book I was about *Man*; Book II is about *Israel*: the nation in ruin, the Redeemer God has provided, and the nation redeemed. Exodus begins with Israel crying under its burdens in Egypt (Ex. 2:23; 3:7–9) and ends with God dwelling among His redeemed people (Ex. 40:34–38). Book II begins with a cry from far off, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (42:1), and ends with the King reigning over a redeemed nation, a blessing to all nations (72:17). It closes with its doxology: "Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen" (72:18, 19).

B. Its match with Exodus

The name *Exodus* is Greek for "the going out." The Hebrew name of the book is its opening words, *we'elleh shemoth*, "And these are the names." It is the book in which God makes His Name known: "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3:14), "by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them" (6:3), "Jehovah is his name" (15:3). It is also the book of *redemption*: "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed" (15:13).

Book II has some clear echoes of Exodus:

- It opens, as Exodus does, with a cry from ruin and oppression (Psalms 42–44).
- Psalm 66 celebrates the crossing of the sea: "He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot" (66:6).
- Psalm 68 begins with the words Moses spoke whenever the Ark set out in the wilderness, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered" (68:1; Num. 10:35). It recalls the march through the wilderness and the trembling of Sinai (68:7, 8, 17).
- The short form of the Name, *JAH*, first occurs in the Bible in the song at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:2). Its first occurrence in the Psalms is in this Book (68:4).
- Psalm 51 asks to be purged "with hyssop" (51:7), the plant used to sprinkle the blood of the Passover (Ex. 12:22).

As with Book I, the match is clearer in some places than in others. Most of Book II is David's prayer in his own troubles, and the link with Exodus there is a general one: God's people in distress, crying out, and redeemed. (Chapter 4 of Part One weighs the match Book by Book.)

The Names of God. Book II uses *Elohim*, "God," far more than *Jehovah*. In the Hebrew text of Book II, *Elohim* occurs about two hundred times and *El* sixteen times, but *Jehovah* only thirty-two times

(Appendix H). Book I used Jehovah far more. This is why Psalm 53, which repeats Psalm 14, has "God" where Psalm 14 has "the LORD" (Chapter 9, D).

The writers. Psalms 42–49 are "for the sons of Korah." Psalm 50 is the only Psalm of Asaph in this Book (the others are in Book III). Psalms 51–65 and 68–70 are David's; 66, 67 and 71 name no writer; and 72 is "for Solomon." The Book ends with the line: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (72:20).

C. Its structure

Book II falls into three divisions:

- A^1 | 42–49. Concerning Israel's ruin.
- A^2 | 50–60. Concerning Israel's Redeemer.
- A^3 | 61–72. Concerning Israel's redemption.

First the ruin, then the Redeemer, then the redemption. The order of Exodus is the same: Israel in bondage (Ex. 1–2), the Redeemer God sends (Ex. 3–14), and the people redeemed and brought to God (Ex. 15–40).

Psalms 42–49: Israel's Ruin

A. What this division is about

The first eight Psalms of Book II are all "for the sons of Korah." Korah led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, and the earth swallowed him (Num. 16:31–33). "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not" (Num. 26:11). God spared his sons in grace, and their descendants became singers and doorkeepers in the house of God (1 Chron. 6:31–37; 9:19; 26:1). Heman the singer was one of them (1 Chron. 6:33–37). It is fitting that the Psalms of Israel's ruin and deliverance should come from the sons of a man who perished in judgment, and whose children were spared.

The division opens with the soul far from the house of God, crying "Why art thou cast down?" (42–43). It ends with the man who sees that no man can redeem his brother, and that God alone can redeem (49:7, 15). In between, the nation cries for a Deliverer (44), the Deliverer is praised as King (45), and His help is celebrated in three songs of deliverance (46–48).

B. Its structure

- B | 42, 43. The ruin and oppression realised (42:9; 43:2). No help from man. It opens with crying and tears, as Exodus does (Ex. 2:23; 3:7–9; 6:5).
- C | 44. The cry for help to the Deliverer and Redeemer (44:23–26).
- D | 45. The Deliverer praised. The answer to the cry.
- *C* | 46. The help of the Deliverer (compare 48:3).
- *D* | 47, 48. The Deliverer praised (compare 48:8 with 44:1).
- *B* | 49. The ruin, and the need of redemption realised. No help from man (v. 7); only from God (v. 15).

The first and last members answer each other: no help from man (42–43; 49). Within them, the cry and the help (44; 46) alternate with the praise (45; 47–48).

C. Its purpose

This division teaches the first lesson of redemption: that the ruin is real, and that man cannot undo it. The soul longs for God and cannot reach His house (42–43). The nation is scattered and slain "all the day long" though it has not forgotten Him (44). No price a man can pay will redeem his brother (49:7). Only then does the answer come: a King whose throne is for ever (45), a God who is "a very present help in trouble" (46), and a redemption that God Himself provides (49:15).

Psalm 42 — "As the Hart Panteth After the Water Brooks"

Place: Book II; Psalms 42–49; member B (the ruin realised), first part. **Writer:** the sons of Korah. **Occasion:** not named. The scenery of verse 6 ("the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites") fits David's flight across Jordan from Absalom (2 Sam. 17:22–24), and the speaker may be one of the Levite singers who went with him, or the king himself in their song.

Introduction

Psalms 42 and 43 are one song in two parts. Psalm 43 has no Title of its own, and the same refrain runs through both: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? . . . hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him" (42:5, 11; 43:5). The singer is far from Jerusalem, beyond Jordan, unable to go up to the house of God, and his enemies taunt him: "Where is thy God?" (42:3, 10).

It is the second "Maschil," a Psalm of instruction (the first is Psalm 32). The lesson is how to deal with a soul that is cast down: by speaking to it, and by turning it to hope in God.

Structure

The two Psalms together make one structure, three stanzas each with the same three parts:

- A^1 | 42:1–3. Cry from afar.
- B^1 | 42:4. Hope. "I remember."
- C^1 | 42:5. Appeal: "Why cast down?" Praise.
- A^2 | 42:6, 7. Cry from afar.
- B^2 | 42:8–10. Hope. "Jehovah will command."
- C^2 | 42:11. Appeal: "Why cast down?" Praise.
- A^3 | 43:1, 2. Cry from afar.
- B^3 | 43:3, 4. Hope. "I will go."
- C^3 | 43:5. Appeal: "Why cast down?" Praise.

Each stanza moves from the cry, through hope, to the appeal to the soul. The hope grows each time: first a memory of the past ("I remember"), then a promise for the present ("Jehovah will command his lovingkindness"), then a resolve for the future ("Then will I go unto the altar of God").

The Psalm

Maschil, for the sons of Korah.

> **1** *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*

> **2** *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*
>
> **3** *My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?*
>
> **4** *When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*
>
> **5** *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*
>
> **6** *O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.*
>
> **7** *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*
>
> **8** *Yet the LORD [Jehovah] will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.*
>
> **9** *I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*
>
> **10** *As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?*
>
> **11** *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

Psalm 42 has no sub-scription. It runs straight on into Psalm 43, which has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **42:1** *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*
>
> **42:2** *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*
>
> **42:3** *My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?*

As the hart panteth after the water brooks. *Panteth* is "crieth" or "longeth," as in Joel 1:20, "The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up." *Water brooks* are channels: water in a gorge, hard to reach. **so panteth my soul after thee, O God.** The figure is *Simile*: as the deer longs for water in a dry land, so he longs for God. **My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.** "Living," in contrast with idols, which are dead (115:4–8). **when shall I come and appear before God?** The Law required every male to appear before Jehovah three times a year (Ex. 23:17; 34:23). He cannot; he is far away.

My tears have been my meat day and night. He weeps instead of eating. **while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?** The taunt of the enemy. It is repeated in verse 10, and it is the taunt the nations will throw at Israel in its ruin (79:10; 115:2; Joel 2:17).

> **42:4** *When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*
>
> **42:5** *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me. *These things* are what he goes on to describe. **for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.** He remembers leading the festal procession up to the sanctuary. *The Companion Bible* notes that the verbs may also be read as future ("I shall go . . . I shall go with them"), which would make the memory a hope. Either way, the picture is the same: **with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.** The crowds going up to the feast.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? He speaks to his own soul: the figure *Apostrophe*. *Cast down* is "bowed down"; *disquieted* is "in turmoil," like the roaring of waters. **hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.** *The help of his countenance* is the salvation that comes from His face turned toward him. Some manuscripts join the first words of verse 6 to the end of verse 5, so that it reads, as in verse 11 and 43:5, "who is the help of my countenance, and my God."

> **42:6** *O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.*
>
> **42:7** *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*

O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee. He does not hide the trouble; he turns it into a reason to remember God. **from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.** The headwaters of the Jordan below the peaks of Hermon (*Hermonites* is plural: the Hermon range). *Mizar* means "little." From the far north-east of the land, at the edge of the country, he looks toward Zion.

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts. The torrents of the upper Jordan in flood, one roaring to another. *Waterspouts* are cataracts or channels. **all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.** The figure turns from the scenery to his own soul: he is overwhelmed. Jonah used these words in the belly of the fish (Jonah 2:3), and they describe Messiah's sufferings in 88:7.

> **42:8** *Yet the LORD [Jehovah] will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.*
>
> **42:9** *I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*
>
> **42:10** *As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?*
>
> **42:11** *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

Yet the LORD [Jehovah] will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me. This is the only place in Psalms 42–43 where the Name Jehovah is used. In the midst of the flood he sets the covenant Name and God's lovingkindness. By day, Jehovah commands mercy; by night, the song He gives is with him. **and my prayer unto the God of my life.** The God who keeps him alive.

I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? He calls God his rock (*sela'*, a crag), and asks why He seems to have forgotten. **why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?** This is the ruin of the division (B: "the ruin and oppression realised"). **As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me.** Their taunt cuts like a sword to the bone. **while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?**

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? . . . hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. The refrain again. *Health* is "salvation." The salvation of his countenance: God will lift up his face again.

Its close

Psalm 42 has no sub-scription. The song continues in Psalm 43.

Looking back

Psalm 42 is the first part of member B, the ruin realised. It opens Book II with tears, as Exodus opens with the groaning of Israel in Egypt (Ex. 2:23). The soul longs for God, cannot come to His house, and is mocked by enemies. But it does not give up: it speaks to itself, and it hopes.

Psalm 43 — "O Send Out Thy Light and Thy Truth"

Place: Book II; Psalms 42–49; member B (the ruin realised), second part. **Writer:** the sons of Korah (the Psalm has no Title; it belongs with Psalm 42). **Occasion:** as Psalm 42.

Introduction

Psalm 43 completes Psalm 42. The third stanza begins, like the first two, with a cry from afar, but this time it is a prayer for vindication against "an ungodly nation" and "the deceitful and unjust man." Then hope rises higher than before. The singer no longer only remembers going up to the house of God; he asks God to lead him there, and he resolves to go.

Structure

The structure is that of Psalm 42 (stanza 3):

- A^3 | 1, 2. Cry from afar.
- B^3 | 3, 4. Hope. "I will go."
- C^3 | 5. Appeal: "Why cast down?" Praise.

The Psalm

Psalm 43 has no super-scription. It is the third stanza of the song begun in Psalm 42.

> **1** *Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.*
> **2** *For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*
> **3** *O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.*
> **4** *Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.*
> **5** *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 44.

Verse by verse

> **43:1** *Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.*

> **43:2** *For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause. *Judge me* is "vindicate me": give judgment in my favour. **against an ungodly nation.** *Ungodly* is "without lovingkindness," the opposite of *chasid*, one who shows mercy. **O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.** One man in particular, a deceitful man. In David's flight from Absalom, that man was Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:31).

For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? He knows God is his stronghold, yet he feels rejected. *Cast off* is a strong word, used again in 44:9, 23. **why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?** As in 42:9.

> **43:3** *O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.*
>
> **43:4** *Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.*

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me. He asks God to send His light and truth as two guides to lead him home. *The Companion Bible* suggests an allusion to the Urim and Thummim ("lights and perfections") in the breastplate of the high priest, by which God's will was made known (Ex. 28:30). The priest and the ark had been with David when he left Jerusalem, and David sent them back (2 Sam. 15:24–29). **let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.** Zion, and the dwelling-place of God there. *Tabernacles* is plural: the plural of majesty, God's great dwelling-place.

Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy. Literally, "unto God, the gladness of my joy." First the altar, then God Himself: the sacrifice is the way to God. **yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.** The hope of the third stanza is a resolve: "I will go."

> **43:5** *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? . . . hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. The refrain closes the song, word for word as in 42:11. The cry has not yet been answered, but the soul has been taught to hope.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 44 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 43. The song of the sons of Korah was handed over to the chief Musician for the worship of the house of God, the very house the singer longed to reach.

Looking back

Psalms 42 and 43 together make member B, the ruin realised. There is no help from man. The soul is far from God's house, mocked, cast down, and oppressed. But three times it turns to God in hope, and each time the hope is stronger. This is the first lesson of Book II: Israel must learn its ruin, and learn to hope in

God alone. Member *B* (Psalm 49) will teach the same lesson from the other side: no man can redeem his brother, but God will redeem.

Psalm 44 — The Cry for a Deliverer

Place: Book II; Psalms 42–49; member C (the cry for help to the Deliverer). **Writer:** the sons of Korah. **Occasion:** not named in the Title. See the Introduction.

Introduction

Psalm 44 is the cry of the nation, not of one man. It begins with what God did for the fathers: He drove out the nations and planted Israel in the land (vv. 1–8). Then it turns to the present: God has cast them off, they are scattered and slain, a reproach among their neighbours (vv. 9–16). Then comes the surprising claim: all this has happened though they have *not* forgotten Him or dealt falsely in His covenant (vv. 17–22). And it ends with the boldest prayer in the Psalter: "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?" (v. 23).

When was it written? The Title does not say, and several times have been proposed. The best fit is the reign of Hezekiah, as *The Companion Bible* holds. In Hezekiah's day the nation had returned to Jehovah: the king had cleansed the temple, destroyed the idols, and kept the Passover (2 Kings 18:3–6; 2 Chron. 29–31). That fits the claim "our heart is not turned back" (v. 18). The northern kingdom had already been carried away (2 Kings 17:6), and Sennacherib took "all the fenced cities of Judah" (2 Kings 18:13). His own record, the prism now in the British Museum, boasts that he took forty-six walled cities and carried off 200,150 people. That fits "scattered us among the heathen" (v. 11) and "sold thy people for nought" (v. 12). Rabshakeh's blasphemy fits "the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth" (v. 16; Isa. 37:4, 23). The Maccabean period has also been proposed, but the Psalms were complete long before then. **Weight:** strong as a fit; the Title does not name the occasion.

The sub-scription (see Its close) shows that the Psalm was afterwards handed over for use at the Passover, which suits its opening: the God who brought the fathers out is asked to "redeem us" again (v. 26).

Structure

- D | 1–8. God our help. ("Thou didst"; "Through thee will we.")
- E | F | 9–14. "Us." Trouble.
- G | 15. "Me." "Thy reproach."
- *E* | *G* | 16. "Me." The reason.
- *F* | 17–22. "Us." Trouble.
- *D* | 23–26. Jehovah our help. ("Awake"; "Arise.")

Verses 1–8 are built in two matching halves:

- a | 1, 2. By Thee our fathers cast out the nations.

- b | 3-. Not their own sword.
- c | -3. But Thy right hand.
- d | 4. Thou our confidence.
- *a* | 5. By Thee will we put down our enemies.
- *b* | 6. Not my own sword.
- *c* | 7. But Thou hast saved us.
- *d* | 8. Thou our boast.

The past and the present match: as the fathers did not win the land by their own sword, so the present generation does not trust its own bow. Verses 9–14 alternate God's acts and the enemies' acts:

- e | 9. Thou hast cast us off.
- f | 10, 11. The enemies' acts.
- *e* | 12. Thou hast sold us.
- *f* | 13, 14. The enemies' words.

Verses 17–22 alternate their righteousness and their calamities:

- g | 17, 18. Righteousness: "we have not forgotten thee."
- h | 19. Calamities.
- *g* | 20, 21. Righteousness: "if we have forgotten . . . shall not God search this out?"
- *h* | 22. Calamities: "for thy sake are we killed."

Verses 23–26 are a prayer framing their affliction:

- i | 23, 24. Prayer: "Awake."
- k | 25-. Affliction: our soul bowed down.
- *k* | -25. Affliction: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.
- *i* | 26. Prayer: "Arise."

The Psalm

For the sons of Korah, Maschil.

> **1** *We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.*
> **2** *How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.*
> **3** *For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.*
> **4** *Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.*

5 *Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*

6 *For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.*

7 *But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.*

8 *In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.*

9 *But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.*

10 *Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.*

11 *Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.*

12 *Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.*

13 *Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.*

14 *Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.*

15 *My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,*

16 *For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.*

17 *All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.*

18 *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;*

19 *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.*

20 *If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;*

21 *Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

22 *Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.*

23 *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever.*

24 *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?*

25 *For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*

26 *Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.*

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 45.

Verse by verse

44:1 *We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.*

44:2 *How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.*

44:3 *For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.*

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us. As the Law commanded: "thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" (Deut. 6:7, 20–23). **what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them.** Israel planted like a vine (80:8). **how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.** *Cast them out* is "spread them out": the figure is a vine sending out its branches (compare 80:11). The two clauses belong together: God cast out the nations and spread out Israel. **For they got not the land in possession by their own sword . . . But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance.** Joshua had said the same: "not with thy sword, nor with thy bow" (Josh. 24:12). **because thou hadst a favour unto them.** Grace was the reason, not their merit (Deut. 7:7, 8).

> **44:4** *Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.*
>
> **44:5** *Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*
>
> **44:6** *For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.*
>
> **44:7** *But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.*
>
> **44:8** *In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.*

Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob. *Deliverances* is plural of majesty: a great deliverance. The single "my" in a nation's Psalm shows the king or the leader of the singers speaking for all. **Through thee will we push down our enemies.** The figure is of an ox goring with its horns (Deut. 33:17). **through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But thou hast saved us . . . In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.** The *Selah* joins the glorious past (vv. 1–8) to the sudden "But" of the present (v. 9), and marks the turn in the Psalm.

> **44:9** *But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.*
>
> **44:10** *Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.*
>
> **44:11** *Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.*
>
> **44:12** *Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.*
>
> **44:13** *Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.*
>
> **44:14** *Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.*

But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies. The God who went before them (Judg. 4:14) no longer does. **Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.** They plunder at will. **Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat.** Sheep for the slaughter. **and hast scattered us among the heathen.** See the Introduction. **Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.** God has sold them cheap, and gained nothing by it: a bold figure of how worthless the people feel. **Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours . . . a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.** The gesture of scorn (22:7; Matt. 27:39).

> **44:15** *My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,*

> **44:16** *For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.*

My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me. The leader speaks for the nation. **For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth.** One man, "him." In Hezekiah's day it was Rabshakeh, sent "to reproach the living God" (Isa. 37:4, 17). **by reason of the enemy and avenger.** The one who seeks vengeance.

> **44:17** *All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.*
>
> **44:18** *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;*
>
> **44:19** *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.*
>
> **44:20** *If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;*
>
> **44:21** *Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*
>
> **44:22** *Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.*

All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Here is the riddle of the Psalm. This is not a confession of sin, as in Daniel 9 or Nehemiah 9. It is a claim of faithfulness. The Law had promised that disobedience would bring defeat and scattering (Deut. 28:25, 64). But this generation has not turned back. Why, then, are they suffering? **Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons.** *Dragons* are jackals: the haunt of jackals is a ruined, desolate place (Isa. 34:13). **and covered us with the shadow of death.** Deep darkness.

If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. They appeal to God's own knowledge: He would know if they had turned to idols. **Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.** They suffer *because* they belong to Him. Paul quotes this verse of believers who face death for Christ's sake, and answers it: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:36, 37). The Psalm teaches that suffering is not always punishment. The righteous may suffer *for* God's sake.

> **44:23** *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever.*
>
> **44:24** *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?*
>
> **44:25** *For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*
>
> **44:26** *Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.*

Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? The figure *Anthropopatheia*: human actions ascribed to God, who never sleeps (121:4). The words express how it seems to them. *O Lord*: the scribes record that the original text here read *Jehovah*, and that it was changed to *Adonai* (Lord). This is one of the 134 places the scribes altered in this way (Chapter 9). **arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.** They lie prostrate. **Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies'**

sake. *Redeem* is *padah*, to deliver by power, the word used of the redemption from Egypt (Deut. 7:8; 9:26). *Mercies* is "lovingkindness." They do not plead their own righteousness, which they have just claimed; they plead God's lovingkindness. This is the cry to the Deliverer that the next Psalm answers.

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 45; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 44. *Shoshannim* means "lilies." The lily was the flower of spring, and *The Chief Musician* takes "Shoshannim" as the mark of the spring festival, the Passover (as in Psalms 68 and 79). The Psalm was handed to the chief Musician for use at the Passover, when Israel remembered how God had brought the fathers out, and asked Him to "redeem us" again.

Looking back

Psalm 44 is member C, the cry for help to the Deliverer. It answers to Psalm 46 (*C*), the help of the Deliverer. Here God seems asleep; there "God shall help her, and that right early" (46:5). Here the nation is scattered and shamed; there "Jehovah of hosts is with us." The prayer "Arise for our help, and redeem us" is answered.

Psalm 45 — The King and His Bride

Place: Book II; Psalms 42–49; member D (the Deliverer praised; the answer to the cry). **Writer:** the sons of Korah. **Occasion:** a royal wedding. See the Introduction.

Introduction

Psalm 44 ended with a cry for a Deliverer. Psalm 45 answers it with a song about a King: "the king" in his beauty, his victories, his everlasting throne, and his bride. It is called "a Song of loves" (*yedidoth*: of the beloved, or of great love). The writer says his heart is "inditing a good matter" concerning the king (v. 1).

Which king? The Psalm names none. A royal wedding is clearly in view. Bullinger suggested the marriage of Hezekiah to Hephzi-bah (2 Kings 21:1), whose name Isaiah uses of the restored Israel, "thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah . . . and thy land Beulah: for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married" (Isa. 62:4). That is possible but not shown. What is shown is that the Psalm goes beyond any king of Israel. His throne is "for ever and ever" (v. 6), and the letter to the Hebrews quotes verses 6 and 7 of the Son (Heb. 1:8, 9). The King is Messiah. The bride, in this Psalm, is Israel, as in the prophets: "thy Maker is thine husband" (Isa. 54:5; 62:4, 5; Hos. 2:19, 20).

"Thy throne, O God." Verse 6 is read as a proof that Jesus Christ is God. Verse 7 answers that reading at once: "therefore God, *thy God*, hath anointed thee." The King has a God over Him, who anointed Him and set Him above His fellows. The Hebrew word *elohim* is used in Scripture of men who represent God and bear His authority: of the judges of Israel (Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9; Psalm 82:6, which the Lord Jesus quoted in John 10:34–36), and of Moses, "I have made thee a god to Pharaoh" (Ex. 7:1). God's King, sitting on Jehovah's throne (1 Chron. 29:23), is addressed by the title that belongs to his office. The case is weighed in Appendix J.

Structure

- H | 1. The Psalmist.
- J | 2–8. The King.
- *J* | 9–16. The Queen.
- *H* | 17. The Psalmist.

The King (2–8):

- K | l | 2-. The King's merits.
- m | -2. His reward. "Therefore."
- L | 3, 4. His weapon (the sword) and its effects.
- *L* | 5. His weapons (the arrows) and their effects.
- *K* | *l* | 6, 7-. The King's merits.

- *m* | -7, 8. His reward. "Therefore."

The Queen (9–16):

- M | n | 9-. Maids of honour.
- o | -9. The queen's apparel.
- P | 10, 11. The queen addressed.
- N | 12-. The suppliant (the daughter of Tyre).
- *N* | -12. The suppliants (the rich among the people).
- *M* | *o* | 13, 14-. The queen's apparel.
- *n* | -14, 15. Maids of honour.
- *P* | 16. The queen addressed.

The Psalm

For the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of loves.

> **1** *My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*
>
> **2** *Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*
>
> **3** *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*
>
> **4** *And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*
>
> **5** *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.*
>
> **6** *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*
>
> **7** *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*
>
> **8** *All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*
>
> **9** *Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*
>
> **10** *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;*
>
> **11** *So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.*
>
> **12** *And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.*
>
> **13** *The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.*
>
> **14** *She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.*

> **15** *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.*
>
> **16** *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*
>
> **17** *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.*

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, upon Alamoth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 46.

Verse by verse

> **45:1** *My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*

My heart is inditing a good matter. *Inditing* is "bubbling up," like water boiling over. The figure is of a heart overflowing with its subject. **I speak of the things which I have made touching the king.** *Made* is "composed." **my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.** A skilled scribe. What his heart pours out, his tongue writes down.

> **45:2** *Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*
>
> **45:3** *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*
>
> **45:4** *And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*
>
> **45:5** *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.*

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips. At Nazareth they "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke 4:22). **therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.** The first "therefore": because of what He is, God has blessed Him (K, *m*).

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. *Most mighty* is *gibbor*, a mighty man, a champion. **And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness.** He rides out for three causes: truth, meekness (humility), and righteousness. John saw Him ride out on a white horse, "and in righteousness he doth judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11). **and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.** He will do fearful deeds of judgment.

Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. *People* is "peoples," the nations.

> **45:6** *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*
>
> **45:7** *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*
>
> **45:8** *All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.*

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. See the Introduction. God's King reigns on God's behalf, and his throne is everlasting, as was promised to David's seed: "I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Sam. 7:13, 16). **the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.** A sceptre of uprightness.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness. *Wickedness* is "lawlessness." **therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.** The second "therefore." The King is anointed: the word gives us *Messiah* (Hebrew) and *Christ* (Greek), "the Anointed One." God is "thy God" to Him. *Above thy fellows*: above His companions, the other kings, or those who share in His kingdom. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38). The writer to the Hebrews quotes verses 6 and 7 to show that the Son, so anointed and enthroned, is far above the angels (Heb. 1:4–9).

All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Myrrh and cassia were in the holy anointing oil (Ex. 30:23, 24). The King's garments are fragrant with His anointing. **out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.** Palaces inlaid with ivory (1 Kings 22:39; Amos 3:15). The music of the strings from the palace makes Him glad.

> **45:9** *Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*
>
> **45:10** *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;*
>
> **45:11** *So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.*
>
> **45:12** *And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.*

Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women. Princesses among the maids of honour. **upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.** The place of honour. Ophir's gold was the finest (1 Kings 9:28).

Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear. The Psalmist turns to the bride. **forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.** As Rebekah left her family (Gen. 24:58), and Ruth hers (Ruth 1:16). **So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.** *Lord* here is *adonim*, the plural of majesty of *adon*, used of a husband and of a human lord (Gen. 18:12; 1 Pet. 3:6). *Worship* is *shachah*, to bow down, the word used of homage to a king (1 Sam. 24:8; 1 Kings 1:16, 31). The bride honours her husband and king.

And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift. Tyre, the rich trading city, comes with a gift (compare 72:10). **even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.** They seek the queen's favour: the nations come to Israel (Isa. 60:3–11; Zech. 8:23).

> **45:13** *The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.*
>
> **45:14** *She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.*
>
> **45:15** *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.*

> **45:16** *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*

The king's daughter is all glorious within. *Within* is "in the inner palace": she is all glory as she waits in her chamber. **her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework.** Embroidered robes. **the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.** The procession to the wedding. These virgins explain the sub-scription, "upon Alamoth," "concerning the maidens" (see Its close).

Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. In the Hebrew text the pronouns are masculine, addressed to the King; the Syriac Version has them feminine, addressed to the queen, which fits the structure (*P*, the queen addressed, answering to verses 10 and 11). Either way, the children of this marriage take the place of the fathers, and are made princes in all the earth (compare Isa. 32:1).

> **45:17** *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.*

I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever. The Psalmist closes (H). His song will keep the King's name in remembrance, and the peoples will praise Him for ever.

Its close: "To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, upon Alamoth"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 46; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 45. *Alamoth* means "maidens" (1 Chron. 15:20, where it marks a choir of women's voices). It belongs with the Psalm whose virgins follow the bride into the king's palace (v. 14). Over Psalm 46, which is about the help of God in war, it makes no sense; under Psalm 45 it fits exactly. This is one of the clearest proofs of the key to the Titles (Chapter 5).

Psalm 45 is one of only two Psalms in which "for the sons of Korah" stands at both the beginning and the end (the other is Psalm 87).

Looking back

Psalm 45 is member D: the Deliverer praised, and the answer to the cry of Psalm 44. The nation cried "Awake . . . arise for our help"; the answer is a King, fairer than the children of men, riding out in righteousness, His throne for ever, and His people, like a bride, brought into His palace with gladness. It answers to Psalms 47 and 48 (*D*), where the Deliverer is praised again as "a great King over all the earth."

Psalm 46 — "God Is Our Refuge and Strength"

Place: Book II; Psalms 42–49; member *C* (the help of the Deliverer). **Writer:** the sons of Korah (see the sub-scription of Psalm 45). **Occasion:** not named in the Title; it fits the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib in Hezekiah's day (2 Kings 18–19; Isa. 36–37).

Introduction

Psalms 46, 47 and 48 are three songs of one deliverance. A great enemy came against Zion, the kings with him were assembled, and God broke them, "right early," without a battle (46:5; 48:4–7). The history that fits these Psalms best is the night when "the angel of Jehovah went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (Isa. 37:36). **Weight:** strong; no other event in Israel's history matches the details so closely, though the Titles do not name it.

Psalm 46 is the answer to Psalm 44 (member *C* to C). There, "Awake, why sleepest thou?" Here, "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved" (v. 5).

Structure

- Q^1 | 1. God our refuge.
- R | p | 2-. The earth moved. } Danger defied.
- q | -2, 3. The waters roar.
- S | 4. The holy city. } Zion defended.
- *S* | 5. The holy city.
- *R* | *q* | 6-. The heathen rage. } Danger defied.
- *p* | -6. The earth melted.
- Q^2 | 7. God our refuge. Selah.
- T | r | 8-. Behold God in His works. } Works seen.
- s | -8. The earth: His desolations.
- U | 9-. The world: wars ended.
- *U* | -9. The world: weapons destroyed.
- *T* | *r* | 10-. Know God in Himself. } Himself known.
- *s* | -10. The earth: His exaltation.
- Q^3 | 11. God our refuge. Selah.

Three times "God our refuge" (Q^1, Q^2, Q^3) holds the Psalm together. In the first half the danger is defied; in the second, God's works are seen and God Himself is known.

The Psalm

A Song.

> **1** *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*
> **2** *Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*
> **3** *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*
> **4** *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.*
> **5** *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*
> **6** *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*
> **7** *The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*
> **8** *Come, behold the works of the LORD [Jehovah], what desolations he hath made in the earth.*
> **9** *He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.*
> **10** *Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*
> **11** *The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 47.

Verse by verse

> **46:1** *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*
> **46:2** *Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*
> **46:3** *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. *Refuge* is a place to flee to. *A very present help* is literally "a help in troubles found exceedingly": proved, found to be so. **Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed.** *Removed* is "change" or "quake." **and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.** The picture is of the world in upheaval: earth shaking, mountains falling into the sea, waters raging. Isaiah used the same picture for the Assyrian army: "the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels" (Isa. 8:7). **Selah.** It links the roaring of the waters with the quiet river of the next verse.

> **46:4** *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.*
>
> **46:5** *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. The contrast is deliberate. Outside, the sea roars; inside, a river flows quietly. *River* is *nahar*, a stream that always flows, not a wadi that dries up. Jerusalem has no great river. But Hezekiah had cut a tunnel through the rock to bring the waters of the spring Gihon inside the city to the pool of Siloam, and he stopped the springs outside so that the Assyrians would find no water (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:3, 4, 30). Isaiah contrasted "the waters of Shiloah that go softly," which the people had despised, with the flood of Assyria (Isa. 8:6–8). The city had water; the besiegers did not. And beyond the water, the river is the picture of God's own supply (36:8; Ezek. 47:1–12; Rev. 22:1). **the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.** *Most High* is *Elyon*, God as possessor of heaven and earth (Gen. 14:19), Lord over all the nations.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. The same word as "removed" (v. 2) and "moved" (v. 6): the earth is moved and the kingdoms are moved, but Zion is not. **God shall help her, and that right early.** Literally, "at the turning of the morning." When the people of Jerusalem woke, the Assyrian army lay dead (Isa. 37:36).

> **46:6** *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*
>
> **46:7** *The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved. *Raged* is the word used of the roaring waters in verse 3: the nations roared like the sea. **he uttered his voice, the earth melted.** One word from God, and it was over. **The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts is with us.** Jehovah *Sabaoth*, the God of the armies of heaven (1 Sam. 1:3). In Isaiah 8, against the Assyrian flood, the cry was "Immanuel," "God with us" (Isa. 8:8, 10). **the God of Jacob is our refuge.** *Refuge* here is a different word from verse 1: *misgab*, a high tower, too high to reach. The God of Jacob, the God who took up a man with nothing in his hand and kept him (Gen. 28:15; 32:10). **Selah.**

> **46:8** *Come, behold the works of the LORD [Jehovah], what desolations he hath made in the earth.*
>
> **46:9** *He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.*
>
> **46:10** *Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*
>
> **46:11** *The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

Come, behold the works of the LORD [Jehovah], what desolations he hath made in the earth. The invitation to walk out and see the field of the dead (compare 48:12, 13). **He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.** The weapons of the enemy destroyed. What God did at Jerusalem in one night is a picture of what He will do in all the earth (Isa. 2:4; Mic. 4:3).

Be still, and know that I am God. God speaks. *Be still* is "let go," "desist": stop striving. It is addressed to the nations as much as to Israel. **I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.** The refrain closes the Psalm.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 47 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 46. The words "A Song upon Alamoth" that the King James Version prints over Psalm 46 belong partly to Psalm 45 ("upon Alamoth") and partly to Psalm 46 ("A Song"). See Psalm 45, Its close.

Looking back

Psalm 46 is member *C*, the help of the Deliverer, answering the cry of Psalm 44. There the enemy reproached and blasphemed; here the enemy is silenced, his weapons are burned, and God says "Be still." Martin Luther's hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" was drawn from this Psalm.

Psalm 47 — "God Is the King of All the Earth"

Place: Book II; Psalms 42–49; member *D* (the Deliverer praised), first part. **Writer:** the sons of Korah. **Occasion:** not named; it belongs with Psalms 46 and 48.

Introduction

Psalm 47 calls all the peoples to clap their hands and shout to God, because He is "a great King over all the earth" (v. 2). The Assyrian had called his master "the great king, the king of Assyria" (Isa. 36:4, 13). This Psalm answers: there is only one great King, and He has shown it.

Structure

Two matching halves:

- V | t | 1. A call to praise.
- u | 2. The reasons.
- W | 3, 4. The nations, and Israel.
- X | 5. God exalted.
- *V* | *t* | 6. A call to praise.
- *u* | 7, 8. The reason.
- *W* | 9-. The nations, and Israel.
- *X* | -9. God exalted.

The Psalm

A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

> **1** *O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.*
> **2** *For the LORD [Jehovah] most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.*
> **3** *He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.*
> **4** *He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.*
> **5** *God is gone up with a shout, the LORD [Jehovah] with the sound of a trumpet.*
> **6** *Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.*
> **7** *For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.*
> **8** *God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*
> **9** *The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.*

Psalm 47 has no sub-scription. Psalm 48 begins with its own super-scription, "A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah."

Verse by verse

> **47:1** *O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.*
>
> **47:2** *For the LORD [Jehovah] most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.*
>
> **47:3** *He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.*
>
> **47:4** *He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.*

O clap your hands, all ye people. *People* is "peoples": the nations. They clap as at the crowning of a king (2 Kings 11:12). **shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the LORD [Jehovah] most high is terrible.** To be feared and revered. **he is a great King over all the earth.** See the Introduction.

He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. *Shall subdue* may be read "subdueth" or "may He subdue." **He shall choose our inheritance for us.** He chooses Israel's inheritance, the land. **the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.** The pride of Jacob, the land in which Jacob gloried. **Selah.** It links what God did for Hezekiah and Zion with God's exaltation in the following verses.

> **47:5** *God is gone up with a shout, the LORD [Jehovah] with the sound of a trumpet.*
>
> **47:6** *Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.*
>
> **47:7** *For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.*

God is gone up with a shout, the LORD [Jehovah] with the sound of a trumpet. *Gone up* is "exalted," the same word as "greatly exalted" in verse 9. The picture is of a king going up to his throne after victory, with shouting and trumpets, as when David brought the Ark up to Zion "with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet" (2 Sam. 6:15). The verse has often been applied to the ascension of Christ. The New Testament does not apply it so, and in the Psalm it is God who is exalted after the deliverance. It can rightly be read as a picture of what God did for His Son: the One whom God raised from the dead, God also "hath highly exalted" to His right hand (Phil. 2:9; Acts 2:32–36). **Weight:** the picture is fair; the Psalm itself is about God's exaltation as King.

Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. Four times "sing praises." **For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.** *With understanding* is *maschil*: with skill, with instruction. Paul said, "I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15).

> **47:8** *God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*
>
> **47:9** *The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.*

God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. *Reigneth* is "hath become King," "hath begun to reign." **The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham.** The words "even" and "unto" are not in the Hebrew. The princes of the nations gather *as* the people of the God of Abraham: the nations join Israel. It is the promise to Abraham fulfilled: "in

thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). **for the shields of the earth belong unto God.** *Shields* are the rulers, the protectors of the people (89:18; Hos. 4:18 margin). **he is greatly exalted.**

Its close

Psalm 47 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 47 is the first part of member *D*, the Deliverer praised. The Deliverer of Psalm 45 is the King; here God Himself is the King of all the earth. The cry of Psalm 44 ("Arise for our help") is answered in Psalm 46, and here the answer is celebrated: God is exalted, the nations gather as His people, and the promise to Abraham is in view.

Psalm 48 — "Great Is the LORD [Jehovah], and Greatly to Be Praised"

Place: Book II; Psalms 42–49; member *D* (the Deliverer praised), second part. **Writer:** the sons of Korah. **Occasion:** the deliverance of Zion (see Psalm 46).

Introduction

Psalm 48 is the song of the city. The kings came, saw, were afraid, and fled. Now the people go out and walk around Zion and count its towers. Not one has fallen. "As we have heard, so have we seen" (v. 8): what the fathers told (44:1), this generation has seen with its own eyes.

Structure

- Y | 1-. Praise.
- Z | -1–3. Zion a joy. In her palaces God is known.
- A | 4–8. The reason ("For"): God's *power*, shown in her establishment "for ever." Selah.
- *Y* | 9, 10. Praise.
- *Z* | 11–13. Zion to rejoice. In her towers, strength surveyed.
- *A* | 14. The reason ("For"): God's *favour*, shown in guidance "for evermore."

The Psalm

A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah.

> **1** *Great is the LORD [Jehovah], and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.*
> **2** *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*
> **3** *God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*
> **4** *For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.*
> **5** *They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.*
> **6** *Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.*
> **7** *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.*
> **8** *As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.*
> **9** *We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.*
> **10** *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.*

> **11** *Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.*
>
> **12** *Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.*
>
> **13** *Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.*
>
> **14** *For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 49.

Verse by verse

> **48:1** *Great is the LORD [Jehovah], and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.*
>
> **48:2** *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*
>
> **48:3** *God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*

Great is the LORD [Jehovah], and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation. Beautiful in elevation: high and lovely. **the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion.** It will be so (Isa. 2:2, 3). **on the sides of the north.** Mount Moriah and the temple lay on the north side of the city of David. **the city of the great King.** The Lord Jesus quoted this when He forbade swearing "by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King" (Matt. 5:35). **God is known in her palaces for a refuge.** He has made Himself known as her high tower (*misgab*, as in 46:7).

> **48:4** *For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.*
>
> **48:5** *They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.*
>
> **48:6** *Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.*
>
> **48:7** *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.*
>
> **48:8** *As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.*

For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. The vassal kings who marched with the Assyrian. Sennacherib's own records list the kings who brought him tribute on that campaign. **They saw it, and so they marvelled.** The figure *Asyndeton*, with the "and"s left out in the Hebrew: "They saw, they marvelled, they were troubled, they hasted away." The speed of the words matches the speed of their flight. **Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.** Sudden, helpless, unavoidable. **Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.** The great ocean-going ships, broken by a storm off the coast (Ezek. 27:25, 26). As easily as God breaks a fleet, He broke the kings.

As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts. See the Introduction. This links back to 44:1. **God will establish it for ever. Selah.** The *Selah* connects God's power (vv. 4–8) with the meditation of the people in His temple (v. 9).

> **48:9** *We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.*

> **48:10** *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.*
>
> **48:11** *Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.*

We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. *Thought* is "pictured," "pondered," or, as some read it, "waited silently." The people, gathered in the temple, think on His lovingkindness. Hezekiah had spread Sennacherib's letter before Jehovah in that very house (Isa. 37:14). **According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth.** His praise is as great as His Name. **thy right hand is full of righteousness. Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.** The *daughters of Judah* are the towns of Judah (Josh. 15:45), which Sennacherib had captured (Isa. 36:1). His judgments on the Assyrian are their joy.

> **48:12** *Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.*
>
> **48:13** *Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.*
>
> **48:14** *For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.*

Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. They could not do this during the siege. Now they are free to walk outside the walls and count the towers. *Tell* is "count." **Mark ye well her bulwarks.** Her ramparts. **consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.** As their fathers had told them (44:1), they must tell their children.

For this God is our God for ever and ever. *This* God, the God who has done this. **he will be our guide even unto death.** Several manuscripts and early versions read the Hebrew *'al-muth* as one word, *'olamoth*, "for evermore," which matches "for ever and ever" in the line before and "for ever" in verse 8 (A, *A*). The Masoretic division gives "unto death." Either way, He guides His people to the end. **Weight:** "for evermore" fits the structure better; "even unto death" is the received reading and is also true.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 49 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 48. A song written for one great deliverance was handed over for the worship of the house of God.

Looking back

Psalm 48 is the second part of member *D*, the Deliverer praised. Psalm 47 praised God as King of all the earth; Psalm 48 praises Him as the defender of His city. Together they answer Psalm 45 (D): the King of glory, and the city of the great King.

Psalm 49 — "None of Them Can by Any Means Redeem His Brother"

Place: Book II; Psalms 42–49; member *B* (the ruin, and the need of redemption realised). **Writer:** the sons of Korah. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 49 closes the division as Psalms 42–43 opened it: with the ruin realised and no help from man. But it goes further. It speaks to the whole world, "low and high, rich and poor, together" (v. 2), and it opens a riddle: why should the righteous fear when the rich oppress him? The answer is death. Every man dies, the wise man and the fool alike, and no man can pay a ransom to keep his brother alive. "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave" (v. 15). Redemption must come from God. That prepares for the next division, concerning Israel's Redeemer.

Structure

The introduction (1–4) has two parts:

- I. 1, 2. All to hear.
- II. 3, 4. I will speak.

The Psalm itself (5–20):

- B | v | 5. Why fear? (two lines)
- w | 6–9. No redemption from man. (four lines)
- x | 10-. Death. (two lines)
- y | -10, 11. Worldly wisdom. (four lines)
- C | 12. Man like the beasts. (two lines)
- *B* | *y* | 13. Worldly wisdom. Selah.
- *x* | 14. Death.
- *w* | 15. Redemption for me. Selah.
- *v* | 16–19. Fear not! (four lines)
- *C* | 20. Man like the beasts. (two lines)

The second half reverses the first. "Why fear?" (5) becomes "Fear not!" (16–19), and "no redemption from man" (6–9) is answered by "God will redeem my soul" (15). Each half ends with the refrain, "like the beasts that perish."

The Psalm

A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

> **1** *Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:*
> **2** *Both low and high, rich and poor, together.*
> **3** *My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.*
> **4** *I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.*
> **5** *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*
> **6** *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;*
> **7** *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:*
> **8** *(For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)*
> **9** *That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.*
> **10** *For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.*
> **11** *Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.*
> **12** *Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.*
> **13** *This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.*
> **14** *Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.*
> **15** *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.*
> **16** *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;*
> **17** *For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.*
> **18** *Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.*
> **19** *He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.*
> **20** *Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.*

Psalm 49 has no sub-scription. Psalm 50 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of Asaph."

Verse by verse

> **49:1** *Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:*
> **49:2** *Both low and high, rich and poor, together.*
> **49:3** *My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.*
> **49:4** *I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.*

Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world. *World* is *cheled*, the world as short-lived, passing (compare 39:5, "mine age"). The very word chosen for "world" speaks of its brevity. **Both**

low and high, rich and poor, together. *Low and high* are "sons of Adam and sons of man (*ish*)": common men and men of rank. The message is for all. **My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.** He listens first, then speaks. A *dark saying* is a riddle (Num. 12:8; Judg. 14:12). The riddle is set out in verse 5.

> **49:5** *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*
>
> **49:6** *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;*
>
> **49:7** *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:*
>
> **49:8** *(For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)*
>
> **49:9** *That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.*

Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about? *The iniquity of my heels* is better read "the iniquity of those who dog my steps," the oppressors who follow at his heels. Why should he fear them? **They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.** The rich oppressors.

None of them can by any means redeem his brother. *Redeem* is *padah*. The Hebrew doubles the verb: "redeeming, he cannot redeem." No amount of wealth can buy back a life from death. **nor give to God a ransom for him.** *Ransom* is *kopher*, an atonement price (Ex. 21:30; 30:12). **(For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)** The price is too high, and it must be given up for ever: no man can pay it. **That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.** This is what the ransom would have to buy. No rich man can buy it, for himself or for his brother. Only One has not seen corruption: "thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (16:10; Acts 2:27, 31). The Son of man came "to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

> **49:10** *For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.*
>
> **49:11** *Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.*
>
> **49:12** *Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.*

For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish. Death takes the wise and the foolish alike (Eccles. 2:16). **and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever . . . they call their lands after their own names.** They name their estates after themselves, as if they would last.

Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. The refrain. *Man* is *adam*. *Abideth not* is "lodgeth not," does not stay the night. However high he rises, he dies like an animal.

> **49:13** *This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.*

> **49:14** *Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.*
>
> **49:15** *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.*

This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah. Their children follow the same folly. The *Selah* turns from their foolish confidence to what happens to them.

Like sheep they are laid in the grave. *Grave* is *Sheol*, the grave, the state of the dead. They go down to it like a flock. **death shall feed on them.** Death shepherds them: the figure *Prosopopoeia*, death as a shepherd leading his flock. **and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.** *The morning* is the morning of resurrection. The upright will rise and rule (Dan. 12:2; Luke 14:14; John 5:28, 29). **and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.** Their form wastes away in Sheol, far from their lofty houses.

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave. The answer to the riddle. *Redeem* is again *padah*: what no man can do for his brother (v. 7), God will do. *The power of the grave* is "the hand of Sheol." He will take the Psalmist out of death's hand. **for he shall receive me.** Literally "take me." The rich man takes nothing with him when he dies (v. 17); the righteous man is taken by God out of the grave. This is redemption from death by resurrection: the Psalmist does not say he will escape dying, but that God will redeem him "from the power of the grave." **Selah.** It connects the fear and folly of the rich with the hope of the upright.

> **49:16** *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;*
>
> **49:17** *For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.*
>
> **49:18** *Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.*
>
> **49:19** *He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.*
>
> **49:20** *Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.*

Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim. 6:7). **Though while he lived he blessed his soul.** He congratulated himself (Luke 12:19). **and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.** The world praises the man who does well for himself. **He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.** He joins his fathers in the dark.

Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish. The refrain again, with one change: "and understandeth not." In verse 12, man in honour "abideth not." Here, man in honour who *does not understand* is like the beasts. The man who understands that God alone can redeem him is not.

Its close

Psalm 49 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 49 is member *B*, answering Psalms 42–43 (B). Both teach that there is no help from man. There the soul longed for God and could not reach Him; here the rich trust in wealth and cannot buy one more day of life. But here the hope is spelled out: "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave." The ruin is complete; the Redeemer must be God's own provision.

Looking Back on Psalms 42–49

The first division of Book II, all "for the sons of Korah," sets out Israel's ruin and the beginning of its answer.

- **The ruin (42–43; 49).** The soul far from God's house, mocked by its enemies (42–43). The rich who cannot redeem a brother, and the death that takes all (49). No help from man.
- **The cry and the help (44; 46).** The nation scattered and slain for God's sake, crying "Awake . . . arise for our help" (44); and the God who is "a very present help," who breaks the bow and says "Be still" (46).
- **The Deliverer praised (45; 47–48).** The King fairer than the children of men, whose throne is for ever, and His bride (45); God the great King over all the earth (47); and the city of the great King, delivered and established (48).

The division begins with "Where is thy God?" (42:3) and ends with "God will redeem my soul" (49:15). The next division turns to the Redeemer Himself.

Psalms 50–60: Israel's Redeemer

A. What this division is about

The first division ended with the truth that no man can redeem his brother; only God can (49:7, 15). The second division turns to the Redeemer. It opens with God Himself breaking the silence and speaking to His people (50). It ends with five "Michtam" Psalms (56–60), in which God's people speak to Him of the Redeemer and His work: of death and of deliverance from death.

Between these stand two kinds of men. In Psalm 51 a transgressor confesses his sin and is forgiven. In Psalms 52–55 transgressors do not confess, and are destroyed. The Redeemer's work divides men by how they respond to God: those who confess and those who do not.

All of Psalms 51–60 are David's, and most of them are tied by their Titles to the events of his life: his sin with Bathsheba (51), Doeg the Edomite (52), the Ziphites (54), Absalom and Ahithophel (55), the Philistines at Gath (56), the cave (57), Saul's men watching his house (59), and the wars with Aram and Edom (60). David's own sufferings and deliverances become the picture of the sufferings and deliverance of the Redeemer.

B. Its structure

- F | 50. God speaks to His people. He breaks the silence, as in Exodus 3:4 (compare Heb. 12:25, 26).
- G | 51. Transgression confessed and forgiven.
- *G* | 52–55. Transgressors unconfessed and destroyed.
- *F* | 56–60. God's people speak to Him of Israel's Redeemer and His work: telling of death and resurrection (Michtam).

God speaks to His people (F); His people answer, speaking to Him (*F*). In between, two responses to Him: confession (G) and its absence (*G*).

C. Its purpose

This division teaches that redemption is God's work from first to last. God speaks first (50). He does not want the blood of bulls but a thankful heart (50:13, 14) and "a broken and a contrite heart" (51:17). He forgives the man who confesses (51). He destroys the man who trusts in himself (52–55). And He delivers the one who trusts in Him from death itself (56:13), as He would deliver the Redeemer, raising Him from the dead and exalting Him to His right hand.

Psalm 50 — "The Mighty God, Even the LORD [Jehovah], Hath Spoken"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member F (God speaks to His people). **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Asaph was one of David's three chief musicians, with Heman and Ethan (Jeduthun) (1 Chron. 15:16–19; 16:4–7). He was also called "the seer" (2 Chron. 29:30), and his Psalms often carry a prophet's voice. Psalm 50 is the only Psalm of Asaph in Book II; the other eleven (73–83) begin Book III.

The Psalm is a scene of judgment. God summons heaven and earth as witnesses (v. 4), as Moses did (Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:2), and He speaks to two groups among His people. To the first, His faithful people, He says He does not need their sacrifices: He owns every beast. What He wants is thanksgiving, kept vows, and prayer (vv. 7–15). To the second, "the wicked" who recite His statutes while they live in sin, He says that His silence was not approval, and that He will tear them in pieces (vv. 16–22).

Structure

- D | 1–6. The Psalmist.
- E | F | 7–13. Reproof. Negative: "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices." Owns them.
- G | 14, 15-. Duty: praise and prayer. } His people addressed.
- H | -15. Promise: "I will deliver."
- *D* | 16-. The Psalmist.
- *E* | *F* | -16–22. Reproof. Positive: "What hast thou to do . . . ?" Disowns them.
- *G* | 23-. Duty: praise. } The wicked addressed.
- *H* | -23. Promise: "I will shew."

The Psalm

A Psalm of Asaph.

> **1** *The mighty God, even the LORD [Jehovah], hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.*
> **2** *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*
> **3** *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*
> **4** *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.*

> **5** *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*
>
> **6** *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.*
>
> **7** *Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.*
>
> **8** *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.*
>
> **9** *I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.*
>
> **10** *For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.*
>
> **11** *I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.*
>
> **12** *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.*
>
> **13** *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?*
>
> **14** *Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:*
>
> **15** *And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*
>
> **16** *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?*
>
> **17** *Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.*
>
> **18** *When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.*
>
> **19** *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.*
>
> **20** *Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.*
>
> **21** *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*
>
> **22** *Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*
>
> **23** *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 51.

Verse by verse

> **50:1** *The mighty God, even the LORD [Jehovah], hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.*
>
> **50:2** *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*
>
> **50:3** *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*

The mighty God, even the LORD [Jehovah], hath spoken. Three Names: *El*, *Elohim*, *Jehovah*, "the God of gods, Jehovah." The same three stand together in Joshua 22:22. **and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.** The whole earth is summoned. **Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.** As He once shone forth from Sinai (Deut. 33:2), He now shines from Zion. **Our**

God shall come, and shall not keep silence. God has been silent while men sinned (v. 21); now He will speak. **a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.** As at Sinai (Ex. 19:16–18).

> **50:4** *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.*
>
> **50:5** *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*
>
> **50:6** *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.*

He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Heaven and earth as witnesses (Deut. 4:26; 30:19; 31:28). **Gather my saints together unto me.** *Saints* is *chasidim*, those who have received His favour. **those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.** Israel was brought into covenant with God by sacrifice at Sinai (Ex. 24:5–8). The Lord Jesus spoke of His elect being gathered "from the four winds" (Matt. 24:31). **And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.** The *Selah* connects the call to hear (v. 4) with what God says (v. 7): the reader must take in what true worship is.

> **50:7** *Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.*
>
> **50:8** *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.*
>
> **50:9** *I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.*
>
> **50:10** *For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.*
>
> **50:11** *I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.*
>
> **50:12** *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.*
>
> **50:13** *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?*

Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. The words of the first commandment (Ex. 20:2). **I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.** His complaint is not that they failed to offer them. They did offer them. **I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.** God does not need anything from man. **I know all the fowls of the mountains . . . If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.** *World* is *tebel*, the habitable world. Paul said the same at Athens: God is not "worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing" (Acts 17:25). **Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?** The heathen thought their gods fed on sacrifices. The God of Israel does not.

> **50:14** *Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:*
>
> **50:15** *And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

Offer unto God thanksgiving. *Offer* is *zabach*, to sacrifice. Thanksgiving is the sacrifice He wants: "the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15). **and pay thy vows unto the most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and**

thou shalt glorify me. Praise, vows kept, and prayer in trouble: this is true worship. And His answer is deliverance.

> **50:16** *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?*
>
> **50:17** *Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.*
>
> **50:18** *When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.*
>
> **50:19** *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.*
>
> **50:20** *Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.*
>
> **50:21** *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*

But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? The wicked here are within Israel: men who recite the Law and live against it. Paul used the same argument: "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" (Rom. 2:21, 22). **Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.** The eighth and seventh commandments. **Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.** The ninth. **Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.**

These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself. They took God's patience for approval, and made Him in their own image. **but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.** He will set out their sins, one by one, as in a lawsuit.

> **50:22** *Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*
>
> **50:23** *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.*

Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. The figure of a lion (Hos. 5:14). **Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.** The sacrifice of thanksgiving again (v. 14). **and to him that ordereth his conversation aright.** *Conversation* is "way." Several manuscripts and early versions read, "and there is a way by which I will shew him." **will I shew the salvation of God.** The last word of God's speech is salvation.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 51 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 50.

Looking back

Psalm 50 is member F: God breaks His silence and speaks to His people. It answers to Psalms 56–60 (*F*), where His people speak to Him. It prepares for Psalm 51: God does not want bulls, but "a broken and a contrite heart" (51:16, 17). And it prepares for Psalms 52–55: the wicked who hate instruction will be torn in pieces.

Psalm 51 — "Have Mercy upon Me, O God"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member G (transgression confessed and forgiven). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba" (Title; 2 Sam. 11–12).

Introduction

David took Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and when she was with child he arranged Uriah's death in battle (2 Sam. 11). For about a year he kept silent. Then Nathan came to him with the parable of the rich man who took the poor man's lamb, and said, "Thou art the man." David answered, "I have sinned against Jehovah." Nathan said, "Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Sam. 12:1–13). Psalm 51 is David's prayer of confession. Psalm 32 is his song after he knew he was forgiven.

The Psalm answers Psalm 50 directly. God said He wanted no bulls but thanksgiving (50:13, 14). David says, "thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it . . . The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit" (51:16, 17). The Law provided no sacrifice for murder or adultery; both carried the death penalty (Lev. 20:10; Num. 35:31). David could bring nothing. He could only cast himself on God's mercy.

Structure

- J | 1, 2. Prayer.
- K | 3–5. Transgression. Confession.
- L | a | 6. What God desires.
- b | 7, 8. Prayer, and resulting praise.
- *J* | 9–12. Prayer.
- *K* | 13. Transgressors. Instruction.
- *L* | *b* | 14, 15. Prayer, and resulting praise.
- *a* | 16–19. What God desires.

The Psalm moves twice through the same steps: prayer, then the sin (confessed in the first half, taught to others in the second), then what God desires and the praise that follows.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.

> **1** *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*
> **2** *Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*
> **3** *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

> **4** *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*
>
> **5** *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*
>
> **6** *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*
>
> **7** *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*
>
> **8** *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*
>
> **9** *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.*
>
> **10** *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*
>
> **11** *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*
>
> **12** *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*
>
> **13** *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*
>
> **14** *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*
>
> **15** *O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*
>
> **16** *For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.*
>
> **17** *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
>
> **18** *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*
>
> **19** *Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 52.

Verse by verse

> **51:1** *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*
>
> **51:2** *Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

Have mercy upon me, O God. *Have mercy* is "be gracious," show favour to one who has no claim. **according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies.** He pleads God's character, not his own. **blot out my transgressions.** As a debt is wiped from a book (Ex. 32:32, 33; Isa. 43:25; 44:22). **Wash me throughly from mine iniquity.** *Wash* is the word for washing a garment by treading it, scrubbing it thoroughly. **and cleanse me from my sin.** *Cleanse* is the priest's word for pronouncing clean (Lev. 13:6). Three words for sin: *transgression* (rebellion), *iniquity* (perverseness), *sin* (missing the mark). Three words for forgiveness: blot out, wash, cleanse.

> **51:3** *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

> **51:4** *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*
>
> **51:5** *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Confession is the condition of forgiveness (32:5; 1 John 1:9). **Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.** David had sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah, and against the nation. But every sin is first a sin against God (Gen. 39:9). **that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.** Paul quotes this: God is shown to be right in His sentence (Rom. 3:4).

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. This is not a charge against his mother. It is a confession that his sin came from what he is: he was a sinner from the beginning (Job 14:4; Rom. 5:12). The sin with Bathsheba was the fruit of a nature he had from birth.

> **51:6** *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*
>
> **51:7** *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*
>
> **51:8** *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts. God wants truth in the heart, not only in outward acts. *Inward parts* are the reins: the hidden depths. David had hidden his sin for a year. **and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.**

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. *Purge* is "un-sin me": cleanse me from sin, as by a sin offering. Hyssop was used to sprinkle the blood of the Passover (Ex. 12:22), the blood and water for the cleansed leper (Lev. 14:4–7), and the water of purification for one defiled by the dead (Num. 19:18). David asks God to do for him what those sprinklings pictured. **wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.** "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. 1:18). **Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.** His guilt felt like broken bones (32:3, 4).

> **51:9** *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.*
>
> **51:10** *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*
>
> **51:11** *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*
>
> **51:12** *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Let God look away from his sins, not from him. **Create in me a clean heart, O God.** *Create* is *bara*, the word of Genesis 1:1: something only God can do, a new work. A clean heart is not the old heart repaired. **and renew a right spirit within me.** *Right* is "steadfast," firm.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. David had seen the spirit of God depart from Saul (1 Sam. 16:14), and he feared the same. Under the old covenant, holy spirit was given to particular men for a particular work, and could be taken away. In the administration of grace, holy spirit is given as a gift to every believer, and they are "sealed" with it "unto the day of redemption"

(Eph. 1:13; 4:30). A believer today does not need to pray David's prayer. **Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.** *Free* is "willing": a willing spirit, glad to obey.

> **51:13** *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*
>
> **51:14** *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*
>
> **51:15** *O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Forgiven, he will teach others. Psalm 32 is the fulfilment: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go" (32:8).

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God. *Bloodguiltiness* is "bloods," plural of majesty: great bloodshed, the murder of Uriah. He names the sin. **thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.** *Lord* is one of the places where the scribes record that *Jehovah* stood in the original text. A man under the guilt of blood could not praise; let God open his lips.

> **51:16** *For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.*
>
> **51:17** *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
>
> **51:18** *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*
>
> **51:19** *Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. For his sins the Law had no sacrifice. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.** *Sacrifices* is plural of majesty: the great sacrifice. *Contrite* is "crushed." *Will not despise* means He will greatly value it: the figure *Tapeinosis*, saying less to mean more.

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness. Some hold that these two verses were added later, perhaps by Hezekiah, or after the exile, when the walls lay in ruins. But the walls of Jerusalem were being built in David's reign (2 Sam. 5:9; 1 Kings 3:1), and the structure needs these verses: they complete member *a*, answering verse 6. David's sin had endangered the nation; his prayer for the city follows naturally. **Weight:** the verses belong to the Psalm as it stands, and fit David's own day. **with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.** When the heart is right, the sacrifices are acceptable again.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 52 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 51. A king's personal confession was handed over for public worship, and became the confession of the nation.

Looking back

Psalm 51 is member G: transgression confessed and forgiven. It answers to Psalms 52–55 (*G*), where transgressors do not confess and are destroyed. The difference is not that David sinned less than Doeg or Ahithophel. It is that David confessed, and cast himself on God's mercy.

Psalm 52 — "Why Boastest Thou Thyself in Mischief, O Mighty Man?"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member *G* (transgressors unconfessed and destroyed), first of four. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech" (Title; 1 Sam. 21:1–9; 22:9–19).

Introduction

Fleeing from Saul, David came to Ahimelech the priest at Nob and asked for bread and a weapon. Ahimelech gave him the holy bread and the sword of Goliath (1 Sam. 21:1–9). Doeg the Edomite, Saul's chief herdsman, was there, and he told Saul. Saul had Ahimelech and the priests brought before him and ordered them killed. When his own men would not lift a hand against the priests of Jehovah, Doeg did it: he killed eighty-five priests and put the city of Nob to the sword (1 Sam. 22:9–19).

Psalms 52–55 are four Psalms of instruction (each is a "Maschil") concerning the defeat of enemies. The first is Doeg.

Structure

- M | 1–5. The enemy apostrophised (Doeg).
- N | 6. The righteous ones (plural: Israel).
- *M* | 7. The enemy apostrophised (Doeg).
- *N* | 8, 9. The righteous one (singular: David).

The Psalm

Maschil, A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.

> **1** *Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.*
> **2** *Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.*
> **3** *Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.*
> **4** *Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.*
> **5** *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.*
> **6** *The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:*
> **7** *Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.*
> **8** *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*

> **9** *I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.*

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 53.

Verse by verse

> **52:1** *Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.*
>
> **52:2** *Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.*
>
> **52:3** *Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.*
>
> **52:4** *Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.*

Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? *Mighty man* is *gibbor*, a champion: said with scorn of a man whose great deed was to kill unarmed priests. **the goodness of God endureth continually.** *Goodness* is "lovingkindness." Doeg's malice is for a day; God's lovingkindness lasts. **Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.** Doeg told the truth, that David had come to Ahimelech, but told it so as to destroy. **Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.** *Devouring* is "swallowing up": words that destroy.

> **52:5** *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.*

God shall likewise destroy thee for ever. As Doeg destroyed, so God will destroy him. Four verbs: **he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living.** *Take away* is to snatch up like coals from a fire; *pluck out* is to tear away like a tent; *root out* is to pull up like a tree (the opposite of the green olive tree in v. 8). **Selah.** It connects God's judgment with the response of the righteous.

> **52:6** *The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:*
>
> **52:7** *Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.*

The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him. They see God's judgment and fear God; and they laugh at the folly of the man who trusted himself. **Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength.** *Man* is *geber*, a strong man. **but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.** He was Saul's chief herdsman, a man of wealth (1 Sam. 21:7).

> **52:8** *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*
>
> **52:9** *I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.*

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. Doeg will be uprooted; David is rooted in God's house, and green. The olive tree lives for centuries. **I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever. I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it.** David ascribes the deliverance to God: "Thou hast done it." **and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.** Some manuscripts read, "I will sing of thy name, for it is good."

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Mahalath"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 53; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 52. *Mahalath* is from *machol*, "dancing": "concerning the great dancings." When David returned from killing Goliath, the women came out of all the cities of Israel "singing and dancing," and sang "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:6, 7). Those dancings began Saul's jealousy, and Saul's jealousy drove David to Nob, where he received Goliath's sword, and where Doeg saw him. *The Chief Musician* reads the sub-scription so: it marks the Psalm as one of those connected with David and Goliath, the turning-point of David's history. Over Psalm 53, it has no evident meaning.

Looking back

Psalm 52 is the first of the four members of *G*: transgressors unconfessed and destroyed. Doeg never confessed. He trusted in his riches and his tongue, and God rooted him out. David, who had sinned too (51), trusted in God's mercy and flourished like an olive tree.

Psalm 53 — "The Fool Hath Said in His Heart, There Is No God"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member *G* (transgressors unconfessed and destroyed), second. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 53 is Psalm 14 again, with changes. The main change is that the Name *Jehovah* in Psalm 14 is replaced by *Elohim*, "God," throughout. Psalm 14 has *Elohim* three times and *Jehovah* four times; Psalm 53 has *Elohim* seven times and *Jehovah* not at all. This fits the character of Book II (see the Introduction to Book II). Jehovah is God in covenant with Israel; Elohim is God the Creator, in relation to all His creatures. Psalm 14 was David's Psalm for Israel; Psalm 53 was adapted for wider use.

The other change is in verse 5, which differs from Psalm 14:5, 6. In Psalm 14 God is in the generation of the righteous; here God has scattered the bones of the enemy who encamped against Israel. (Chapter 12, F, explains how this study treats Psalms that repeat.)

Structure

- O | 1-. The fool. God nowhere.
- P | a | -1. Man. Depravity.
- b | 2. God. Inspection.
- *P* | *a* | 3. Man. Depravity.
- *b* | 4. God. Expostulation.
- *O* | 5, 6. The righteous. God now here.

The fool says "There is no God"; the Psalm ends with God present, scattering the enemy and bringing salvation out of Zion. The figure *Epanadiplosis* frames verse 1 and verse 3: "there is none that doeth good."

The Psalm

Maschil, A Psalm of David.

> **1** *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.*
>
> **2** *God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.*
>
> **3** *Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

> **4** *Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.*
>
> **5** *There were they in great fear, where no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.*
>
> **6** *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 54.

Verse by verse

> **53:1** *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.*
>
> **53:2** *God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.*
>
> **53:3** *Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. *Fool* is *nabal*: not a man without intelligence, but a man who is morally foolish, who acts as if God did not matter. Nabal of Carmel was one (1 Sam. 25:25). **Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity.** Psalm 14 has "abominable works"; here *iniquity* (*'avel*, deceit). **there is none that doeth good.**

God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. The same words as 14:2, with "God" for "the LORD." *Did understand* is *maschil*, the word of the Title. **Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.** Paul quoted 14:1–3 and 53:1–3 to prove that "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:10–12).

> **53:4** *Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.*

Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? God expostulates: do they not know? **who eat up my people as they eat bread.** They devour God's people as easily as they eat a meal. **they have not called upon God.**

> **53:5** *There were they in great fear, where no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.*
>
> **53:6** *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*

There were they in great fear, where no fear was. They were struck with terror suddenly, when there was nothing to fear. **for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth against thee.** This is the addition to Psalm 14. The enemy camped against Israel; God scattered his bones. In Book II, after Psalms

46–48, the words fit the night the Assyrian army died before Jerusalem (Isa. 37:36), and they fit any enemy God destroys before His people. **thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.**

Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! *Salvation* is plural of majesty: the great salvation. **When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.** *Bringeth back the captivity* means "restores the fortunes": it is used of restoration from any calamity (Job 42:10), not only of exile.

Its close: "To the chief Musician on Neginoth"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 54; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 53. *Neginoth* is "smitings": not stringed instruments, but the smiting of the enemy by God (Chapter 6, B). It fits verse 5 exactly: God smote and scattered the bones of the one who camped against His people. (Psalm 14, where verse 5 is different, has no such sub-scription.)

Looking back

Psalm 53 is the second member of *G*. The fool who denies God and devours His people is one of the transgressors who do not confess, and God scatters him. The Psalm that in Book I described man's depravity (Psalm 14, in the division of "the man of the earth") is used again in Book II for the enemies of Israel.

Psalm 54 — "Save Me, O God, by Thy Name"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member *G* (transgressors unconfessed and destroyed), third. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?" (Title; 1 Sam. 23:19–28; 26:1).

Introduction

Twice the men of Ziph, in the wilderness of Judah, went to Saul to betray David's hiding place (1 Sam. 23:19; 26:1). The first time Saul surrounded David on a mountain, and was about to take him, when a messenger came: "Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land." Saul turned back, and the place was called *Sela-hammahlekoth*, "the rock of divisions" (1 Sam. 23:26–28). Psalm 54 is short: a cry, a statement of trust, and thanksgiving for deliverance.

Structure

- Q | c | 1, 2. Prayer.
- d | 3. Reason: enemies assemble.
- R | 4. Jehovah my helper.
- *R* | 5. Jehovah my helper (requiting the enemy).
- *Q* | *c* | 6. Praise.
- *d* | 7. Reason: enemies scattered.

The Psalm

Maschil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

> **1** *Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.*
> **2** *Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.*
> **3** *For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.*
> **4** *Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.*
> **5** *He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.*
> **6** *I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD [Jehovah]; for it is good.*
> **7** *For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 55.

Verse by verse

> **54:1** *Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.*
>
> **54:2** *Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.*
>
> **54:3** *For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.*

Save me, O God, by thy name. God's Name is God Himself as He has revealed Himself. **and judge me by thy strength.** *Judge* is "vindicate." **Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers are risen up against me.** *Strangers*: the Ziphites were of Judah, David's own tribe, but they acted like aliens. Some manuscripts read "the proud," as in 86:14. **and oppressors seek after my soul.** Saul and his men. **they have not set God before them. Selah.** The *Selah* turns from the danger to David's true and only source of help.

> **54:4** *Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.*
>
> **54:5** *He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.*

Behold, God is mine helper. the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. *Lord* is one of the places where the scribes record that the original read *Jehovah*. *With them that uphold* is the figure of a God who stands among David's few supporters, and is all his support. **He shall reward evil unto mine enemies.** *Evil* is the harm they planned. It will come back on them. **cut them off in thy truth.** In faithfulness to His promise to David.

> **54:6** *I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD [Jehovah]; for it is good.*
>
> **54:7** *For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.*

I will freely sacrifice unto thee. A freewill offering, given gladly (Num. 15:3). **I will praise thy name, O LORD [Jehovah]; for it is good.** The one place in the Psalm where the Name Jehovah stands in the text as we have it. **For he hath delivered me out of all trouble.** *Delivered* is "rescued." At the rock of divisions, Saul was called away at the last moment. **and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.** The words "his desire" are supplied. He has looked on his enemies and seen Jehovah's deliverance.

Its close: "To the chief Musician on Neginoth"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 55; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 54. *Neginoth*, "smitings," refers to the great smitings of his enemies by Jehovah (v. 5): Saul was turned back by the smiting of the Philistines.

Looking back

Psalm 54 is the third member of *G*. The Ziphites, like Doeg, betrayed David and did not confess. God delivered David and turned the evil back on his enemies.

Psalm 55 — "Oh That I Had Wings Like a Dove!"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member *G* (transgressors unconfessed and destroyed), fourth. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named in the Title; the Psalm fits the rebellion of Absalom and the treachery of Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15–17).

Introduction

The worst enemy is the friend who betrays. In Absalom's rebellion, David's counsellor Ahithophel, "whose counsel . . . was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God" (2 Sam. 16:23), went over to Absalom. David prayed, "O Jehovah, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness" (2 Sam. 15:31). The details of the Psalm fit: violence in the city (v. 9), "my guide, and mine acquaintance" (v. 13), "we took sweet counsel together" (v. 14), the wish to flee to the wilderness (vv. 6–8), and the end of "bloody and deceitful men" who "shall not live out half their days" (v. 23). Ahithophel hanged himself (2 Sam. 17:23), and Absalom died young (2 Sam. 18:14). **Weight:** strong; the Title names no occasion, but the fit is close.

The Psalm also looks beyond David. Ahithophel is a picture of Judas, who ate with the Lord Jesus and betrayed Him, and who also hanged himself (Matt. 27:5). The Lord applied Psalm 41:9, a Psalm of the same betrayal, to Judas (John 13:18).

Structure

The Psalm has three parts, each built of prayer and its reason:

- S^1 | e | 1, 2. Prayer. Despondency.
- f | 3–5. Reason. "For."
- *e* | 6–9-. Prayer. Encouragement.
- *f* | -9–11. Reason. "For."
- T^1 | 12–14. The treachery of Ahithophel.
- S^2 | g | 15-. Prayer. Imprecatory.
- h | -15. Reason. "For."
- *g* | 16–18-. Prayer. Encouragement.
- *h* | -18, 19. Reason. "For."
- T^2 | 20, 21. The treachery of Ahithophel.
- S^3 | i | 22-. Encouragement.
- k | -22. Reason. Assurance.
- *i* | 23-. Imprecatory.

- *k* | -23. Reason. Assurance.

The Psalm

Maschil, A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.*
> **2** *Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;*
> **3** *Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.*
> **4** *My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.*
> **5** *Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.*
> **6** *And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*
> **7** *Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.*
> **8** *I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.*
> **9** *Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.*
> **10** *Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.*
> **11** *Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.*
> **12** *For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him:*
> **13** *But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.*
> **14** *We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.*
> **15** *Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.*
> **16** *As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD [Jehovah] shall save me.*
> **17** *Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.*
> **18** *He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me.*
> **19** *God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.*
> **20** *He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant.*
> **21** *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.*
> **22** *Cast thy burden upon the LORD [Jehovah], and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*
> **23** *But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.*

To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 56.

Verse by verse

> **55:1** *Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.*
>
> **55:2** *Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;*
>
> **55:3** *Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.*
>
> **55:4** *My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.*
>
> **55:5** *Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.*

Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise. *Make a noise* is "moan," like the cooing of a dove (Isa. 38:14; Ezek. 7:16). **Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me.** They roll trouble down on him, like stones. **and in wrath they hate me.**

My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. In Gethsemane the Lord Jesus said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26:38). **Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.**

> **55:6** *And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*
>
> **55:7** *Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.*
>
> **55:8** *I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.*
>
> **55:9** *Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.*
>
> **55:10** *Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.*
>
> **55:11** *Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.*

And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. The dove flies to the clefts of the rocks (Song 2:14; Jer. 48:28). **Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.** David did flee to the wilderness (2 Sam. 15:23, 28; 17:16). The *Selah* connects his wish to escape with the cause of it: what he wanted was deliverance, not merely distance. **I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.**

Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues. *Lord* is again one of the places the scribes altered from *Jehovah*. *Divide their tongues*: confuse their counsel, as at Babel (Gen. 11:7–9). It was answered: Hushai's counsel defeated Ahithophel's (2 Sam. 17:1–14). **for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it. Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.** Violence and strife walk the walls like sentries; mischief, sorrow, wickedness, deceit and guile fill the streets. The city of God has been taken over by evil.

> **55:12** *For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him:*

> **55:13** *But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.*
>
> **55:14** *We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.*

For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it . . . But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. *A man mine equal* is "a man according to my valuation": one he esteemed as himself. *Guide* is "counsellor": the very office Ahithophel held (2 Sam. 15:12; 1 Chron. 27:33). **We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.** They had worshipped together.

> **55:15** *Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.*
>
> **55:16** *As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD [Jehovah] shall save me.*
>
> **55:17** *Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.*
>
> **55:18** *He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me.*
>
> **55:19** *God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.*

Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell. *Quick* is "alive"; *hell* is *Sheol*, the grave. Like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, who went down alive into the pit (Num. 16:30–33). This is an imprecation, a prayer for judgment: such prayers belong to the administration of law, and Chapter 3 of Part One explains how we read them. **for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.**

As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD [Jehovah] shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud. The Hebrew day began at evening (Gen. 1:5). Daniel prayed three times a day (Dan. 6:10). *Cry aloud* is again "moan." **and he shall hear my voice. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me.** *Delivered* is "redeemed," *padah*. **for there were many with me.** That is, many were *with* him in the conflict, against him: "for they were many that strove with me."

God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. *Afflict* is "answer": God will answer them. He is enthroned from of old. **Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.** They have had no reverses, no troubles, and so they do not fear Him.

> **55:20** *He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant.*
>
> **55:21** *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.*

He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. Ahithophel. **The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.** Judas greeted the Lord with a kiss (Matt. 26:48, 49).

> **55:22** *Cast thy burden upon the LORD [Jehovah], and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

> **55:23** *But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.*

Cast thy burden upon the LORD [Jehovah], and he shall sustain thee. *Burden* is "lot" or "what is given": whatever He has given you to carry, give it back to Him. Peter: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). **he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.** *The righteous* is singular: the righteous one.

But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. Ahithophel hanged himself; Absalom was killed in the prime of life. **but I will trust in thee.** The last word is trust.

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 56; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 55. *Jonath-elem-rechokim* means "the dove of the distant terebinths" (or "of the silent ones far away"). It is a picture of David himself, fleeing into the wilderness like a dove, far from home (vv. 6–8). Over Psalm 56, about the Philistines at Gath, it has no evident link; under Psalm 55, with its "wings like a dove," it fits at once.

Looking back

Psalm 55 is the fourth member of *G*. Of all the transgressors who did not confess, the betrayer is the worst, and his end is the most terrible. The four Psalms 52–55 show the enemies of God's king: the slanderer (Doeg), the fool (53), the betrayers of his hiding-place (the Ziphites), and the friend who turned traitor (Ahithophel). All were destroyed. David, who confessed (51), was delivered.

Psalm 56 — "What Time I Am Afraid, I Will Trust in Thee"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member *F* (God's people speak of the Redeemer and His work), first of five Michtam Psalms. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when the Philistines took him in Gath" (Title; 1 Sam. 21:10–15).

Introduction

Psalms 56–60 are five "Michtam" Psalms of David. With Psalm 16 they make the six of the Psalter. *Michtam* is from *katam*, "to engrave": a writing cut into stone so that it cannot be erased. The Septuagint renders it "a writing for a pillar." *The Chief Musician* observes that each of the six is personal and direct, and that each speaks of deliverance from danger or death, even from the grave itself (16:10, 11; 56:13; 57:8; 58:10, 11; 59:16; 60:5, 12). What is engraved is the truth that God raises up His king from death. In Psalm 16 that truth is plain: Peter showed that David spoke of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:25–31). In Psalms 56–60 David's own deliverances from death are the picture.

Psalm 56 belongs to the day David fled from Saul to Achish, king of Gath, the city of Goliath. He was recognised, was afraid, and escaped by feigning madness (1 Sam. 21:10–15; compare Psalm 34, from the same day). The refrain of the Psalm is "In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear" (vv. 4, 10, 11).

Structure

- U | 1, 2. Complaint.
- V | 3. Trust.
- W | 4. Praise.
- *U* | 5–8. Complaint.
- *V* | 9. Trust.
- *W* | 10–13. Praise.

The Psalm

Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.

> **1** *Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.*
> **2** *Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.*
> **3** *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*
> **4** *In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*

> **5** *Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil.*
>
> **6** *They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.*
>
> **7** *Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.*
>
> **8** *Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?*
>
> **9** *When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.*
>
> **10** *In God will I praise his word: in the LORD [Jehovah] will I praise his word.*
>
> **11** *In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.*
>
> **12** *Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.*
>
> **13** *For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?*

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 57.

Verse by verse

> **56:1** *Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.*
>
> **56:2** *Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.*

Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up. *Be merciful* is "be gracious." *Man* is *enosh*, frail, mortal man; *swallow me up* is "pant after me," as a beast after its prey. **he fighting daily oppresseth me. Mine enemies would daily swallow me up.** *Enemies* is "those who watch me." **for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.** *Most High* here is *marom*, "on high," not *Elyon*: either "O Thou on high," or "proudly," describing the enemies.

> **56:3** *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*
>
> **56:4** *In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*

What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. He does not say he is never afraid; he says what he does when he is. In Gath, "David . . . was sore afraid of Achish" (1 Sam. 21:12). *Trust* is *batach*, to confide. **In God I will praise his word.** He praises God for His promise, His word to David that he would be king (1 Sam. 16:13). **in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.** *Flesh* is frail man. Compare Hebrews 13:6.

> **56:5** *Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil.*
>
> **56:6** *They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.*
>
> **56:7** *Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.*
>
> **56:8** *Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?*

Every day they wrest my words. They twist what he says. **all their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.** *Wait for my soul* is "lie in wait for my life." **Shall they escape by iniquity?** Shall their wickedness be their escape? It shall not. **in thine anger cast down the people, O God.** *People* is "peoples," the Philistine nations.

Thou tellest my wanderings. *Tellest* is "countest": God has kept count of every step of his flight. **put thou my tears into thy bottle.** A skin bottle. Mourners' tears were said to be gathered and kept. God keeps his tears, every one. The words *wanderings* (*nod*) and *bottle* (*nod*) sound alike in Hebrew: the figure *Paronomasia*. **are they not in thy book?** God records them (Mal. 3:16).

> **56:9** *When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.*
>
> **56:10** *In God will I praise his word: in the LORD [Jehovah] will I praise his word.*
>
> **56:11** *In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.*

When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). **In God will I praise his word: in the LORD [Jehovah] will I praise his word.** The refrain, the second time with the covenant Name. **In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.**

> **56:12** *Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.*
>
> **56:13** *For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?*

Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee. He made vows in his trouble; now he will pay them with thanksgiving. **For thou hast delivered my soul from death.** *Delivered* is "plucked." **wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?** *The light of the living* is "the light of life." David had been delivered from death at Gath, so that he lived to walk before God. The words reach further. The same God who delivers from death raised David's Son from the dead to the light of life, and then exalted Him to His right hand (Acts 2:24–33). This is the Michtam note: deliverance from death.

Its close: "To the chief Musician, Al-taschith"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 57; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 56. *Al-taschith* means "Destroy not." Moses cried it at a great crisis when Israel had sinned with the calf (Deut. 9:26, the same Hebrew verb, *shachath*), and David at another, when the angel of Jehovah stood over Jerusalem (2 Sam. 24:16). David used the same words of Saul: "Destroy him not" (1 Sam. 26:9). It is the cry of a man at a crisis, pleading that judgment be held back. Psalms 56, 57 and 58 bear it, and Psalm 74 (Asaph's). Written for particular crises, they were handed to the chief Musician for use whenever the nation would need to cry "Destroy not."

Looking back

Psalm 56 is the first of the five members of *F*: God's people speak of the Redeemer and His work. God spoke in Psalm 50; His people answer here. David afraid in Gath trusts God's word, and is delivered from death to walk in the light of life.

Psalm 57 — "In the Shadow of Thy Wings"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member *F* (God's people speak of the Redeemer and His work), second Michtam. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when he fled from Saul in the cave" (Title; 1 Sam. 22:1 or 24:1–7).

Introduction

David hid in caves twice: the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. 22:1) and the cave in En-gedi, where Saul came in and David cut off the skirt of his robe but spared his life (1 Sam. 24:3–7). The sub-scription "Destroy not" (*Al-taschith*), the words David used of Saul at their second meeting (1 Sam. 26:9), and the refrain "Be thou exalted," fit the cave of En-gedi, where David refused to lift his hand against Jehovah's anointed. **Weight:** probable; the Title names only "the cave."

The Psalm moves from prayer in the cave to a song at dawn: "I myself will awake early" (v. 8). The second half (vv. 7–11) is repeated as the first half of Psalm 108.

Structure

- X | Z | I | 1-. Repetition. Prayer: "Be merciful."
- m | -1–3-. Resolve: "I will cry."
- n | -3. Mercy and truth sent.
- Y | 4. Enemies.
- Y | 5. "Be thou exalted."
- *X* | *A* | 6. Enemies.
- *Z* | *I* | 7-. Repetition. Praise: "My heart is fixed."
- *m* | -7–9. Resolve: "I will sing."
- *n* | 10. Mercy and truth great.
- *Y* | 11. "Be thou exalted."

The Psalm

Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.

> **1** *Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.*
>
> **2** *I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.*
>
> **3** *He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.*
>
> **4** *My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*

> **5** *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.*
>
> **6** *They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.*
>
> **7** *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.*
>
> **8** *Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*
>
> **9** *I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.*
>
> **10** *For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.*
>
> **11** *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.*

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 58.

Verse by verse

> **57:1** *Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.*
>
> **57:2** *I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.*
>
> **57:3** *He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.*

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me. The figure *Epizeuxis*: the same words repeated for emphasis. **for my soul trusteth in thee.** *Trusteth* is "hath fled for refuge" (*chasah*). **yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge.** The wings of the cherubim over the mercy seat, or of a bird over her young (17:8; 36:7; 91:4; Matt. 23:37). In the shadow of the cave he takes refuge in a better shadow. **until these calamities be overpast.** Until the storm passes over.

I will cry unto God most high. *Elyon*. **unto God that performeth all things for me.** *El*, who brings to completion everything concerning him (138:8). **He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah.** The *Selah* connects his confidence with its ground: **God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.** Lovingkindness and faithfulness, sent from heaven like two messengers (compare 43:3).

> **57:4** *My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*
>
> **57:5** *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.*

My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire. His enemies are like lions, men inflamed with rage. **even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.** Their slander wounds like weapons. **Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.** The refrain. In the depths of the cave, he prays not first for his own safety but for God's glory.

> **57:6** *They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.*

They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah. Saul walked into the very cave where David was hiding, and was in David's power (1 Sam. 24:3, 4). The trap set for David caught its maker. The *Selah* connects the enemies' fall with David's confidence.

> **57:7** *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.*
>
> **57:8** *Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*
>
> **57:9** *I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.*
>
> **57:10** *For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.*
>
> **57:11** *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.*

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed. *Fixed* is "steadfast," established. **I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory.** *My glory* is his soul, or his tongue, the glory of a man, made to praise God (16:9, quoted in Acts 2:26 as "my tongue"). **awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.** Literally, "I will awake the dawn." He will sing before the sun rises. **I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people.** *Lord* is another of the places the scribes altered from *Jehovah*. *People* is "peoples." **I will sing unto thee among the nations.** The fugitive in the cave sees his praise going out to the nations. Paul quoted the parallel words of 18:49 of the Gentiles praising God (Rom. 15:9). **For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.** The refrain closes the Psalm.

Its close: "To the chief Musician, Al-taschith"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 58; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 57. "Destroy not" are the very words David spoke when Abishai wanted to kill Saul: "Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless?" (1 Sam. 26:9). See Psalm 56, Its close.

Looking back

Psalm 57 is the second member of *F*. David in the cave, surrounded by lions, prays for God's glory, and wakes the dawn with song. The Michtam note is here too: out of the pit, the one delivered sings among the nations.

Psalm 58 — "Verily He Is a God That Judgeth in the Earth"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member *F* (God's people speak of the Redeemer and His work), third Michtam. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 58 is addressed to unjust judges. It begins by asking them whether they truly speak righteousness, describes their nature, prays for their destruction, and ends with the righteous rejoicing that "verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth." Man's judgment is unrighteous; God's judgment is righteous. The Psalm fits the days when Saul and his court pursued David unjustly, and it fits every age when rulers pervert justice.

Structure

- B | 1, 2. Man's judgment. Unrighteous.
- C | 3–5. The wicked. Their character.
- D | 6–9. Imprecation.
- *C* | 10. The righteous. Their rejoicing.
- *B* | 11. God's judgment. Righteous.

The Psalm

Michtam of David.

> **1** *Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?*
> **2** *Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.*
> **3** *The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*
> **4** *Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;*
> **5** *Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*
> **6** *Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD [Jehovah].*
> **7** *Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.*
> **8** *As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.*
> **9** *Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.*

> **10** *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*
>
> **11** *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 59.

Verse by verse

> **58:1** *Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?*
>
> **58:2** *Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.*

Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? *Congregation* is *'elem*, a word found only here and in the sub-scription of Psalm 55. It means "silence": "Are ye indeed silent [when] ye should speak righteousness?" The judges are dumb when they should speak, and deaf when they should hear (v. 4). **do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?** *Men* is *adam*. **Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.** They hold the scales of justice, and weigh out violence.

> **58:3** *The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*
>
> **58:4** *Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;*
>
> **58:5** *Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their wickedness is from the beginning (compare 51:5). **Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.** A snake that will not answer to the charmer: they will not listen to any appeal.

> **58:6** *Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **58:7** *Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.*
>
> **58:8** *As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.*
>
> **58:9** *Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.*

Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD [Jehovah]. Take away their power to harm. This and the verses that follow are imprecations, prayers for judgment. They belong to the administration of law, under which God's people prayed for His justice to be done on the wicked. In the administration of grace we are told to bless, not to curse (Rom. 12:14). Chapter 3 of Part One explains how this study reads them.

Let them melt away as waters which run continually. Like water poured on sand. **when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.** Let their arrows be blunted, cut off like grass. **As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away.** A snail leaves a trail of slime as it goes, and seems to waste away. **like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns.** Thorns burn quickly under a cooking pot (Eccles. 7:6). Before the pot is even warm, **he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.** Whether green or burning, the whirlwind sweeps them away.

> **58:10** *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*
>
> **58:11** *So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance. Not personal revenge, but God's justice done. **he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.** The figure of a victor walking through the battlefield (68:23; Isa. 63:3). **So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous.** *Reward* is "fruit." **verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.** *God* here is *Elohim* with a plural verb, "a God who judges," marking His majesty. The unjust judges (v. 1) are answered by the Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25).

Its close: "To the chief Musician, Al-taschith"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 59; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 58. "Destroy not" (see Psalm 56, Its close). After a Psalm calling for judgment, the sub-scription is a plea that God's people be spared when He judges.

Looking back

Psalm 58 is the third member of *F*. Where Psalms 56 and 57 spoke of David's deliverance from death, Psalm 58 speaks of the judgment of those who pervert justice. It looks forward to the day when "he is a God that judgeth in the earth."

Psalm 59 — "God Is My Defence"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member *F* (God's people speak of the Redeemer and His work), fourth Michtam. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him" (Title; 1 Sam. 19:11–17).

Introduction

Saul sent men to watch David's house through the night and kill him in the morning. Michal, his wife, let him down through a window, and he escaped (1 Sam. 19:11, 12). The enemies are pictured as dogs that roam the city at evening, snarling and hungry (vv. 6, 14, 15). The refrain is "God is my defence" (vv. 9, 17).

Structure

- E | 1–5. Prayer. Enemies in the land. Selah.
- F | 6. Comparison to a dog.
- G | 7. Doggish characteristic: barking.
- H | 8, 9-. The Psalmist's trust in God.
- J | -9, 10. Reason: "God my defence."
- *E* | 11–13. Prayer. Enemies with them in the land. Selah.
- *F* | 14. Comparison to a dog.
- *G* | 15. Doggish characteristic: greediness.
- *H* | 16-. The Psalmist's trust in God.
- *J* | -16, 17. Reason: "God my defence."

The Psalm

Michtam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

> **1** *Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.*
> **2** *Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.*
> **3** *For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD [Jehovah].*
> **4** *They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.*
> **5** *Thou therefore, O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.*
> **6** *They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*
> **7** *Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?*

> **8** *But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.*
>
> **9** *Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.*
>
> **10** *The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.*
>
> **11** *Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.*
>
> **12** *For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak.*
>
> **13** *Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.*
>
> **14** *And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*
>
> **15** *Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.*
>
> **16** *But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.*
>
> **17** *Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.*

To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 60.

Verse by verse

> **59:1** *Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.*
>
> **59:2** *Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.*
>
> **59:3** *For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **59:4** *They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.*
>
> **59:5** *Thou therefore, O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.*

Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. *Defend me* is "set me on high," out of their reach. **Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD [Jehovah].** He has done Saul no wrong (1 Sam. 24:11). **They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.**

Thou therefore, O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, the God of Israel. *Jehovah Elohim Sabaoth*: the fullest form of the Name. **awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.** *Transgressors* is "traitors," those who deal treacherously. The prayer rises from David's own enemies to all the nations. The *Selah* links the treacherous men with their true character, set out next.

> **59:6** *They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*
>
> **59:7** *Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?*

> **59:8** *But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.*
>
> **59:9** *Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.*
>
> **59:10** *The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.*

They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. The wild dogs of an eastern city, which roam the streets at night scavenging. **Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?** They think no one hears. **But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.** As in 2:4.

Because of his strength will I wait upon thee. Several manuscripts and early versions read "O my strength," as in verse 17. **for God is my defence.** *Defence* is "high tower" (*misgab*). **The God of my mercy shall prevent me.** *Prevent* is "come to meet me": God will go before him. **God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.**

> **59:11** *Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.*
>
> **59:12** *For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak.*
>
> **59:13** *Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.*

Slay them not, lest my people forget. A striking prayer. Do not kill them at once, lest Israel forget the lesson. **scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.** *Lord* is again one of the places the scribes altered from *Jehovah*. **For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride.** Let them be caught by their own words. **Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.** Not slain at once, but brought to an end, so that all may learn that God rules. The *Selah* marks off the two prayers (vv. 1–5 and 11–13) and connects the end of the wicked with their character.

> **59:14** *And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*
>
> **59:15** *Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.*
>
> **59:16** *But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.*
>
> **59:17** *Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.*

And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied. *Grudge* is "stay all night." Let them prowl all night and go hungry. That night David was gone (1 Sam. 19:12).

But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning. They prowl at evening; he sings in the morning. The morning is the time of deliverance: the Michtam note again. **for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 60; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 59. *Shushan-eduth* means "the lily of testimony." *Shushan* (lilies) marks a spring festival, as in the *Shoshannim* Psalms (44, 68). *Eduth*, "testimony," marks some special witness connected with it.

The Chief Musician takes it as the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), the second spring festival. The Passover celebrated God bringing Israel *out* of Egypt; the Feast of Weeks celebrated His bringing them *into* the land, and at it Israel was to "remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt" (Deut. 16:9–12). Psalm 59, with Israel in the land but enemies in the land with them, and God their defence, was handed over for that feast. *The Companion Bible* takes it instead as the second Passover, kept a month late by those who could not keep the first (Num. 9:6–14; 2 Chron. 30:2, 3). **Weight:** both readings agree that it marks a spring festival; *The Chief Musician*'s reading explains the distinction between "Shoshannim" (Passover) and "Shushan-eduth" better. The same sub-scription stands at the end of Psalm 79.

Looking back

Psalm 59 is the fourth member of *F*. Dogs prowl around the house at evening; in the morning, the one they sought to kill sings of God's power and mercy. Delivered from death, David lived to be king.

Psalm 60 — "Through God We Shall Do Valiantly"

Place: Book II; Psalms 50–60; member *F* (God's people speak of the Redeemer and His work), fifth Michtam. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand" (Title; 2 Sam. 8:3–14; 1 Chron. 18:3–13).

Introduction

At the height of his reign David fought on two fronts. He was away in the north, at war with the Arameans of Mesopotamia (*Aram-naharaim*, "Aram of the two rivers") and of Zobah. Meanwhile Edom invaded from the south. The Psalm opens with a nation shaken as by an earthquake (vv. 1–3), and closes in confidence (v. 12). Joab, Abishai and David won the victory in the valley of salt, south of the Dead Sea. The numbers differ in the accounts: "eighteen thousand" in 2 Samuel 8:13 and 1 Chronicles 18:12 (where Abishai is named), "twelve thousand" here (where Joab is named). The accounts describe the whole campaign and a part of it: Abishai's share, Joab's share, and David's as king. They do not contradict one another.

This is the one Michtam with "to teach" in its Title: it was to be taught to Israel (compare 2 Sam. 1:18). Its second half (vv. 5–12) is repeated as the second half of Psalm 108.

Structure

- K | 1–5. Prayer. (God the object.)
- L | o | 6, 7. Israel. } God the subject.
- p | 8, 9. The heathen.
- *K* | 10, 11. Prayer. (God the object.)
- *L* | *o* | 12-. Israel. } God the subject.
- *p* | -12. The heathen.

The Psalm

Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand.

> **1** *O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.*
> **2** *Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.*
> **3** *Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.*

> **4** *Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.*
>
> **5** *That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me.*
>
> **6** *God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*
>
> **7** *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;*
>
> **8** *Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.*
>
> **9** *Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?*
>
> **10** *Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?*
>
> **11** *Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.*
>
> **12** *Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*

To the chief Musician upon Neginah.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 61.

Verse by verse

> **60:1** *O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.*
>
> **60:2** *Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.*
>
> **60:3** *Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.*
>
> **60:4** *Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.*
>
> **60:5** *That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me.*

O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us. *Scattered* is "broken through": the enemy has breached the defences. **thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again. Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it.** *Broken* is "split open," as in an earthquake. **heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh. Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.** Wine that makes one stagger (Isa. 51:17).

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah. A rallying standard. *Because of the truth*: on account of God's faithfulness, or, as the word can mean, "from before the bow," to flee from the archers. Either way, God has not left His people without a standard to rally to. **That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me.** *Thy beloved* is plural: "thy beloved ones" (*yedidim*). *Hear me* is "answer me." Some manuscripts read "answer us."

> **60:6** *God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*
>
> **60:7** *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;*
>
> **60:8** *Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.*
>
> **60:9** *Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?*

God hath spoken in his holiness. God's own promise, sworn by His holiness (89:35). What follows is God speaking, as the conqueror who divides the land. **I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.** Shechem west of Jordan, Succoth east: the whole land is His to divide. **Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine.** The lands east of Jordan. **Ephraim also is the strength of mine head.** *Strength* is "helmet," the defence of the head: the strongest tribe. **Judah is my lawgiver.** *Lawgiver* is "sceptre" or "ruler's staff" (Gen. 49:10). Judah, the royal tribe.

Moab is my washpot. A basin for washing the feet: a servant's vessel. **over Edom will I cast out my shoe.** To throw one's shoe over a land was to claim possession of it (compare Ruth 4:7). **Philistia, triumph thou because of me.** Better, "over Philistia will I shout in triumph" (as 108:9). The nations around are God's to rule.

Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? David speaks. *The strong city* is Sela (Petra), the rock fortress of Edom (2 Kings 14:7).

> **60:10** *Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?*
>
> **60:11** *Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.*
>
> **60:12** *Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*

Wilt not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies? The same God who had cast them off (v. 1) is the only One who can lead them in. **Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.** *Help of man* is "salvation of *adam*." **Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.** The last word of the Michtam Psalms: victory through God.

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Neginah"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 61; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 60. *Neginah* is the singular of *Neginoth*: "smiting." It fits the Psalm that ends "he it is that shall tread down our enemies." Over Psalm 61, a quiet prayer from "the end of the earth," it has no evident fit.

Looking back

Psalm 60 is the last of the five members of *F*. The nation shaken and broken is restored, and God claims the whole land and the nations around it. The Michtam Psalms began with one man afraid in Gath (56) and end with the whole nation doing valiantly through God (60).

Looking Back on Psalms 50–60

The second division of Book II concerns Israel's Redeemer.

- **God speaks (50).** He breaks His silence, calls heaven and earth to witness, and tells His people what He wants: not the blood of bulls, but thanksgiving, faithfulness, and prayer.
- **Transgression confessed (51).** David confesses his sin, offers the only sacrifice he can, a broken heart, and is forgiven.
- **Transgressors unconfessed (52–55).** Doeg, the fool, the Ziphites, and Ahithophel never confess. They trust in themselves and are destroyed.
- **God's people speak (56–60).** In five Michtam Psalms, engraved for ever, David tells of deliverance from death: in Gath, in the cave, before unjust judges, in a house surrounded at night, and in war. Each ends in praise.

The lesson of the division is the lesson of redemption: God speaks first; man must confess or perish; and the Redeemer God delivers His king, and His people, from death itself. The next division shows the redemption completed, and the King reigning.

Psalms 61–72: Israel's Redemption

A. What this division is about

The third division of Book II shows the redemption accomplished. It is built in two matching halves. In the first (61–68), Israel waits for deliverance; Zion waits for her blessing; praise is promised and past trouble remembered; and the answer comes in Psalm 68: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered." In the second (69–72), the King Himself waits for deliverance from suffering, shame and sorrow; He cries "Make haste"; praise is promised and trouble remembered; and the answer comes in Psalm 72: the King reigns, and all nations are blessed in Him.

So the division moves from the nation to the King, and in both halves from waiting to answer. The last Psalm of the Book is "for Solomon," and it describes a reign wider and longer than Solomon's: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea . . . His name shall endure for ever" (72:8, 17). It ends with the words, "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (72:20). David's prayers end when this King reigns.

B. Its structure

- K | 61–64. Israel waits for deliverance "from the end of the earth" (61:2), which is the work of God alone (64:9).
- L | 65. Zion waits for her blessing.
- M | 66, 67. Praise promised. The trouble remembered (66:10–12).
- N | 68. The answer to 61–67. God arises. "Blessed be God" (68:35).
- *K* | 69. The King waits for deliverance (v. 14) from sufferings, shame and sorrow. The trespass offering.
- *L* | 70. The King waits for His deliverance. "Make haste."
- *M* | 71. Praise promised (vv. 22–24). The trouble remembered (v. 20).
- *N* | 72. The answer. The King reigns. "Blessed be the LORD God" (v. 18). This was all David's desire (2 Sam. 23:5). The redeemed nation blessed, and a blessing to all nations.

Each member of the first half is matched in the second. Psalm 68 and Psalm 72 are the two answers, and both end in "Blessed be God."

Three offerings. *The Companion Bible* observes that as Psalm 22 presents Messiah as the sin offering and Psalm 40 as the burnt offering (40:6), Psalm 69 presents Him as the trespass offering: "then I restored that which I took not away" (69:4). The trespass offering was the one in which restitution was made (Lev. 6:1–7).

C. Its purpose

This division teaches that redemption is complete only when the King reigns. Israel waits (61–64), Zion waits (65), and praise is promised (66–67). God arises and scatters His enemies (68). But the full answer comes through the King who first suffers, "hated without a cause" and given vinegar to drink (69:4, 21), and who then reigns from sea to sea (72). The New Testament quotes Psalm 69 more than almost any other Psalm except Psalm 22, of the sufferings of Christ. Psalm 72 describes the kingdom that follows His resurrection and ascension, and His return.

Psalm 61 — "Lead Me to the Rock That Is Higher Than I"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member K (Israel waits for deliverance), first of four. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named; it fits David's exile beyond Jordan in Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. 17:22–29).

Introduction

David cries "from the end of the earth" (v. 2): from the edge of the land, far from Zion. He longs to dwell in God's tabernacle again (v. 4). And he speaks of "the king" in the third person: "Thou wilt prolong the king's life . . . He shall abide before God for ever" (vv. 6, 7). The prayer of an exiled king for his own restoration becomes a prayer for the King whose throne is for ever. The ancient Aramaic paraphrase (the Targum) renders verse 6, "Thou wilt add days to the days of the King Messiah."

Structure

- M | 1, 2. Prayer.
- N | 3, 4. Confidence.
- O | 5. Reason. "For thou, O God, hast heard."
- *N* | 6, 7. Confidence.
- *M* | 8. Praise.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.*
> **2** *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*
> **3** *For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.*
> **4** *I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.*
> **5** *For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.*
> **6** *Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations.*
> **7** *He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.*
> **8** *So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.*

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 62.

Verse by verse

> **61:1** *Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.*
>
> **61:2** *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee. *Earth* may be "land": from the end of the land. **when my heart is overwhelmed.** *Overwhelmed* is "fainting," covered over. **lead me to the rock that is higher than I.** A rock too high for him to climb alone. God must lead him there. The rock is the refuge he cannot reach by his own strength.

> **61:3** *For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.*
>
> **61:4** *I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.*

For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. What God has been, He will be. **I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.** *Tabernacle* is *ohel*, a tent: the tent David had pitched for the Ark on Mount Zion (2 Sam. 6:17). *Abide* is "sojourn as a guest." **I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.** *Trust* is "flee for refuge." The *Selah* marks the centre of the Psalm and connects his confidence with its only true ground (v. 5).

> **61:5** *For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.*

For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. The heritage of the God-fearing: the land, and God Himself as their portion (16:5, 6).

> **61:6** *Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations.*
>
> **61:7** *He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.*

Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations. Literally, "Thou wilt add days to the days of the king." David's life was prolonged; he returned to Jerusalem. But "as many generations" goes beyond any one man. **He shall abide before God for ever.** *Abide* is "sit enthroned." **O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.** *Prepare* is "appoint": appoint lovingkindness and faithfulness as guards to keep him, as in 57:3. God's covenant with David was that his seed's throne would be "established for ever" (2 Sam. 7:16; Psalm 89:4, 36, 37). It is fulfilled in the Son of David, raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand (Acts 2:30–33).

> **61:8** *So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.*

So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows. Day by day, for ever.

Its close: "To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 62; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 61. Jeduthun was one of David's three directors of the temple music, with Asaph and Heman (1 Chron. 16:41, 42; 25:1–6); he seems also to be called Ethan (1 Chron. 15:17, 19). His name comes from *yadah*, "to give thanks," "to praise." The three Psalms handed to him (38, 61, 76) each carry that note: "So will I sing praise unto thy

name for ever" (61:8). Read over Psalm 62, the line made it seem that Psalm 62 had two authors, Jeduthun and David; in its right place, the confusion goes.

Looking back

Psalm 61 is the first of four Psalms in member K: Israel waits for deliverance. The king at the end of the land longs for God's tent and is confident of an everlasting reign. The waiting has begun.

Psalm 62 — "My Soul Waiteth upon God"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member K (Israel's redemption waited for), second. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named; it follows Psalm 61, and the plotting "to cast him down from his excellency" (v. 4) fits Absalom's conspiracy.

Introduction

Psalm 62 is built on the little word *'ak*, which can mean "only," "surely," or "truly." It begins six lines (vv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9): "Truly my soul waiteth upon God"; "He only is my rock"; "They only consult"; "wait thou only"; "He only is my rock"; "Surely men of low degree are vanity." The Psalm is a lesson in waiting on God *alone*.

Structure

- P^1 | 1, 2. Trust in God.
- Q^1 | 3, 4. Enmity of foes.
- P^2 | 5–7. Trust in God.
- Q^2 | 8–10. Men are vanity: trust not in them.
- P^3 | 11, 12. Trust in God.

(*The Companion Bible* labels Q^2 "Enmity of foes," as Q^1. Verses 8–10 are an exhortation to the people to trust God and not men or riches, so the label is given here as it reads.)

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.*
> **2** *He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.*
> **3** *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.*
> **4** *They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.*
> **5** *My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.*
> **6** *He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.*
> **7** *In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.*
> **8** *Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.*
> **9** *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.*

> **10** *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*
>
> **11** *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.*
>
> **12** *Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.*

Psalm 62 has no sub-scription. Psalm 63 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah."

Verse by verse

> **62:1** *Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.*
>
> **62:2** *He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.*

Truly my soul waiteth upon God. Literally, "Only unto God is my soul silence": waiting quietly, without complaint. **from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence.** *Defence* is "high tower." **I shall not be greatly moved.** He may be shaken, but not overthrown.

> **62:3** *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.*
>
> **62:4** *They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.*

How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? *Imagine mischief* is "rush upon," assault. *A man* is *ish*. **ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.** Better, "ye shall all of you batter him, as a leaning wall, as a tottering fence": they treat him as if he were a wall about to fall. **They only consult to cast him down from his excellency.** From his royal dignity. **they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.** Absalom "stole the hearts of the men of Israel" with fair words (2 Sam. 15:1–6). The *Selah* connects their hatred with David's trust in God.

> **62:5** *My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.*
>
> **62:6** *He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.*
>
> **62:7** *In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.*

My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He speaks to his own soul, as in 42:5. *Wait* is "be silent." **He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.** The refrain of verse 2, with "greatly" left out: now he shall not be moved at all. **In God is my salvation and my glory.** Upon God depends his salvation. **the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.**

> **62:8** *Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.*
>
> **62:9** *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.*
>
> **62:10** *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*

Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him. He turns from his own soul to the people. Some ancient versions read "all ye assembly of the people." **God is a refuge for us. Selah.** It contrasts God, the refuge, with the nothingness of man that follows.

Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie. *Men of low degree* are "sons of *adam*"; *men of high degree* are "sons of *ish*" (as 49:2). *Vanity* is a breath. **to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.** Put them all on the scales together, and they weigh less than a breath. **Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.**

> **62:11** *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.*
>
> **62:12** *Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.*

God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this. A Hebrew way of saying "God has said it clearly, and I have heard it more than once." **that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.** *Lord* is one of the places the scribes altered from *Jehovah*. Power and lovingkindness: both are His. **for thou renderest to every man according to his work.** The Lord Jesus said it of His return (Matt. 16:27), and Paul of the judgment (Rom. 2:6; 2 Tim. 4:14).

Its close

Psalm 62 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 62 is the second member of K. Waiting means silence before God, and trust in God alone. Men are a breath; power and mercy belong to God.

Psalm 63 — "My Soul Thirsteth for Thee"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member K (Israel's redemption waited for), third. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when he was in the wilderness of Judah" (Title).

Introduction

David was in the wilderness of Judah more than once: fleeing from Saul (1 Sam. 22:5; 23:14), and fleeing from Absalom, when he crossed the Kidron "toward the way of the wilderness" (2 Sam. 15:23, 28). Verse 11, "But the king shall rejoice in God," shows that David was already king. That points to the flight from Absalom. **Weight:** strong; in Saul's day David was not yet king.

In the dry wilderness he thirsts for God, as in Psalm 42. But where Psalm 42 asked "Why art thou cast down?", Psalm 63 is full of satisfaction: "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness" (v. 5).

Structure

- R^1 | 1, 2. Assurance.
- S^1 | 3. Reason for praise.
- R^2 | 4–6. Assurance.
- S^2 | 7. Reason for praise.
- R^3 | 8–10. Assurance. (Enemies.)
- S^3 | 11-. Reason for praise.
- R^4 | -11. Assurance. (Enemies.)

The Psalm

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

> **1** *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;*
> **2** *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*
> **3** *Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*
> **4** *Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.*
> **5** *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:*
> **6** *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.*
> **7** *Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*
> **8** *My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.*
> **9** *But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.*

> **10** *They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.*
>
> **11** *But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 64.

Verse by verse

> **63:1** *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;*
>
> **63:2** *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*

O God, thou art my God. *Elohim*, thou art my *El*. **early will I seek thee.** *Early* is "earnestly," as one who rises at dawn to seek. **my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee.** *Longeth* is "faints." Soul and flesh, the whole man. **in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.** *Thirsty* is "weary." The wilderness without matches the thirst within. **To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.** *So as* is "as": he longs to see God now in the wilderness as he saw Him in the tent of the Ark.

> **63:3** *Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*
>
> **63:4** *Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.*
>
> **63:5** *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:*
>
> **63:6** *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.*

Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Better than life itself. **Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.** Lifted hands, the attitude of prayer (28:2; 1 Tim. 2:8). **My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.** The richest food. **and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.** The night was divided into three watches (Judg. 7:19; Lam. 2:19).

> **63:7** *Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.*
>
> **63:8** *My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.*

Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee. *Followeth hard* is "cleaveth": the word of Genesis 2:24, "shall cleave unto his wife." **thy right hand upholdeth me.** He clings to God; God holds him.

> **63:9** *But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.*
>
> **63:10** *They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.*
>
> **63:11** *But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.*

But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. Into the grave (Sheol). **They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.** *Foxes* are jackals, which eat the dead left on a battlefield. Absalom's army fell in the forest of Ephraim, "and the wood devoured more

people that day than the sword devoured" (2 Sam. 18:7, 8). **But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory.** *By him* is by God: those who swear by God, the faithful (Deut. 6:13). **but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 64 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 63.

Looking back

Psalm 63 is the third member of K. In the dry land, the waiting king is satisfied with God, clings to Him, and is sure his enemies will fall.

Psalm 64 — "Hide Me from the Secret Counsel of the Wicked"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member K (Israel's redemption waited for), fourth. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

The enemies of Psalm 64 do their work in secret: "the secret counsel of the wicked" (v. 2), "they shoot in secret at the perfect" (v. 4), "they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?" (v. 5). Their weapons are words, sharpened like swords and shot like arrows. Then "God shall shoot at them with an arrow" (v. 7), and their own tongues fall on them. The secret plot is answered openly: "all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God" (v. 9).

Structure

- T^1 | 1–8. Enemies.
- T^2 | 9. Mankind in general.
- T^3 | 10. The righteous in particular.

The first part (1–8):

- U | q | 1. The enemy (singular).
- r | 2. Enemies (plural).
- V | 3, 4. Their attempt to wound.
- *U* | *r* | 5, 6-. Enemies (plural).
- *q* | -6. The enemy (singular).
- *V* | 7, 8. Their wounding.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.*
> **2** *Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:*
> **3** *Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:*
> **4** *That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.*
> **5** *They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?*

> **6** *They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.*
>
> **7** *But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.*
>
> **8** *So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.*
>
> **9** *And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.*
>
> **10** *The righteous shall be glad in the LORD [Jehovah], and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 65.

Verse by verse

> **64:1** *Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.*
>
> **64:2** *Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:*
>
> **64:3** *Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:*
>
> **64:4** *That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.*

Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer. *Prayer* is "complaint" or "musing." **preserve my life from fear of the enemy.** From the dread the enemy causes. **Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked.** *Secret counsel* is a conspiracy, as Absalom's (2 Sam. 15:12; 17:1–4). **from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.** The open uprising. The first is secret, the second open. **Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words. That they may shoot in secret at the perfect.** *The perfect* is the blameless man. **suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.** The words *shoot* and *fear* sound alike in Hebrew (*yoruhu* and *yira'u*).

> **64:5** *They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?*
>
> **64:6** *They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.*

They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? Some manuscripts read "Who will see us?" **They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search.** They plan their crimes with care. **both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.** Deep and dark, and hidden.

> **64:7** *But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.*
>
> **64:8** *So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.*

But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. They shot suddenly (v. 4); God shoots suddenly. **So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves.** Their words come back on them. **all that see them shall flee away.** *Flee* is better "shake the head" in scorn.

> **64:9** *And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.*
>
> **64:10** *The righteous shall be glad in the LORD [Jehovah], and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*

And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God. *Men* is *adam*: all mankind. What was done in secret is now seen by all, and they see God's work in it. This is the key verse of member K: deliverance is "the work of God" alone. **for they shall wisely consider of his doing.** *Wisely consider* is the verb of *maschil*. **The righteous shall be glad in the LORD [Jehovah], and shall trust in him.** *The righteous* is singular, the righteous one. *Trust* is "flee for refuge." **and all the upright in heart shall glory.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 65 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 64.

Looking back

Psalm 64 closes member K. Israel and its king wait (61–64), and the end of the waiting is "the work of God," seen by all men (64:9). The secret plots of the enemy are undone by God Himself.

Psalm 65 — "Praise Waiteth for Thee, O God, in Sion"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member L (Zion waits for her blessing). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 65 begins with Zion waiting in silence for God, and ends with the whole earth shouting for joy at harvest. It moves from the forgiveness of sins (v. 3) to the God of all the earth (vv. 5–8) to the rain and the corn and the flocks (vv. 9–13). It is the song of a land blessed by God, and it pictures the earth when Zion's blessing has come.

Structure

- W | 1-. Israel. Zion.
- X | -1, 2. Mankind.
- *W* | 3–5-. Israel. Zion.
- *X* | -5–13. Mankind.

Verses 3–5:

- s | 3-. Singular: "me."
- t | -3. Plural: "our."
- *s* | 4-. Singular: "he."
- *t* | -4, 5-. Plural: "we."

Verses -5–13:

- Y | -5. God the confidence of all afar off. } God spoken of.
- Z | 6, 7. The power of God. } God spoken to.
- *Y* | 8-. God the fear of all afar off. } God spoken of.
- *Z* | -8–13. The goodness of God. } God spoken to.

And the goodness of God (-8–13):

- u | -8. Times: morning and evening.
- v | 9, 10. Places: earth and water.
- *u* | 11. Time: the year.
- *v* | 12, 13. Places: hills and valleys.

The Psalm

A Psalm and Song of David.

> **1** *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.*
> **2** *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.*
> **3** *Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*
> **4** *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*
> **5** *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:*
> **6** *Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power:*
> **7** *Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.*
> **8** *They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*
> **9** *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.*
> **10** *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.*
> **11** *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.*
> **12** *They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.*
> **13** *The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 66.

Verse by verse

> **65:1** *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.*
> **65:2** *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.*

Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion. Literally, "To thee silence is praise," or "For thee there is silence, praise": the word of 62:1. Zion waits silently for God, and the silence is itself praise. *Sion* is the same as Zion. **and unto thee shall the vow be performed. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.** *All flesh* is all mankind. The temple was to be "an house of prayer for all people" (Isa. 56:7).

> **65:3** *Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*
> **65:4** *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*
> **65:5** *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:*

Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away. *Purge* is *kaphar*, to cover by atonement. The first need of Zion is forgiveness. **Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts.** Only those whom God calls can draw near (Num. 16:5). *Courts* here are the courts of David's tent on Zion. **we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.** *Temple* is *heykal*, a palace: the house of the great King.

By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation. By awesome deeds of righteous judgment. **who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.** From Zion the Psalm turns to the whole earth (*X*).

> **65:6** *Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power:*
>
> **65:7** *Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.*
>
> **65:8** *They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*

Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power: Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people. *People* is "peoples." The raging sea and the raging nations are both stilled by Him (46:2, 3, 6). The Lord Jesus stilled the sea with a word (Mark 4:39). **They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens.** His signs in nature. **thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.** Where the morning comes out and where the evening goes: east and west, from sunrise to sunset.

> **65:9** *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.*
>
> **65:10** *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.*
>
> **65:11** *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.*
>
> **65:12** *They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.*
>
> **65:13** *The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.*

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water. *River* is *peleg*, a channel, the word always used of a channel for watering a garden (1:3; 46:4). God's channel is the rain from heaven. **thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers.** *Settlest* is "levellest": the rain softens the clods. **thou blessest the springing thereof.** The sprouting of the seed.

Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. The track of God's chariot drips with plenty. **They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness.** Even the wilderness pastures. **and the little hills rejoice on every side.** *Rejoice on every side* is "are girded with joy." **The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.** The whole land sings at harvest. The figure *Prosopopoeia*: hills and valleys rejoicing as if they were persons.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 66 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 65.

Looking back

Psalm 65 is member L: Zion waits for her blessing. It answers to Psalm 70 (*L*), where the King waits for His deliverance and cries "Make haste." Zion's waiting ends in harvest joy, a picture of the earth when its Redeemer reigns (72:16).

Psalm 66 — "Come and See the Works of God"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member M (praise promised; the trouble remembered), first part. **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 66 calls all the earth to praise God (vv. 1–7), then Israel (vv. 8–12), and then one man speaks of his own vows (vv. 13–20). It remembers the crossing of the sea and the Jordan (v. 6), and a later trouble in which the nation was "tried, as silver is tried" (v. 10). The writer is not named. The "I" of verses 13–20 may be the king leading his people; some have thought of Hezekiah after the Assyrian deliverance and his own recovery, when he said "we will sing my songs . . . all the days of our life in the house of Jehovah" (Isa. 38:20). The Title does not say. **Weight:** possible only.

Structure

- A | 1, 2. Exhortation to praise.
- B | 3. Address: God's works in the world.
- C | 4. Address: promise for the world. Selah.
- D | 5–7. Invitation: "Come and see."
- *A* | 8, 9. Exhortation to praise.
- *B* | 10–12. Address: God's dealings with His people.
- *C* | 13–15. Address: promise for the Psalmist. Selah.
- *D* | 16–20. Invitation: "Come and hear."

Verses 13–15:

- w | 13-. Offerings.
- x | -13. Vows.
- *x* | 14. Vows.
- *w* | 15. Offerings.

Verses 16–20:

- y | 16. God.
- z | 17. I.
- *z* | 18. I.
- *y* | 19, 20. God.

The Psalm

A Song or Psalm.

> **1** *Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:*
> **2** *Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.*
> **3** *Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.*
> **4** *All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.*
> **5** *Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.*
> **6** *He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.*
> **7** *He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.*
> **8** *O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:*
> **9** *Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.*
> **10** *For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.*
> **11** *Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.*
> **12** *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*
> **13** *I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,*
> **14** *Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.*
> **15** *I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.*
> **16** *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*
> **17** *I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.*
> **18** *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*
> **19** *But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*
> **20** *Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 67.

Verse by verse

> **66:1** *Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:*
> **66:2** *Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.*
> **66:3** *Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.*
> **66:4** *All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.*

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands. *All the earth*: all its inhabitants. **Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.** Some versions read "give glory to his praise." **Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.** *Submit themselves* is "yield feigned obedience": they cringe before Him, as defeated enemies before a conqueror (18:44). **All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.** The *Selah* connects the call to praise (vv. 1–4) with the reason (vv. 5–7).

> **66:5** *Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.*
>
> **66:6** *He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.*
>
> **66:7** *He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.*

Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men. He turned the sea into dry land. The Red Sea (Ex. 14:21, 22). **they went through the flood on foot.** *The flood* is "the river": the Jordan (Josh. 3:14–17). **there did we rejoice in him.** "We": the singers count themselves with the fathers who crossed. What God did for them, He did for the nation, and for us. **He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.** The *Selah* repeats the call to praise and joins the two halves of the Psalm.

> **66:8** *O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:*
>
> **66:9** *Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.*
>
> **66:10** *For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.*
>
> **66:11** *Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.*
>
> **66:12** *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*

O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Refined in the furnace (Isa. 48:10; Zech. 13:9; 1 Pet. 1:7). **Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.** *Affliction* is a heavy burden, the word used of Israel's bondage in Egypt. **Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads.** *Men* is *enosh*, frail men: weak men rode over them as conquerors. **we went through fire and through water.** "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee . . . when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned" (Isa. 43:2). **but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.** *Wealthy place* is "abundance," overflowing (23:5, "runneth over").

> **66:13** *I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,*
>
> **66:14** *Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.*
>
> **66:15** *I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.*

I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. *Uttered* is "opened": the lips opened wide in trouble to make the vows. **I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.** *Incense of rams* is the smoke of the burning rams. The *Selah* connects his promise with his invitation to all who fear God.

> **66:16** *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*
> **66:17** *I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.*
> **66:18** *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*
> **66:19** *But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*
> **66:20** *Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*

Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. "Come and see" (v. 5) was for the nations; "Come and hear" is for those who fear God. **I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.** He cried, and even as he cried he was praising. **If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.** *Lord* is one of the places the scribes altered from *Jehovah*. *Regard* is "look upon with favour": cherish sin in the heart. The blind man said, "God heareth not sinners" (John 9:31). **But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.** He did not turn away the prayer, nor His lovingkindness. The Psalm ends with "Blessed be God."

Its close: "To the chief Musician on Neginoth"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 67; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 66. *Neginoth*, "smitings": the smiting of Israel's enemies by God. It fits the Psalm of God's "terrible" works (vv. 3, 5) and His dealing with those who "rode over our heads" (v. 12).

Looking back

Psalm 66 is the first part of member M: praise promised, the trouble remembered. The trouble was fire and water, the net and the burden; the God who brought the fathers through the sea brought this generation through its trials too. It answers to Psalm 71 (*M*), where the King promises praise and remembers His troubles.

Psalm 67 — "God Be Merciful unto Us, and Bless Us"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member M (praise promised), second part. **Writer:** not named (some ancient versions add "of David"). **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 67 begins with the words of the blessing Aaron and his sons were to speak over Israel: "Jehovah bless thee . . . make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee" (Num. 6:24–26). But the purpose of the blessing reaches beyond Israel: "That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations" (v. 2). When God blesses Israel, all the ends of the earth will fear Him (v. 7). That is the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:2, 3).

Structure

- E | a | 1. Prayer: "God be merciful."
- b | 2. Object: His way known on earth.
- F | c | 3. Injunction: "Let the people praise."
- d | 4-. Effect: the peoples glad.
- G | -4-. Address: the peoples judged.
- *G* | -4. Address: the nations governed.
- *F* | *c* | 5. Injunction: "Let the people praise."
- *d* | 6-. Effect: the earth fruitful.
- *E* | *a* | -6. Prayer answered: "God shall bless us."
- *b* | 7. Object: God feared on earth.

The Psalm

A Psalm or Song.

> **1** *God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.*
> **2** *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*
> **3** *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.*
> **4** *O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.*
> **5** *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.*
> **6** *Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*
> **7** *God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 68.

Verse by verse

> **67:1** *God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.*
>
> **67:2** *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*

God be merciful unto us, and bless us. *Merciful* is "gracious." **and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.** The Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:24–26). The *Selah* connects the prayer with its object: **That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.** *Way* is God's dealings; *saving health* is "salvation." Israel blessed so that the nations may know.

> **67:3** *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.*
>
> **67:4** *O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.*
>
> **67:5** *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.*

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. *People* is "peoples" (no article). **O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously.** *Judge* in the sense of rule. **and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.** *Govern* is "lead," as a shepherd leads (23:3). The *Selah* connects God's righteous rule with the renewed call to praise. **Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.**

> **67:6** *Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*
>
> **67:7** *God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*

Then shall the earth yield her increase. The harvest of 65:9–13. When the nations praise, the earth itself responds (Lev. 26:4; Ezek. 34:27). **and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us.** The figure *Epizeuxis*: "God . . . God . . . God." Three times *Elohim* in verses 6 and 7, as three times the Name in the Aaronic blessing. **and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 68 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 67.

Looking back

Psalm 67 is the second part of member M. The praise promised is not Israel's only: when God blesses Israel, all the nations praise Him. This prepares for the answer in Psalm 68, where God arises, and kings bring presents, and Ethiopia stretches out her hands (68:29, 31).

Psalm 68 — "Let God Arise, Let His Enemies Be Scattered"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member N (the answer to Psalms 61–67). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named in the Title. The Psalm was first written for the bringing up of the Ark to Zion (2 Sam. 6:12–19; 1 Chron. 15–16); its sub-scription shows it was afterwards handed over for the Passover.

Introduction

Psalm 68 is the great processional Psalm. It opens with the words Moses spoke each time the Ark set out in the wilderness: "Rise up, Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee" (Num. 10:35). It recalls God marching before Israel through the wilderness, the earth shaking at Sinai (vv. 7, 8), the kings fleeing in the conquest (vv. 12–14), and God choosing Zion as His dwelling (vv. 15, 16). Then it describes the procession itself going up into the sanctuary: the singers, the players, the maidens with timbrels, and the tribes (vv. 24–27). It ends with the kingdoms of the earth called to sing to God (vv. 32–35).

David brought the Ark up to Zion "with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet," dancing before Jehovah with all his might (2 Sam. 6:14, 15). The Psalm fits that day exactly. Paul quoted verse 18 of the ascension of Christ (Eph. 4:8): as the Ark went up to Zion, Christ ascended on high.

The Psalm is the answer to Psalms 61–67 (member N). Israel waited for deliverance; God arises and scatters His enemies. It ends, as the answer in Psalm 72 ends, with "Blessed be God."

The Names. Psalm 68 is rich in the Names of God: *Elohim* (God) twenty-six times; *JAH* (v. 4), its first occurrence in the Psalms, as Exodus 15:2 is its first in the Bible; *Jehovah*; *Adonai* (Lord) several times; *Shaddai* (the Almighty, v. 14); and *El* (vv. 19, 20, 35).

Structure

- H^1 | 1–3. Introduction.
- J^1 | 1, 2. The wicked scattered.
- J^2 | 3. The righteous made glad.
- H^2 | 4–35. The Psalm itself.

The Psalm itself (4–35):

- K | 4. Exhortation to praise.
- L | N | 5, 6-. Mercies to His people.
- O | -6. Enemies judged.
- P | 7–10. Goings in the wilderness.

- Q | 11–14. Jehovah's word. History.
- M | 15, 16. Zion, Jehovah's chosen dwelling-place.
- *M* | 17, 18. Zion, Jehovah's chosen dwelling-place.
- *L* | *N* | 19, 20. Mercies to His people.
- *O* | 21–23. Enemies judged.
- *P* | 24–27. Goings in the sanctuary.
- *Q* | 28–31. God's command. Prophecy.
- *K* | 32–35. Exhortation to praise.

The two "goings" are built alike:

- P | e | 7. Goings in the wilderness.
- f | 8. Accompaniments. } In the wilderness.
- g | 9. Address.
- h | 10. Thy congregation.
- *P* | *e* | 24. Goings in the sanctuary.
- *f* | 25. Accompaniments. } Into the sanctuary.
- *g* | 26. Address.
- *h* | 27. The congregation.

The Psalm

A Psalm or Song of David.

> **1** *Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.*
>
> **2** *As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.*
>
> **3** *But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.*
>
> **4** *Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH [Jah], and rejoice before him.*
>
> **5** *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.*
>
> **6** *God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.*
>
> **7** *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:*
>
> **8** *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.*
>
> **9** *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.*

10 *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.*

11 *The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.*

12 *Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.*

13 *Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*

14 *When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.*

15 *The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.*

16 *Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] will dwell in it for ever.*

17 *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.*

18 *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD [Jah] God might dwell among them.*

19 *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.*

20 *He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD [Jehovah] the Lord belong the issues from death.*

21 *But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.*

22 *The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea:*

23 *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.*

24 *They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.*

25 *The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.*

26 *Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.*

27 *There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.*

28 *Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*

29 *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.*

30 *Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war.*

31 *Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*

32 *Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:*

33 *To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.*

34 *Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.*

> **35** *O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.*

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 69.

Verse by verse

> **68:1** *Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.*
>
> **68:2** *As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.*
>
> **68:3** *But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.*

Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. Moses' words when the Ark set out (Num. 10:35), with "God" (*Elohim*) for "Jehovah." **As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.** The two sides of His arising: the wicked scattered, the righteous glad.

> **68:4** *Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH [Jah], and rejoice before him.*
>
> **68:5** *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.*
>
> **68:6** *God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.*

Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens. *Heavens* is *'araboth*, "the deserts," the plains of the wilderness. *Extol* is "cast up a highway for": make ready the road for Him who rides through the desert, as He led Israel through the wilderness (Isa. 40:3). **by his name JAH [Jah], and rejoice before him.** *JAH* is the short form of Jehovah: "He who is." Its first use in the Bible is in the song at the Red Sea, "JAH is my strength and song" (Ex. 15:2).

A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. The God who rides through the deserts cares for the weakest (Deut. 10:18). **God setteth the solitary in families.** He gives a home to the homeless: Israel, a nation of slaves, made a family. **he bringeth out those which are bound with chains.** Out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.** The rebels left in the desert (Num. 14:29–35).

> **68:7** *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:*
>
> **68:8** *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.*
>
> **68:9** *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.*

> **68:10** *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.*

O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah. The words of Deborah's song (Judg. 5:4, 5). The *Selah* connects the first going up of the Ark in the wilderness with all that went with it. **The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.** *Dropped* is "poured down rain" (Ex. 19:16–18).

Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary. A rain of gifts: the manna and the quails, the water from the rock, and the rain of the land (Deut. 11:11). **Thy congregation hath dwelt therein.** *Congregation* is "thy living ones," "thy flock." **thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.**

> **68:11** *The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.*
>
> **68:12** *Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.*
>
> **68:13** *Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*
>
> **68:14** *When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.*

The Lord gave the word. *Lord* here is one of the places the scribes altered from *Jehovah*. Jehovah gave the word of victory. **great was the company of those that published it.** The word *those that published* is feminine: "the women that proclaimed the good tidings were a great host." When Israel won a victory, the women went out with song (Ex. 15:20, 21; Judg. 5; 1 Sam. 18:6, 7). Verses 12 and 13 are their song. **Kings of armies did flee apace.** Literally, "did flee, did flee": the figure *Epizeuxis*. **and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.** The women at home shared the plunder (Judg. 5:30; 1 Sam. 30:24).

Though ye have lien among the pots. *Pots* is better "the folds" or "sheepfolds": "Though ye lay among the sheepfolds" (Judg. 5:16). Some take it of the brick-kilns of Egypt. **yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.** The dove shining in the sun: Israel, once among the sheepfolds or the kilns, now glittering with the spoil of kings. **When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.** *Almighty* is *Shaddai*. *Salmon* (or Zalmon) is a wooded hill near Shechem (Judg. 9:48). The kings were scattered like snow driven across a dark hill, or their bones lay white as snow on it. The verse is one of the hardest in the Psalms.

> **68:15** *The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.*
>
> **68:16** *Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] will dwell in it for ever.*
>
> **68:17** *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.*
>
> **68:18** *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD [Jah] God might dwell among them.*

The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. Better, "A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan; a mountain of peaks is the mountain of Bashan": the high range of Hermon and

the Bashan hills. **Why leap ye, ye high hills?** *Leap* is "look askance," "look with envy": the figure *Prosopopoeia*, the great mountains envying little Zion. **this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] will dwell in it for ever.** Not the high peaks, but Zion, which God chose (132:13, 14).

The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. Literally, "twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands": a numberless host. **the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.** *Lord* is again one of the scribes' alterations from *Jehovah*. The line may be read, "Jehovah hath come from Sinai into the sanctuary." The God who came down on Sinai now comes up into His sanctuary on Zion with His hosts (Deut. 33:2).

Thou hast ascended on high. *On high* is the height, the mountain of Zion. In the Psalm the Ark, the symbol of God's presence, goes up to Zion. **thou hast led captivity captive.** The conqueror leads his captives in his train. **thou hast received gifts for men.** *Received* is *laqach*, "take," which also means take *in order to give* (as in Gen. 15:9, "Take me," that is, bring me; Ex. 25:2). The conqueror takes the spoil and distributes it. Paul quotes the verse: "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Eph. 4:8). The Aramaic and Syriac also read "gave." *For men* is "among men" or "in man" (*ba'adam*). **yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD [Jah] God might dwell among them.** *JAH Elohim* in the Hebrew. Even the rebels receive His gifts, so that God may dwell among them. This is a foreshadowing of grace.

Paul applies the verse to the ascension of Christ. God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand, and from there He gave gifts to His church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:8–12; Acts 2:33). As the Ark, the sign of God's presence, went up to Zion and the spoil was given to the people, so the risen and ascended Christ received of the Father and gave to His people.

> **68:19** *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.*
>
> **68:20** *He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD [Jehovah] the Lord belong the issues from death.*

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits. *Lord* is again *Jehovah* in the original text, as the scribes record. *Loadeth us with benefits* is better "beareth our burden for us": "Blessed be Jehovah, day by day He carrieth us" (compare Isa. 46:3, 4). **even the God of our salvation. Selah.** *God* is *El*. The *Selah* connects this praise with its reason. **He that is our God is the God of salvation.** "The *El* that is ours is an *El* of salvations." **and unto GOD [Jehovah] the Lord belong the issues from death.** *Jehovah Adonai*. *Issues* are the ways of escape: the escapes from death belong to Him (Deut. 32:39). He alone brings men out of death.

> **68:21** *But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.*
>
> **68:22** *The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea:*
>
> **68:23** *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.*

But God shall wound the head of his enemies. *Wound* is "shatter." **and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.** Long hair was a sign of a vow of war (Judg. 5:2, margin; Deut. 32:42). **The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea.** *My people* is supplied. God will bring His enemies back from wherever they flee, the heights of Bashan or the depths of the sea (Amos 9:2, 3), for judgment. **That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.** As in 58:10.

> **68:24** *They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.*
>
> **68:25** *The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.*
>
> **68:26** *Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.*
>
> **68:27** *There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.*

They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. *In the sanctuary* is "into the sanctuary": the procession of the Ark going up into the holy place (2 Sam. 6:17). **The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.** The order given in 1 Chronicles 15:16–21, 27, 28. *Damsels* is *'alamoth*: the maidens (see Psalm 45, Its close). **Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.** All who come from the fountain of Israel, from Jacob (Deut. 33:28; Isa. 48:1). **There is little Benjamin with their ruler.** Benjamin, the youngest tribe, from which Saul came. **the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.** Two southern tribes and two northern: the whole nation is represented.

> **68:28** *Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*
>
> **68:29** *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.*
>
> **68:30** *Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war.*
>
> **68:31** *Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*

Thy God hath commanded thy strength. Several ancient versions read "Command, O God, thy strength." **strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.** The rest of the Psalm is prophecy (*Q*): the kings of the earth coming to Jerusalem (Isa. 60:3–11; 2 Chron. 32:23). **Rebuke the company of spearmen.** Literally, "the beast of the reeds," the hippopotamus or crocodile of the Nile: Egypt. **the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people.** The mighty rulers and their peoples (22:12). **till every one submit himself with pieces of silver.** Till they come cringing with tribute. **scatter thou the people that delight in war.** The Hebrew text reads "He hath scattered"; the King James Version follows the ancient versions in reading it as a prayer.

Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. *Ethiopia* is Cush. Stretching out the hands is the gesture of prayer, or of bringing gifts. The nations that once oppressed

Israel will come to worship (Isa. 19:21–25; 45:14). In the Acts, a man of Ethiopia came to Jerusalem to worship and went home believing (Acts 8:27–39).

> **68:32** *Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:*
>
> **68:33** *To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.*
>
> **68:34** *Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.*
>
> **68:35** *O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.*

Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah. *Lord* is again one of the places altered from *Jehovah*. The call to praise goes out to all kingdoms. The *Selah* connects the call with its reason: **To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old.** The ancient heavens. **lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.** "His voice, a voice of strength" (29:3–9). **Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places.** *Holy places* is plural of majesty: the great sanctuary. **the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.** The answer ends as the answer in Psalm 72 will end: "Blessed be . . ."

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 69; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 68. *Shoshannim*, "lilies," is the spring festival, the Passover (see Psalm 44, Its close). Written for the bringing up of the Ark, the Psalm was handed over for use at the Passover, because it celebrates the deliverance from Egypt and the march through the wilderness (vv. 6–10).

Looking back

Psalm 68 is member N, the answer to Psalms 61–67. Israel waited; God arises. His enemies are scattered, His people are brought out of bondage, the procession goes up to Zion, and the kingdoms of the earth are called to sing. It answers to Psalm 72 (*N*): there God is the conqueror going up to Zion; there the King reigns from Zion over all the earth.

Psalm 69 — "Save Me, O God; for the Waters Are Come in unto My Soul"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member *K* (the King waits for deliverance from sufferings, shame and sorrow). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

The second half of the division begins. Psalm 61 began with Israel crying "from the end of the earth"; Psalm 69 begins with the King sinking in deep waters. It is David's own cry. But it is quoted in the New Testament of Christ more than any Psalm except Psalm 22:

- Verse 4, "They that hate me without a cause": the Lord applied it to Himself (John 15:25).
- Verse 9, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up": the disciples remembered it when He cleansed the temple (John 2:17). "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me": Paul applied it to Christ (Rom. 15:3).
- Verse 21, "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink": fulfilled at the cross (Matt. 27:34, 48; John 19:28–30).
- Verses 22, 23: Paul applied them to Israel's blindness (Rom. 11:9, 10).
- Verse 25: Peter applied it to Judas (Acts 1:20).

The Companion Bible sees in Psalm 69 the trespass offering, as Psalm 22 is the sin offering and Psalm 40 the burnt offering. The trespass offering was the one in which wrong was put right and restitution made (Lev. 6:1–7), and the King says: "then I restored that which I took not away" (v. 4).

Not every line can be applied to Christ. Verse 5, "thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee," is David's confession. The Lord Jesus "did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22). The Psalm is David's, written in his own sufferings, and the New Testament takes from it what was fulfilled in his Son.

Structure

- R^1 | 1–21. Prayer.
- R^2 | 22–29. Imprecation.
- R^3 | 30–36. Praise.

The prayer (1–21):

- S | 1-. Salvation.
- T | -1–4. Trouble.
- U | 5, 6. Appeal.
- V | 7–12. Reproach. Treatment received.

- *S* | 13. Salvation.
- *T* | 14–18. Trouble.
- *U* | 19. Appeal.
- *V* | 20, 21. Reproach. Treatment received.

The trouble (T, *T*):

- i | -1, 2. Mire and waters.
- k | 3. Desire after God.
- l | 4. Enemies.
- *i* | 14, 15. Mire and waters.
- *k* | 16–18-. Desire after God.
- *l* | -18. Enemies.

The reproach (V, *V*):

- m | 7. "I" reproached.
- n | 8–10-. Desolation.
- o | 11, 12-. "I gave," etc.
- p | -12. Drunkards.
- *m* | 20-. "I" reproached.
- *n* | -20. Desolation.
- *o* | 21-. "They gave," etc.
- *p* | -21. Drink.

The imprecation (22–29):

- q | 22–25. Imprecation: "they."
- r | 26. Reason: they hurt Thine afflicted.
- *q* | 27, 28. Imprecation.
- *r* | 29. Contrast: Thou savest Thine oppressed.

The praise (30–36):

- W | 30, 31. "I will praise."
- X | s | 32. Promise to God's servants.
- t | 33. Reason: Jehovah's dealings.
- *W* | 34. Let creation praise.
- *X* | *t* | 35. Reason: God's dealings.
- *s* | 36. Promise to God's servants.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

1 *Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.*

2 *I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*

3 *I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.*

4 *They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.*

5 *O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.*

6 *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah] of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.*

7 *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.*

8 *I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.*

9 *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*

10 *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.*

11 *I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.*

12 *They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.*

13 *But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.*

14 *Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.*

15 *Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*

16 *Hear me, O LORD [Jehovah]; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.*

17 *And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.*

18 *Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.*

19 *Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.*

20 *Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.*

21 *They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

22 *Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.*

23 *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.*

24 *Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.*

> **25** *Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.*
>
> **26** *For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*
>
> **27** *Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness.*
>
> **28** *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*
>
> **29** *But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.*
>
> **30** *I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.*
>
> **31** *This also shall please the LORD [Jehovah] better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*
>
> **32** *The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.*
>
> **33** *For the LORD [Jehovah] heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.*
>
> **34** *Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.*
>
> **35** *For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.*
>
> **36** *The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 70.

Verse by verse

> **69:1** *Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.*
>
> **69:2** *I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*
>
> **69:3** *I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.*
>
> **69:4** *They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.*

Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. The waters threaten his life (*soul*). The figure is of great troubles as floods (18:4, 16; 42:7). **I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.** Like Jeremiah in the dungeon of mire (Jer. 38:6). **I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.**

They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head. The Lord said: "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25; also 35:19). **they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty. then I restored that which I took not away.** He paid back what he had not stolen: the trespass offering (Lev. 6:4, 5). Christ made restitution for wrongs He had not done.

> **69:5** *O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.*
>
> **69:6** *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah] of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.*

O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. David's confession (see the Introduction). *Sins* is "trespasses," *'ashmah*, the word from which the trespass offering takes its name. **Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah] of hosts, be ashamed for my sake.** Let none who trust God be put to shame because of what happens to him. **let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.**

> **69:7** *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.*
>
> **69:8** *I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.*
>
> **69:9** *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*
>
> **69:10** *When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.*
>
> **69:11** *I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.*
>
> **69:12** *They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.*

Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. He suffers *for God's sake* (44:22). **I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.** "For neither did his brethren believe in him" (John 7:5). **For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.** When the Lord Jesus drove the traders out of the temple, "his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17). **and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.** "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me" (Rom. 15:3).

When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. A byword. Even his grief was mocked. **They that sit in the gate speak against me.** The elders and judges who sat at the city gate. **and I was the song of the drunkards.** The mocking song of the wine-drinkers.

> **69:13** *But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.*
>
> **69:14** *Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.*
>
> **69:15** *Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*
>
> **69:16** *Hear me, O LORD [Jehovah]; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.*
>
> **69:17** *And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.*
>
> **69:18** *Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.*

But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], in an acceptable time. In a time of favour, when God is pleased to hear (Isa. 49:8; 2 Cor. 6:2). **O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.** *Hear* is "answer." **Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the waterflood overflow me,**

neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. The *pit* is the well, a picture of the grave closing over him.

Hear me, O LORD [Jehovah]; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it. *Redeem* is *ga'al*, to redeem as a kinsman (Ex. 6:6; Lev. 25:25). **deliver me because of mine enemies.**

> **69:19** *Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.*
>
> **69:20** *Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.*
>
> **69:21** *They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none. Several ancient versions read "for one to take pity." In Gethsemane His disciples slept; at His arrest "all the disciples forsook him, and fled" (Matt. 26:40, 56). **and for comforters, but I found none.**

They gave me also gall for my meat. *Gall* is a bitter, poisonous plant (Deut. 29:18). *Meat* is food. "They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink" (Matt. 27:34). **and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.** "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. . . . and they filled a spunge with vinegar . . . and put it to his mouth" (John 19:28, 29). In David's suffering this was the cruelty of enemies who offered poison and sour wine to a starving man. At the cross it was fulfilled to the letter.

> **69:22** *Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.*
>
> **69:23** *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.*
>
> **69:24** *Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.*
>
> **69:25** *Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.*
>
> **69:26** *For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.*
>
> **69:27** *Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness.*
>
> **69:28** *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*
>
> **69:29** *But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.*

Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. The imprecation begins. The table that should have nourished them, let it catch them. Paul applied verses 22 and 23 to the part of Israel that rejected Christ: "God hath given them the spirit of slumber . . . And David saith, Let their table be made a snare" (Rom. 11:8–10). These prayers for judgment belong to the administration of law, not to this day of grace (Chapter 3). **Let their eyes be**

darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. *Habitation* is an encampment surrounded by a wall. Peter applied this to Judas: "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein" (Acts 1:20). **For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten.** "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isa. 53:4). The one God smote, they persecuted. **and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.** *Those whom thou hast wounded* is "thy wounded ones."

Add iniquity unto their iniquity. Add the punishment of iniquity to their iniquity: the figure *Metonymy*, the sin put for its punishment. **and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living.** *The living* is "life": the register of the living (Ex. 32:32, 33; Isa. 4:3; Rev. 3:5). **and not be written with the righteous. But I am poor and sorrowful.** *Poor* is "afflicted." **let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.** As in 59:1: lift me out of reach. The One who was afflicted was set on high (Phil. 2:9).

> **69:30** *I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.*
> **69:31** *This also shall please the LORD [Jehovah] better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*
> **69:32** *The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.*
> **69:33** *For the LORD [Jehovah] heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.*
> **69:34** *Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.*
> **69:35** *For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.*
> **69:36** *The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.*

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. The suffering is never mentioned again; it turns to praise, as Psalm 22 does at verse 22. **This also shall please the LORD [Jehovah] better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.** *Song* (*shir*) and *ox* (*shor*) sound alike: the figure *Paronomasia*. Praise is better than an ox with horns, a full-grown animal, and hoofs, divided and so ceremonially clean (Lev. 11:3). Compare 50:13, 14; 51:16, 17.

The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God. *Shall live* is "shall live again." **For the LORD [Jehovah] heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners. Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.**

For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. This is prophecy (Acts 2:30): David "being a prophet." **The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.** Not merely dwell and possess, but inherit and hand down. The suffering of the King ends in a restored Zion.

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 70 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 69.

Looking back

Psalm 69 is member *K*, the King waiting for deliverance. It answers to Psalms 61–64 (K), where Israel waited. The nation's waiting is taken up into the King's suffering: He bears the reproach, is hated without a cause, is given vinegar to drink, and makes restitution for what He did not take. And His suffering ends in praise and a restored Zion.

Psalm 70 — "Make Haste, O God, to Deliver Me"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member *L* (the King waits for His deliverance). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 70 is the last five verses of Psalm 40 (40:13–17), repeated with small changes. In Psalm 40 they followed the words of the Son, "Lo, I come . . . I delight to do thy will" (40:7, 8). Here they stand alone, as the cry of the waiting King: "Make haste." The main changes are in the Names and in the urgency. "God" (*Elohim*) stands where Psalm 40 has "the LORD" in verses 1 and 4, as is usual in Book II, while at the very end "O LORD" stands where Psalm 40 has "O my God." "Make haste" replaces "Be pleased" at the start (40:13), and "make haste unto me, O God" replaces "yet the Lord thinketh upon me" (40:17).

Its Title, "to bring to remembrance," is shared with Psalm 38. Both are prayers in which the sufferer brings his case before God.

Structure

- Y | 1. David: "Make haste."
- Z | 2, 3. Imprecation.
- *Z* | 4. Intercession.
- *Y* | 5. David: "Make haste."

The Psalm

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

> **1** *Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **2** *Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.*
>
> **3** *Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.*
>
> **4** *Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.*
>
> **5** *But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD [Jehovah], make no tarrying.*

Psalm 70 has no sub-scription. Psalm 71 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **70:1** *Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD [Jehovah].*

> **70:2** *Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.*
>
> **70:3** *Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.*

Make haste, O God, to deliver me. In Psalm 40, "Be pleased." The ellipsis is supplied from there: "Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; make haste." **make haste to help me, O LORD [Jehovah]. Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt. Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.** The jeer of the enemy over a fallen foe (35:21, 25). Psalm 40:15 has "desolate"; here "turned back."

> **70:4** *Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.*
>
> **70:5** *But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD [Jehovah], make no tarrying.*

Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified. The intercession for those who seek God. **But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God.** *Poor* is "afflicted." In 40:17, "yet the Lord thinketh upon me." **thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD [Jehovah], make no tarrying.** Several manuscripts read "O my God," as 40:17.

Its close

Psalm 70 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 70 is member *L*. It answers to Psalm 65 (L), where Zion waited for her blessing in silence. Here the King waits and cries "Make haste." The Son who came to do God's will (40) waits for God's deliverance.

Psalm 71 — "Thou Art My Trust from My Youth"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member *M* (praise promised; the trouble remembered). **Writer:** not named; it continues Psalm 70, and some Hebrew manuscripts join the two as one Psalm. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 71 has no Title. It is the prayer of an old man (vv. 9, 18) who has trusted God from his youth (vv. 5, 6, 17). It draws on many earlier Psalms: verses 1–3 are almost Psalm 31:1–3, and phrases come from Psalms 22, 35 and 40. Some have thought it was written by Jeremiah, whose prayers it resembles. But it follows Psalm 70 without a break, and the old king who had trusted God since he faced the lion and the bear (1 Sam. 17:34–37) fits it well.

Structure

- A | C | 1–6-. Declaration of trust.
- D | u | -6-. Youth: care. (Past.)
- v | -6–8. Promise of praise. (Present.)
- w | 9–12. Prayer for old age. (Future.)
- B | x | 13. Confusion of enemies.
- y | 14–16. Return for mercies.
- *A* | *D* | *u* | 17-. Youth: teaching. (Past.)
- *v* | -17. Promise of praise. (Present.)
- *w* | 18. Prayer for old age. (Future.)
- *C* | 19–21. Declaration of trust.
- *B* | *y* | 22–24-. Return for mercies.
- *x* | -24. Confusion of enemies.

The Psalm

Psalm 71 has no super-scription. It follows Psalm 70 without a break.

> **1** *In thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.*
> **2** *Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.*
> **3** *Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress.*
> **4** *Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.*

5 *For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah]: thou art my trust from my youth.*

6 *By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee.*

7 *I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.*

8 *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.*

9 *Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.*

10 *For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,*

11 *Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.*

12 *O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.*

13 *Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.*

14 *But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.*

15 *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.*

16 *I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah]: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.*

17 *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.*

18 *Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.*

19 *Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!*

20 *Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*

21 *Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.*

22 *I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.*

23 *My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.*

24 *My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.*

Psalm 71 has no sub-scription. Psalm 72 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm for Solomon."

Verse by verse

71:1 *In thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.*

71:2 *Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.*

71:3 *Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress.*

> **71:4** *Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.*

In thee, O LORD [Jehovah], do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. *Do I put my trust* is "have I fled for refuge." **Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort.** Several manuscripts read "a rock of refuge," as in 31:2. **thou hast given commandment to save me.** God has given the order for his deliverance. **for thou art my rock and my fortress.** *Rock* is *sela'*, a crag (18:2). **Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.** *Cruel* is "violent." One man in particular.

> **71:5** *For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah]: thou art my trust from my youth.*
>
> **71:6** *By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee.*
>
> **71:7** *I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.*
>
> **71:8** *Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.*

For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah]. thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels. As in 22:9, 10. **my praise shall be continually of thee. I am as a wonder unto many.** *Wonder* is a portent, a sign: men stared at his sufferings and wondered (Isa. 52:14). **but thou art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.**

> **71:9** *Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.*
>
> **71:10** *For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,*
>
> **71:11** *Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.*
>
> **71:12** *O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.*

Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. The same taunt thrown at the Lord on the cross: "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now" (Matt. 27:43). **O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.** As 22:11, 19; 70:1.

> **71:13** *Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.*
>
> **71:14** *But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.*
>
> **71:15** *My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.*
>
> **71:16** *I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah]: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.*

Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt. But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more

and more. Literally, "I will add to all thy praise." **My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.** They are too many to count (40:5). **I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah]: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.** Of His righteousness alone, not his own.

> **71:17** *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.*
>
> **71:18** *Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.*

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation. *Strength* is "arm." **and thy power to every one that is to come.** He wants to live long enough to pass on what he knows to the next generation (78:4–6).

> **71:19** *Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!*
>
> **71:20** *Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*
>
> **71:21** *Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.*

Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high. Reaches to the heavens (36:5). **who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!** The cry of the Song of Moses: "Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods?" (Ex. 15:11). **Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again.** *Quicken me again* is "make me alive again." Some manuscripts read "us." **and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.** From the grave. The word "again" is the hope of resurrection: brought up from the depths, as the Michtam Psalms spoke of deliverance from death (56:13). **Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.** He will be restored to more than he had.

> **71:22** *I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.*
>
> **71:23** *My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.*
>
> **71:24** *My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.*

I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. *The Holy One of Israel* is found only three times in the Psalms (71:22; 78:41; 89:18), and about thirty times in Isaiah. **My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.** *Redeemed* is *padah*, delivered by power. **My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.** The last line is the confusion of the enemies, as in verse 13 (B, *B*).

Its close

Psalm 71 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 71 is member *M*: praise promised and the trouble remembered. It answers to Psalms 66–67 (M). There the nation remembered the fire and the water; here the King remembers "great and sore troubles," and promises that God will bring Him up again from the depths of the earth. Then the answer comes.

Psalm 72 — "Give the King Thy Judgments, O God"

Place: Book II; Psalms 61–72; member *N* (the answer: the King reigns). **Writer:** David (see "for Solomon" below, and v. 20). **Occasion:** the setting of Solomon on the throne (1 Chron. 29:22–25).

Introduction

"For Solomon." The Hebrew preposition (*le*) can mean "of" (by) or "for" (concerning). Since the Psalm is followed by "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (v. 20), it is best read as David's prayer *for* his son, written near the end of his life, when Solomon was made king "the second time" before all Israel (1 Chron. 29:22). David's "last words" said of the king who rules in righteousness, "he shall be as the light of the morning . . . as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain . . . this is all my salvation, and all my desire" (2 Sam. 23:1–5). Psalm 72 says the same in a prayer.

But the Psalm reaches far beyond Solomon. His reign was great and peaceful, and the queen of Sheba came with gold (1 Kings 10:1–10). But no reign of Solomon lasted "as long as the sun and moon endure" (v. 5), or reached "unto the ends of the earth" (v. 8), or made "all nations" blessed in him (v. 17). Solomon is the type; the fulfilment is in Christ, the Son of David, who will reign over the earth. David's prayer for his son is God's promise of David's Son.

"Blessed be the LORD God." Verses 18 and 19 are the doxology that closes Book II (as 41:13 closes Book I). Verse 20 is the epilogue.

Structure

- E | 1. Prayer, and the theme of the Psalm.
- F | G | 2–4. Messiah's goodness to the poor.
- H | 5–10. Other attributes.
- I | 11. General adoration.
- *F* | *G* | 12–14. Messiah's goodness to the poor.
- *H* | 15–17-. Other attributes.
- *I* | -17. General adoration.
- *E* | 18–20. Praise, and the doxology to Book II.

The other attributes (H, *H*):

- a | 5. Eternity.
- b | 6, 7. Agricultural prosperity. (Moon.)
- c | 8, 9. The world: dominion.
- d | 10. Gifts.

- *d* | 15-. Gifts.
- *c* | -15. His people: worship.
- *b* | 16. Agricultural prosperity. (Sun.)
- *a* | 17-. Eternity.

The Psalm

A Psalm for Solomon.

> **1** *Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.*
> **2** *He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.*
> **3** *The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.*
> **4** *He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.*
> **5** *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.*
> **6** *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.*
> **7** *In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.*
> **8** *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.*
> **9** *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.*
> **10** *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*
> **11** *Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.*
> **12** *For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.*
> **13** *He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.*
> **14** *He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*
> **15** *And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.*
> **16** *There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*
> **17** *His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.*
> **18** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.*
> **19** *And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.*
> **20** *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*

Psalm 72 ends Book II with its doxology (vv. 18, 19) and its epilogue (v. 20). It has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **72:1** *Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.*

Give the king thy judgments, O God. *Judgments* are just decisions: let God give him wisdom to judge. Solomon asked for exactly this (1 Kings 3:5–12). **and thy righteousness unto the king's son.** Solomon was both king and king's son. In the fullest sense, the King's Son is Christ.

> **72:2** *He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.*
>
> **72:3** *The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.*
>
> **72:4** *He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.*

He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. *Poor* is "oppressed." **The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.** *Peace* is prosperity, well-being. The mountains, which once hid robbers, will yield peace. **He shall judge the poor of the people.** *Judge* is "vindicate." **he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.** "With righteousness shall he judge the poor . . . and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth" (Isa. 11:4).

> **72:5** *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.*
>
> **72:6** *He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.*
>
> **72:7** *In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.*
>
> **72:8** *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.*
>
> **72:9** *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.*
>
> **72:10** *The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*
>
> **72:11** *Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.*

They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. Eternity (a). The Greek version reads "He shall continue as long as the sun." **He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass.** Rain on a field already mown, so that it grows again (2 Sam. 23:4). **as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish.** Several ancient versions read "righteousness." **and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.**

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea. From the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, or from sea to sea around the earth. **and from the river unto the ends of the earth.** *The river* is the Euphrates, Israel's ideal border (Gen. 15:18). Zechariah repeats these words of the King who comes "lowly, and riding upon an ass" (Zech. 9:9, 10). **They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.** The desert tribes bow; the enemies lie prostrate (Isa. 49:23; Mic. 7:17).

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents. Tarshish in the far west (Spain); the *isles* are the coastlands of the Mediterranean. **the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.** Sheba in southern Arabia, Seba in Africa. The queen of Sheba came to Solomon (1 Kings 10:1, 2). Wise men came from the

east to the Child "born King of the Jews" with gold, frankincense and myrrh (Matt. 2:1–11; Isa. 60:6). **Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.** General adoration (I).

> **72:12** *For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.*
>
> **72:13** *He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.*
>
> **72:14** *He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. *Needy* is the helpless one; *poor* is the afflicted. **He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.** *Souls* is "lives." **He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence.** *Redeem* is *ga'al*, as a kinsman. **and precious shall their blood be in his sight.** Their lives are too precious to be thrown away (116:15).

> **72:15** *And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.*
>
> **72:16** *There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*
>
> **72:17** *His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.*

And he shall live. The Hebrew accent marks "he" as emphatic: *He*, the King, shall live. "Let the king live" is the cry that in English is "God save the king" (1 Sam. 10:24; 1 Kings 1:25, 34, 39). Of Solomon it was a wish; of Christ, who was raised from the dead and "dieth no more" (Rom. 6:9), it is fact. **and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba.** The gifts of the nations (*d*), as the Queen of Sheba gave Solomon gold (1 Kings 10:10). **prayer also shall be made for him continually.** His people pray for his kingdom, as believers pray "Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10). **and daily shall he be praised.** *Daily* is "all the day." His people bring Him gifts, prayer and praise.

There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains. *Handful* is "abundance." Even on the mountain tops, where little grows, there will be abundant grain. **the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon.** The grain waving like the cedars of Lebanon. **and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.** The people will multiply. The prosperity of the land is the sign of God's blessing (b; compare 65:9–13; 67:6).

His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun. *Shall be continued* is "shall send out shoots," shall propagate itself. **and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.** This is the promise to Abraham: "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18; 12:3; 18:18; 26:4; 28:14). Paul shows that the seed is Christ (Gal. 3:8, 16). *Blessed* in the first line is *barak*, to be blessed by God; *call him blessed* is *'ashar*, to call happy.

> **72:18** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.*
>
> **72:19** *And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.*

Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. The doxology that closes Book II. All the King's goodness, power and dominion come from Jehovah, "who only doeth wondrous things." The whole earth filled with His glory: "as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah" (Num. 14:21; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14). **Amen, and Amen.** As at the close of Book I (41:13).

> **72:20** *The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*

The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. *Are ended* is *kalah*, "are completed," "are fulfilled." This is not a note that no more Psalms of David follow, for there are many in Books III–V (86, 101, 103, 108–110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138–145). It means that when this Psalm is fulfilled, all that David prayed for is accomplished. David's last words said the same: "this is all my salvation, and all my desire" (2 Sam. 23:5). He is called "the son of Jesse" as in his last words (2 Sam. 23:1): the shepherd boy from Bethlehem, raised up on high, whose prayers end in the reign of his Son.

Its close

Psalm 72 closes Book II. It has no sub-scription. Book III begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of Asaph" (73).

Looking back

Psalm 72 is member *N*, the answer to Psalms 69–71, as Psalm 68 was the answer to 61–67. In Psalm 68 God arose and went up to Zion; in Psalm 72 the King reigns from Zion over the whole earth. The King who sank in deep waters (69), cried "Make haste" (70), and was brought up again from the depths of the earth (71), now reigns in righteousness, and all nations are blessed in Him.

Looking Back on Psalms 61–72

The third division of Book II shows Israel's redemption, first as the nation's waiting and then as the King's.

- **Israel waits, and God answers (61–68).** The king cries from the end of the earth (61), waits in silence (62), thirsts in the wilderness (63), and is delivered from secret enemies by the work of God alone (64). Zion waits, and the harvest comes (65). Praise is promised, the trouble remembered, and the nations called to praise (66–67). God arises, scatters His enemies, and goes up to Zion (68).
- **The King waits, and God answers (69–72).** The King sinks in deep waters, hated without a cause, given vinegar to drink: the trespass offering (69). He cries "Make haste" (70). In old age He remembers His troubles and trusts God to bring Him up again from the depths (71). And He reigns, from sea to sea, His name enduring for ever, and all nations blessed in Him (72).

Both halves end with "Blessed be God" (68:35; 72:18). The King's suffering, resurrection and ascension are the way to the kingdom, and when the kingdom comes, "the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended."

Looking Back on Book II

Book II, which Bullinger compared with Exodus, is about Israel: its ruin, its Redeemer, and its redemption.

- **Psalms 42–49: Israel's ruin.** The soul far from God, the nation scattered, and the truth that no man can redeem his brother. God alone is "a very present help," and God alone will redeem from the grave.
- **Psalms 50–60: Israel's Redeemer.** God speaks to His people. The man who confesses is forgiven; the men who do not are destroyed. In the Michtam Psalms David tells of deliverance from death.
- **Psalms 61–72: Israel's redemption.** The nation waits and God arises; the King suffers and then reigns.

Book II begins "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (42:1) and ends "let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen" (72:19). The thirst of one soul far from God ends with the whole earth filled with His glory. Book III, which Bullinger compared with Leviticus, turns to the Sanctuary.

Book III — Psalms 73–89: Concerning the Sanctuary

A. The subject of the Book

Book III is the "Leviticus Book" of the Psalter. Book I was about *Man*, Book II about *Israel*; Book III is about *the Sanctuary*: God's dwelling among His people, how He is approached, and what happens when it is defiled and destroyed. It begins with a man who could not understand the prosperity of the wicked "until I went into the sanctuary of God" (73:17). It ends with the covenant with David apparently broken and the crown cast to the ground (89:38–45), and then with its doxology: "Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] for evermore. Amen, and Amen" (89:52).

B. Its match with Leviticus

The Hebrew name of Leviticus is its first word, *Vayyiqra*, "And he called." Jehovah called Moses "out of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Lev. 1:1), and the whole book tells how a holy God may be approached: by sacrifice, by priesthood, by cleansing, and at His appointed feasts. It teaches that none can worship except those God calls. Book II ended on that note: "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts" (65:4).

The match in Book III is close. The sanctuary, God's house, or His dwelling-place is in view in almost every Psalm of the Book:

- "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (73:17).
- "They have cast fire into thy sanctuary" (74:7).
- "In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion" (76:2).
- "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (77:13).
- "He built his sanctuary like high palaces" (78:69); and He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh (78:60).
- "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled" (79:1).
- "Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth" (80:1).
- The trumpet at the new moon and the feast day (81:3), the feasts of Leviticus 23.
- "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty" (82:1).
- "Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession" (83:12).
- "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts!" (84:1).
- "The LORD [Jehovah] loveth the gates of Zion" (87:2).
- "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints" (89:7).

Weight: the Leviticus match is strong in Book III, stronger than in Books I and II (Chapter 4 of Part One).

The Names of God. In the first division (73–83), *Elohim* (God) occurs forty-seven times and *Jehovah* only thirteen. In the second division (84–89), the proportion is reversed: *Jehovah* thirty-one times and *Elohim* sixteen (Appendix H). The sanctuary in relation to man speaks of God; the sanctuary in relation to Jehovah speaks of the covenant Name.

The writers. All the Psalms of the first division (73–83) are "of Asaph." All the Psalms of the second division are "for the sons of Korah," except Psalm 86 (David's, the only Psalm of David in this Book) and Psalm 89 (Ethan's). Psalm 88 is both "for the sons of Korah" and "of Heman the Ezrahite," for Heman was a Korahite (1 Chron. 6:33–37).

C. Its structure

Book III falls into two divisions:

- A^1 | 73–83. The Sanctuary in relation to man.
- A^2 | 84–89. The Sanctuary in relation to Jehovah.

Psalms 73–83: The Sanctuary in Relation to Man

A. What this division is about

The eleven Psalms of Asaph that open Book III show what man does with God's sanctuary, and what the sanctuary does for man. The man outside it is distracted and miserable (73; 77–78). The enemy invades it and burns it (74; 79). God's Anointed, and God Himself, stand in it to judge (75; 80–82). And the enemies of the sanctuary are destroyed (76; 83).

Asaph was one of David's three chief musicians (1 Chron. 15:17–19; 16:4–7), "the seer" (2 Chron. 29:30). His family continued as the temple singers for centuries: "the children of Asaph" came back from Babylon (Ezra 2:41; Neh. 7:44). Some of the Psalms "of Asaph" describe events long after David's day, such as the burning of the sanctuary (74; 79). These were written by a later Asaph, or by the family of singers who bore his name. **Weight:** the Title "of Asaph" names the family as well as the man; the later Psalms cannot be David's Asaph's own unless they are prophecy, and they read as the cry of men who are seeing the events.

B. Its structure

- B | 73. The effect of being outside the sanctuary. Occupation of heart with others, and consequent distraction.
- C | 74. The enemy in the sanctuary.
- D | 75. God's Anointed in the sanctuary.
- E | 76. Destruction of the enemies of the sanctuary.
- *B* | 77, 78. The effect of being outside the sanctuary. Occupation of heart with self, and consequent misery. Psalm 78 is instruction (*Maschil*) concerning 73 and 77, showing how Jehovah forsook Shiloh (78:60), chose not Joseph (78:67), but chose Zion (78:68, 69), and chose David (78:70–72).
- *C* | 79. The enemy in the sanctuary.
- *D* | 80, 81, 82. God in the sanctuary.
- *E* | 83. Destruction of the enemies of the sanctuary.

The two halves run in parallel: the man outside, the enemy in, God's presence, and the enemies destroyed.

C. Its purpose

This division teaches that the sanctuary is where the truth is seen. Outside it, a man envies the wicked (73) and drowns in his own troubles (77). Inside it, he sees their end and God's way (73:17; 77:13). The sanctuary can be invaded and burned (74; 79), but God's Anointed and God Himself rule in it (75; 80–82), and its enemies will perish (76; 83).

Psalm 73 — "Until I Went into the Sanctuary of God"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member B (the effect of being outside the sanctuary: distraction). **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 73 opens Book III with a man who nearly fell. He saw the wicked prosper: healthy, rich, proud, untroubled, mocking God. He had kept his heart clean, and he was plagued every day. "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain" (v. 13). He could not make sense of it, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (v. 17). In God's presence he saw the end of the wicked, and his own foolishness, and the God who held his hand.

The first verse gives the conclusion before the story: "Truly God is good to Israel." The rest of the Psalm shows how he came back to it.

Structure

- A | 1. Occupation with God. Peace.
- B | 2. Occupation with others. My error.
- C | 3. Result: my discontent.
- D | 4–12. The wicked: their prosperity.
- E | 13–16. Result: distraction.
- *E* | 17. Remedy: the sanctuary.
- *D* | 18–20. The wicked: their end.
- *C* | 21. Result: my discontent.
- *B* | 22. Occupation with others. My error.
- *A* | 23–28. Occupation with God. Peace.

The wicked's prosperity (4–12):

- F | 4, 5. Their prosperity. (Negative: "no bands," "not in trouble.")
- G | a | 6, 7. Their pride and fulness.
- b | 8, 9. Their speech.
- *G* | *a* | 10. Their pride and fulness.
- *b* | 11. Their speech.
- *F* | 12. Their prosperity. (Positive: "they increase in riches.")

The peace (23–28):

- c | 23–26. "I" (emphatic).
- d | 27-. They: far from Thee.
- *d* | -27. They: departing from Thee.
- *c* | 28. "I" (emphatic).

The turning-point is the centre of the Psalm: verse 17, the sanctuary.

The Psalm

A Psalm of Asaph.

> **1** *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*
> **2** *But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.*
> **3** *For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*
> **4** *For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.*
> **5** *They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.*
> **6** *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.*
> **7** *Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*
> **8** *They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.*
> **9** *They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.*
> **10** *Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.*
> **11** *And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?*
> **12** *Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.*
> **13** *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.*
> **14** *For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*
> **15** *If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.*
> **16** *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;*
> **17** *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*
> **18** *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.*
> **19** *How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*
> **20** *As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.*
> **21** *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.*
> **22** *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.*
> **23** *Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.*
> **24** *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*
> **25** *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*
> **26** *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*
> **27** *For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*

> **28** *But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah], that I may declare all thy works.*

Psalm 73 has no sub-scription. Psalm 74 begins with its own super-scription, "Maschil of Asaph."

Verse by verse

> **73:1** *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*
>
> **73:2** *But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.*
>
> **73:3** *For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

Truly God is good to Israel. *Truly* is the little word *'ak* (as in Psalm 62): "Only good is God to Israel," "Nothing but good." **even to such as are of a clean heart.** The conclusion first. **But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.** "But I" is emphatic: the key to the Psalm. His feet nearly slipped, because he was looking at others. **For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.** *Foolish* is "the arrogant," the boasters. *Prosperity* is *shalom*, "peace": the wicked seemed to have the peace that God promised the righteous.

> **73:4** *For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.*
>
> **73:5** *They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.*
>
> **73:6** *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.*
>
> **73:7** *Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*
>
> **73:8** *They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.*
>
> **73:9** *They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.*
>
> **73:10** *Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.*
>
> **73:11** *And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?*
>
> **73:12** *Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.*

For there are no bands in their death. *Bands* are pangs. They die without pain. **but their strength is firm.** Their body is fat, well fed. **They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.** *Men* in the first line is *enosh* (frail man); in the second, *adam*. They escape the common lot.

Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain. They wear pride like a necklace. **violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.** Literally, "the imaginations of their heart overflow." **They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.** *Corrupt* is "they mock." **They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.** They speak against God in heaven, and their words strut through the earth.

Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. God's people are drawn after them: the common people turn to these men and drink in their words, as from a full cup. **And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?** *God* is *El*; *most High* is *Elyon*. **Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.** *World* is "age": they prosper in this age.

> **73:13** *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.*
>
> **73:14** *For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*
>
> **73:15** *If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.*
>
> **73:16** *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;*

Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. *Verily* is again *'ak*: "Surely in vain." This is where occupation with others leads. **For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.** *Offend* is "deal treacherously." He did not speak his doubts aloud, for that would betray God's children. **When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.** *Painful* is "trouble" or "wearisome" in my eyes.

> **73:17** *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*
>
> **73:18** *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.*
>
> **73:19** *How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*
>
> **73:20** *As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.*

Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. *Sanctuary* is plural: the holy places. This is the centre of the Psalm and the key to the Book. In God's presence, he saw what he could not see outside: not their present but their *end*, their latter end. **Surely thou didst set them in slippery places.** He had nearly slipped (v. 2); they are on slippery ground. **thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.** *Lord* is one of the places where the scribes record that the original read *Jehovah*. *When thou awakest* is "when thou arisest" to judge. The wicked are like a dream: real while it lasts, nothing when one wakes. Their *image*, their show, will be despised.

> **73:21** *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.*
>
> **73:22** *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.*

Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. *Thus* is "for": "For my heart was soured." **So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.** *As a beast* is literally "beasts," plural of majesty: a great brute. He had looked at the world like an animal, seeing only what was in front of him.

> **73:23** *Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.*
>
> **73:24** *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*
>
> **73:25** *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*
>
> **73:26** *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

Nevertheless I am continually with thee. "But I" again, now in the right place. **thou hast holden me by my right hand.** When his feet slipped, God held him. **Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.** *Receive* is "take" (*laqach*). *Afterward* is "after this," after the guiding of this life. *To glory* may be "with glory." The wicked have their end (v. 17); he has his: God will take him

with glory. The hope of the righteous is the resurrection, when God's people are raised and "appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4; compare 49:15).

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. The wicked have the earth (v. 9); he has God. **My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.** *Strength* is "rock." His flesh may fail; God does not.

> **73:27** *For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*
>
> **73:28** *But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah], that I may declare all thy works.*

For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. Spiritual adultery: idolatry, or anything that draws the heart from God. **But it is good for me to draw near to God.** "But I": emphatic. "God is good to Israel" (v. 1); "it is good for me to draw near." **I have put my trust in the Lord GOD [Adonai Jehovah], that I may declare all thy works.** *Put my trust* is "made my refuge." He found God a refuge, and he tells of it.

Its close

Psalm 73 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 73 is member B: the effect of being outside the sanctuary, occupation with others, and distraction. It answers to Psalms 77 and 78 (*B*), where the effect is occupation with self, and misery. In both, the remedy is the sanctuary: "Until I went into the sanctuary of God" (73:17); "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (77:13).

Psalm 74 — "They Have Cast Fire into Thy Sanctuary"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member C (the enemy in the sanctuary). **Writer:** Asaph (a later Asaph; see the division introduction). **Occasion:** the destruction of the sanctuary by an enemy.

Introduction

Psalm 74 is written by one who saw the sanctuary burned. The enemy roared in the meeting-place, set up his own standards, hacked at the carved work with axes, and burned it to the ground (vv. 4–7). There are no signs, no prophet, and no one who knows how long (v. 9).

When was it written? The sanctuary was plundered several times: by Shishak in Rehoboam's day (1 Kings 14:25, 26), and by Jehoash of Israel (2 Kings 14:14). But it was *burned* by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.: Nebuzaradan "burnt the house of Jehovah" (2 Kings 25:9). The details of this Psalm fit that day, and fit the Lamentations of Jeremiah (Lam. 2:1–9). "There is no more any prophet" (v. 9) is a complaint, not a census: Jeremiah and Ezekiel were alive, but there was no word to say how long. **Weight:** the Babylonian destruction is the best fit; the Maccabean period has also been proposed, but in Antiochus' day the temple was defiled, not burned down. Psalm 79 belongs to the same event.

Structure

- H | 1–11. Prayer. The enemy in the sanctuary.
- J | 12. Plea: former merciful deliverances.
- *J* | 13–17. Plea: former merciful deliverances.
- *H* | 18–23. Prayer. The enemy in the sanctuary.

The first prayer (1–11):

- K | 1. Expostulation: "Why?"
- L | 2. Prayer: memory. "Of old."
- M | 3. Enemies.
- *M* | 4–8. Enemies.
- *L* | 9. Prayer: inquiry. "How long?"
- *K* | 10, 11. Expostulation: "Why?"

The plea (13–17):

- N | c | 13-. Dividing the sea.
- d | -13. The breaking of Egypt.
- *d* | 14. The breaking of Egypt.
- *c* | 15. Dividing the Jordan.

- *N* | e | 16-. Day and night.
- f | -16. The heavens.
- *f* | 17-. The earth.
- *e* | -17. Summer and winter.

The second prayer (18–23):

- O | 18. Remember the enemies' reproach.
- P | g | 19. Deprecation: the oppressed.
- h | 20. Prayer: "Thy covenant."
- *P* | *g* | 21. Deprecation: the oppressed.
- *h* | 22-. Prayer: "Thy cause."
- *O* | -22, 23. Remember the enemies' reproach.

The Psalm

Maschil of Asaph.

> **1** *O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?*
>
> **2** *Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.*
>
> **3** *Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.*
>
> **4** *Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs.*
>
> **5** *A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.*
>
> **6** *But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.*
>
> **7** *They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.*
>
> **8** *They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.*
>
> **9** *We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.*
>
> **10** *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?*
>
> **11** *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.*
>
> **12** *For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.*
>
> **13** *Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.*
>
> **14** *Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.*
>
> **15** *Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers.*

> **16** *The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.*
>
> **17** *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.*
>
> **18** *Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD [Jehovah], and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.*
>
> **19** *O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.*
>
> **20** *Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.*
>
> **21** *O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.*
>
> **22** *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.*
>
> **23** *Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.*

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 75.

Verse by verse

> **74:1** *O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?*
>
> **74:2** *Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.*
>
> **74:3** *Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.*

O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? The figure *Anthropopatheia*: God's anger as smoke. *Sheep of thy pasture* is a favourite phrase of the Asaph Psalms (79:13; 95:7; 100:3). **Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old.** *Purchased* is "acquired": God's people are His possession, bought out of Egypt (Ex. 15:16). **the rod of thine inheritance.** *Rod* is "tribe" (the word means a sceptre or a tribe). **which thou hast redeemed.** *Redeemed* is *ga'al*, as a kinsman. **this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.** The writer is looking at Zion. **Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations.** Hurry to see the ruins. **even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.**

> **74:4** *Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs.*
>
> **74:5** *A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.*
>
> **74:6** *But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.*
>
> **74:7** *They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.*
>
> **74:8** *They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.*

Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations. *Congregations* is "meeting-place," the place where God met His people. **they set up their ensigns for signs.** They set up *their* signs, their military standards, in place of God's. **A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.** Better, "They seemed like men lifting axes on a thicket of trees." **But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.** The carved cedar panelling of the temple (1 Kings 6:18, 29).

They have cast fire into thy sanctuary. 2 Kings 25:9. **they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.** *Defiled* is "profaned to the ground." **They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together.** *Together* is "at once." **they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.** *Synagogues* is *mo'ade el*, "the meeting-places of God": the places where God was met, the feast-places. The word "synagogue" comes from the Greek version.

> **74:9** *We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.*
>
> **74:10** *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?*
>
> **74:11** *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.*

We see not our signs. God's signs of His presence and power, in contrast with "their ensigns" (v. 4). **there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.** See the Introduction. **O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever? Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.** The figure is of a man with his hand folded in his garment, doing nothing. The words "consume them" are supplied: "Draw it out of thy bosom [and consume them]."

> **74:12** *For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.*

For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. *Salvation* is plural of majesty: great deliverance. This verse is the turning-point. Against all that he sees, he sets what God is.

> **74:13** *Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.*
>
> **74:14** *Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.*
>
> **74:15** *Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers.*
>
> **74:16** *The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.*
>
> **74:17** *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.*

Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength. *Divide* is "cleave," a sudden, violent act (Ex. 14:21). **thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.** *Dragons* are crocodiles, the symbol of Egypt (Ezek. 29:3). **Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces.** *Leviathan* here is Egypt's power, broken at the sea. **and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.** *People* is the wild beasts of the desert, which fed on the Egyptian dead washed up on the shore (Ex. 14:30).

Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood. The rock struck for water (Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11); and the Jordan (Josh. 3:13). **thou driedst up mighty rivers. The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.** Several ancient versions read "the moon and the sun." **Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.** The Creator of day and night and seasons (Gen. 1:14; 8:22) can surely deliver His people.

> **74:18** *Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD [Jehovah], and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.*
>
> **74:19** *O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.*
>
> **74:20** *Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.*
>
> **74:21** *O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.*
>
> **74:22** *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.*
>
> **74:23** *Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.*

Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD [Jehovah], and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name. O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked. Israel is God's dove: helpless, gentle, beloved (Song 2:14). *Multitude* is "the wild beast": "deliver not thy dove to the wild beast." **forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.** *Congregation* is "the life" (the same word as "multitude" in the first line): "the life of thine afflicted."

Have respect unto the covenant. God's covenant with Abraham and with Israel (Gen. 15:18; 17:7). **for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.** Violence fills the land. **O let not the oppressed return ashamed.** *The oppressed* is singular: the crushed one. **let the poor and needy praise thy name. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause.** It is God's cause, not only Israel's. **remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician, Al-taschith"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 75; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 74. *Al-taschith*, "Destroy not" (see Psalm 56, Its close). It is the cry of the whole Psalm: the sanctuary is destroyed; let not God's people be destroyed with it. *The Chief Musician* names Psalm 74 as the fourth of the "Destroy not" Psalms.

Looking back

Psalm 74 is member C: the enemy in the sanctuary. It answers to Psalm 79 (*C*), which describes the same destruction. The sanctuary burned, no prophet, and no word of how long. But the God who broke Egypt at the sea is "my King of old." The next Psalm brings God's answer.

Psalm 75 — "When I Shall Receive the Congregation I Will Judge Uprightly"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member D (God's Anointed in the sanctuary). **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 74 asked "how long?" Psalm 75 answers with God Himself speaking: "When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly" (v. 2), that is, "When I take the appointed time." God has His set time. The arrogant are warned not to lift up their horn, for "God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" (v. 7). The cup of His wrath is in His hand, and the wicked will drink its dregs (v. 8).

Structure

- Q | 1. Praise offered.
- R | 2–8. Judgment. Upright.
- *Q* | 9. Praise promised.
- *R* | 10. Judgment. Upright.

The judgment (2–8):

- S | 2, 3-. The earth.
- T | -3-. Its inhabitants.
- *S* | -3. The earth.
- *T* | 4–8. Its inhabitants.

The Psalm

A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

> **1** *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.*
> **2** *When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.*
> **3** *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.*
> **4** *I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:*
> **5** *Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.*
> **6** *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*
> **7** *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

> **8** *For in the hand of the LORD [Jehovah] there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*
>
> **9** *But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*
>
> **10** *All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.*

To the chief Musician on Neginoth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 76.

Verse by verse

> **75:1** *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.*

Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare. Better, "for thy name is near: men tell of thy wondrous works." God's *Name* is God Himself as He has made Himself known, and He is near.

> **75:2** *When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.*
>
> **75:3** *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.*

When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly. God speaks. *Receive the congregation* is "take the set time" (*mo'ed*, appointed time). When the time has come, He will judge. **The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved.** They melt in fear. **I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.** *I* is emphatic: "*I* have established its pillars." When everything shakes, God holds the world together. The *Selah* connects His set time of judgment with the warning to the wicked.

> **75:4** *I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:*
>
> **75:5** *Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.*
>
> **75:6** *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*
>
> **75:7** *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*
>
> **75:8** *For in the hand of the LORD [Jehovah] there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*

I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn. *Fools* is "the arrogant" (as 73:3). The *horn* is a figure for strength and pride, from the horn of a beast. **Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.** An ancient reading divides the words differently: "speak not arrogantly of the Rock." **For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.** *South* is "the wilderness" (*midbar*). East, west and wilderness are named; the north is not. The north was the place of God's throne (48:2; Isa. 14:13). Promotion does not come from any point of the compass, but from God (Dan. 2:21). **But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.** Hannah sang it (1 Sam. 2:7, 8), and Mary (Luke 1:52).

For in the hand of the LORD [Jehovah] there is a cup, and the wine is red. *Red* is "foaming." The cup is the figure of God's judgment (Jer. 25:15–28; Isa. 51:17; Rev. 14:10). **it is full of mixture.** Wine mixed with spices to make it stronger. **and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.** They must drain it to the bottom.

> **75:9** *But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*
>
> **75:10** *All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.*

But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. The Psalmist, or the Anointed, speaks. The Greek version reads "I will exult for ever." **All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.** *The righteous* is singular: the righteous one. The horn of the arrogant is cut off; the horn of the righteous one is lifted up (89:17, 24; 132:17; Luke 1:69).

Its close: "To the chief Musician on Neginoth"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 76; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 75. *Neginoth*, "smitings": the smiting of the wicked in judgment (vv. 7, 8, 10).

Looking back

Psalm 75 is member D: God's Anointed in the sanctuary. God has His set time, and when it comes He will judge uprightly. It answers to Psalms 80–82 (*D*), where God Himself stands in the sanctuary and judges among the judges.

Psalm 76 — "In Judah Is God Known"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member E (destruction of the enemies of the sanctuary). **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** not named in the Hebrew Title. See the Introduction.

Introduction

Psalm 76 celebrates a victory at Jerusalem: "In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle" (vv. 2, 3). The mighty men "have slept their sleep" (v. 5); "both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep" (v. 6). God rose to judgment "to save all the meek of the earth" (v. 9).

Which victory? The Greek version adds to the Title the words "concerning the Assyrian," and the details fit the night the angel of Jehovah struck the Assyrian army before Jerusalem: the men of might found dead in the morning, the horses and chariots silent (Isa. 37:36). It belongs with Psalms 46–48. *The Companion Bible* takes it instead of David's capture of Jebus, which became Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:6–9), noting the names Judah, Salem and Zion together. **Weight:** the Assyrian deliverance is the stronger reading; the Greek title is an ancient witness to it, and "a dead sleep" fits it closely.

Structure

- U^1 | 1–3. The enemies' defeat. Selah.
- V^1 | 4. God: "Thou art glorious."
- U^2 | 5, 6. The enemies' defeat.
- V^2 | 7. God: "Thou art to be feared."
- U^3 | 8, 9. The enemies' defeat. Selah.
- V^3 | 10. God: "Thou art to be praised."
- U^4 | 11, 12. The enemies' defeat.

The two *Selahs* fall at the end of U^1 and U^3, and mark the structure.

The Psalm

A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

> **1** *In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.*
> **2** *In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion.*
> **3** *There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.*
> **4** *Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*
> **5** *The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.*

> **6** *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.*
>
> **7** *Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*
>
> **8** *Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,*
>
> **9** *When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.*
>
> **10** *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*
>
> **11** *Vow, and pay unto the LORD [Jehovah] your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*
>
> **12** *He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.*

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 77.

Verse by verse

> **76:1** *In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.*
>
> **76:2** *In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion.*
>
> **76:3** *There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.*

In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. *Known* is "made Himself known." **In Salem also is his tabernacle.** *Salem* is the old name of Jerusalem (Gen. 14:18; Heb. 7:1, 2). *Tabernacle* is *sukkah*, a booth: His pavilion. **and his dwelling place in Zion.** *Dwelling place* is the lair of a lion (10:9): God dwells in Zion like a lion in its den. **There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.** *There* is emphatic. *Arrows of the bow* is "the flames of the bow," flashing arrows. The *Selah* connects the battle with the glory of the God who won it.

> **76:4** *Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*
>
> **76:5** *The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.*
>
> **76:6** *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.*

Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. The enemy came like a beast of prey from his mountains; God is more glorious. **The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep.** The sleep of death (Jer. 51:39). **and none of the men of might have found their hands.** They could not lift a hand. **At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.** *Dead sleep* is one Hebrew word: stunned. Pharaoh's chariots sank in the sea (Ex. 15:1); the Assyrian's lay still.

> **76:7** *Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*
>
> **76:8** *Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,*
>
> **76:9** *When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.*

Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still. When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah. *The meek* are the afflicted and humble. God's judgment on the enemy is salvation for His people.

> **76:10** *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*
>
> **76:11** *Vow, and pay unto the LORD [Jehovah] your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*
>
> **76:12** *He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.*

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee. Even man's fury serves God's glory: He turns it to His purpose. **the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.** *Restrain* is "gird thyself with": God wears the last of man's wrath like a belt, binding it. **Vow, and pay unto the LORD [Jehovah] your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.** After the Assyrian fell, "many brought gifts unto Jehovah to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah" (2 Chron. 32:23). **He shall cut off the spirit of princes.** *Cut off* is the word for harvesting grapes: He gathers the breath of princes like grapes. **he is terrible to the kings of the earth.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 77; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 76. *Jeduthun* ("praise," "thanksgiving") was one of David's three chief musicians (see Psalm 61, Its close). In its right place it removes the puzzle of Psalm 77's Title, which seemed to name two writers, Jeduthun and Asaph.

Looking back

Psalm 76 is member E: the destruction of the enemies of the sanctuary. The sanctuary was invaded in Psalm 74; here God, dwelling in Zion like a lion, breaks the weapons of the invader. It answers to Psalm 83 (*E*), where the confederacy of nations is destroyed.

Psalm 77 — "Thy Way, O God, Is in the Sanctuary"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member *B* (the effect of being outside the sanctuary: misery), first part. **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 73 showed a man distracted by looking at others. Psalm 77 shows a man made miserable by looking at himself. In the first nine verses "I," "me" and "my" occur over and over: "I cried . . . I sought . . . my sore ran . . . my soul refused to be comforted . . . I remembered God, and was troubled" (vv. 1–3). Even remembering God troubled him, because he was remembering God from within himself. Then he turns: "I will remember the works of JAH" (v. 11). From that point "I" gives way to "Thou" and "Thy." "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (v. 13). He remembers the Exodus, the sea, the thunder, and the flock led by Moses and Aaron. The misery ends in the God of the sanctuary and of the sea.

Structure

- W | 1–6. Occupation with self.
- X | 7–9. Its sure result: misery.
- *W* | 10–12. Occupation with God.
- *X* | 13–20. Its sure result: happiness.

The happiness (13–20):

- Y | i | 13. God's way in the sanctuary.
- k | 14, 15. His people redeemed: Jacob and Joseph.
- Z | l | 16. The waters beneath. (Fear and trouble.)
- m | 17. The heavens. (Clouds and skies.)
- *Z* | *m* | 18-. The heavens. (Thunder and lightning.)
- *l* | -18. The earth beneath. (Trembling and shaking.)
- *Y* | *i* | 19. God's way in the sea.
- *k* | 20. His people led by Moses and Aaron.

The Psalm

A Psalm of Asaph.

> **1** *I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.*
>
> **2** *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.*

> **3** *I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.*
>
> **4** *Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*
>
> **5** *I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.*
>
> **6** *I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.*
>
> **7** *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?*
>
> **8** *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?*
>
> **9** *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.*
>
> **10** *And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.*
>
> **11** *I will remember the works of the LORD [Jah]: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.*
>
> **12** *I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.*
>
> **13** *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?*
>
> **14** *Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.*
>
> **15** *Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.*
>
> **16** *The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.*
>
> **17** *The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.*
>
> **18** *The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.*
>
> **19** *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.*
>
> **20** *Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

Psalm 77 has no sub-scription. Psalm 78 begins with its own super-scription, "Maschil of Asaph."

Verse by verse

> **77:1** *I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.*
>
> **77:2** *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.*
>
> **77:3** *I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.*

I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me. *Gave ear* is "to give ear": he cried in order that God would hear. **In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.** *Lord* is one of the places the scribes record as altered from *Jehovah*. **my sore ran in the night, and ceased not.** *My sore* is "my hand": his hand was stretched out in prayer all night, and did not grow slack. **my soul refused to be comforted.** Like Jacob mourning for Joseph (Gen. 37:35). **I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.** *Complained* is "mused," communed with himself. The *Selah* joins this inward brooding to its sure result: more misery.

> **77:4** *Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*
>
> **77:5** *I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.*

> **77:6** *I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.*

Thou holdest mine eyes waking. God holds his eyelids open: he cannot sleep. **I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night.** He remembers the songs he used to sing at night (42:8). **I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.** The whole of this section is self-examination.

> **77:7** *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?*
>
> **77:8** *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?*
>
> **77:9** *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.*

Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah. Six questions, each a doubt, each the sure fruit of looking at himself. *Promise* is "word." The *Selah* connects all this misery with the only cure: to turn from "I" to "Thou."

> **77:10** *And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.*
>
> **77:11** *I will remember the works of the LORD [Jah]: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.*
>
> **77:12** *I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.*

And I said, This is my infirmity. "This is my sickness": the trouble is in me, not in God. **but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.** The words "but I will remember" are supplied; the line may be read, "the years of the right hand of the Most High": the times when God's right hand worked for His people. **I will remember the works of the LORD [Jah].** The Hebrew has *JAH*, the Name of Exodus 15:2. **surely I will remember thy wonders of old.** Now "Thy" begins. **I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.**

> **77:13** *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?*
>
> **77:14** *Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.*
>
> **77:15** *Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.*

Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary. Here, as in 73:17, the turning-point: in God's presence there is peace and understanding. Or, "Thy way, O God, is in holiness." **who is so great a God as our God?** The cry of Moses at the sea: "Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods?" (Ex. 15:11). **Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people.** *Redeemed* is *ga'al* (Ex. 6:6; 15:13). **the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.** Joseph is named because his sons were not directly sons of Jacob, but became tribes. The *Selah* connects the redemption from Egypt with the way it was done, at the sea.

> **77:16** *The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.*
>
> **77:17** *The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.*

> **77:18** *The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.*
>
> **77:19** *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.*
>
> **77:20** *Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid. The figure *Prosopopoeia*: the waters of the Red Sea saw God and fled (114:3). **the depths also were troubled.** The depths of the sea, not anything from heathen myth. **The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.** The storm at the sea (Ex. 14:24, 25). *Arrows* are the lightnings. **The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven.** *Heaven* is "the whirlwind," the rolling of the storm. **the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.**

Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. When the waters came back, there was no trace of the path. God's ways are beyond tracing (Rom. 11:33). **Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.** After all the thunder, the quietest picture: a shepherd leading a flock. This is the only place in Book III where Moses and Aaron are named together.

Its close

Psalm 77 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 77 is the first part of member *B*. Occupation with self brings misery (vv. 1–9); occupation with God brings happiness (vv. 10–20). The way out of the misery is the sanctuary and the sea: what God is, and what God has done. Psalm 78 follows with the instruction.

Psalm 78 — "I Will Open My Mouth in a Parable"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member *B* (the effect of being outside the sanctuary), second part: instruction. **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 78 is the second longest Psalm (72 verses). It is a *Maschil*, a Psalm of instruction, and it tells Israel's history from the Exodus to David, so that the next generation will "set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God" (v. 7). It tells the story twice: first the wonders in Egypt and the wilderness, and Israel's unbelief (vv. 12–39); then the wonders again, and Israel's unbelief in the land (vv. 43–64). And it ends with God's choice: He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, refused the tribe of Ephraim, chose Judah and Mount Zion, built His sanctuary there, and chose David His servant (vv. 60–72).

So the Psalm is instruction concerning Psalms 73 and 77: why the sanctuary is where it is. It is "a parable" and "dark sayings of old" (v. 2): a history with a hidden lesson. Matthew quotes verse 2 of the Lord's teaching in parables (Matt. 13:35).

As the study promised for long Psalms (Chapter 12), the treatment here is shorter verse by verse and fuller on the structure and the lesson.

Structure

- A | 1–7. The Mosaic institution: the giving of the Law.
- B | D | 8. Provocation. General.
- E | 9. Turning back.
- F | 10, 11. Forgetfulness.
- G | 12. Wonders in Egypt and Zoan.
- H | 13–16. "Led," with mercies in the wilderness.
- J | 17–20. Provocation in the wilderness.
- K | 21. Wrath in the wilderness.
- C | 22–33. Unbelief in spite of wrath.
- *C* | 34–39. Insincerity in spite of mercies.
- *B* | *D* | 40. Provocation. General.
- *E* | 41. Turning back.
- *F* | 42. Forgetfulness.
- *G* | 43–51. Wonders in Egypt and Zoan.
- *H* | 52–55. "Led forth," from Egypt to the land.

- *J* | 56–58. Provocation in the land.
- *K* | 59–64. Wrath in the land.
- *A* | 65–72. The Davidic institution: the giving of the Temple and the monarchy.

The Psalm begins with the Law given through Moses and ends with the sanctuary and the king given through David. Between them, the same story is told twice: provocation, turning back, forgetfulness, wonders, leading, provocation, wrath. At the centre (C, *C*) stand the two great failures: unbelief in spite of wrath, and insincerity in spite of mercy.

The opening (1–7):

- N | r | 1, 2. The Law.
- s | 3. Taught us by our fathers.
- t | 4. To be taught by us.
- *N* | *r* | 5-. The Law.
- *s* | -5. Taught us by our fathers.
- *t* | 6, 7. To be taught by us.

Unbelief in spite of wrath (22–33):

- l^1 | 22. Israel: sin. Unbelief.
- m^1 | 23–28. Jehovah: mercies.
- l^2 | 29, 30-. Israel: sin. Lust.
- m^2 | -30, 31. Jehovah: wrath.
- l^3 | 32. Israel: sin. Unbelief.
- m^3 | 33. Jehovah: wrath.

Insincerity in spite of mercies (34–39):

- L | n | 34. Repentance of Israel.
- o | 35. Remembrance of Israel.
- M | p | 36-. Mouth. } Positive.
- q | -36. Lied.
- *M* | *p* | 37-. Heart. } Negative.
- *q* | -37. Unsteadfast.
- *L* | *n* | 38. Repentance of Jehovah.
- *o* | 39. Remembrance of Jehovah.

The Psalm

Maschil of Asaph.

1 *Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*

2 *I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:*

3 *Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.*

4 *We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD [Jehovah], and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*

5 *For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:*

6 *That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:*

7 *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:*

8 *And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.*

9 *The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.*

10 *They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;*

11 *And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.*

12 *Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.*

13 *He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.*

14 *In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.*

15 *He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths.*

16 *He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.*

17 *And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.*

18 *And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.*

19 *Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*

20 *Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?*

21 *Therefore the LORD [Jehovah] heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;*

22 *Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:*

23 *Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,*

24 *And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.*

25 *Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.*

26 *He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.*

27 *He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:*

28 *And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.*

29 *So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;*

30 *They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths,*

31 *The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.*

32 *For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.*

33 *Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.*

34 *When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God.*

35 *And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.*

36 *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.*

37 *For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.*

38 *But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*

39 *For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.*

40 *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!*

41 *Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.*

42 *They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.*

43 *How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:*

44 *And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.*

45 *He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.*

46 *He gave also their increase unto the caterpiller, and their labour unto the locust.*

47 *He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycomore trees with frost.*

48 *He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.*

49 *He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.*

50 *He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;*

51 *And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham:*

52 *But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.*

53 *And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.*

54 *And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.*

55 *He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.*

56 *Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:*

57 *But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.*

58 *For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.*

59 *When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:*

> **60** *So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men;*
>
> **61** *And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.*
>
> **62** *He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.*
>
> **63** *The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.*
>
> **64** *Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.*
>
> **65** *Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.*
>
> **66** *And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.*
>
> **67** *Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:*
>
> **68** *But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.*
>
> **69** *And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.*
>
> **70** *He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:*
>
> **71** *From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.*
>
> **72** *So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*

Psalm 78 has no sub-scription. Psalm 79 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of Asaph."

Verse by verse

> **78:1** *Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*
>
> **78:2** *I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:*
>
> **78:3** *Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.*
>
> **78:4** *We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD [Jehovah], and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*
>
> **78:5** *For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:*
>
> **78:6** *That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:*
>
> **78:7** *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:*
>
> **78:8** *And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.*

Give ear, O my people, to my law. *Law* is *torah*, "teaching." Asaph speaks as a teacher, or as God's prophet (2 Chron. 29:30). **I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old.** Matthew 13:35: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." The history of Israel is a parable: it has a meaning beneath its surface.

Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children. Four generations in verses 3–6: the fathers, us, the children, and their children. This is God's command (Deut. 4:9; 6:6, 7, 20–25). **That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation.** The words of Moses' song (Deut. 32:5, 20). **whose spirit was not stedfast with God.**

> **78:9** *The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.*
>
> **78:10** *They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;*
>
> **78:11** *And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.*

The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. Ephraim was the leading tribe of the north, where the tabernacle stood at Shiloh. No single battle is named. *The Companion Bible* connects the verse with Ephraim's failures in Judges (Judg. 12:1–6) and with the idolatry that began in Ephraim (Judg. 17–18). The figure is of archers who had every weapon and turned and ran, like "a deceitful bow" (v. 57): Ephraim failed God when it mattered. **They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.**

> **78:12** *Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.*
>
> **78:13** *He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.*
>
> **78:14** *In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.*
>
> **78:15** *He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths.*
>
> **78:16** *He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.*

Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. Zoan (Tanis) was a royal city in the Nile delta (Num. 13:22; Isa. 19:11). **He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap** (Ex. 14:21, 22; 15:8). **In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire** (Ex. 13:21). **He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock.** Twice: at Rephidim (Ex. 17:6) and at Kadesh (Num. 20:11).

> **78:17** *And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.*
>
> **78:18** *And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.*
>
> **78:19** *Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*
>
> **78:20** *Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?*
>
> **78:21** *Therefore the LORD [Jehovah] heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;*

And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. *Lust* is "their soul": what they craved. **Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?** (Num. 11:4–6; 21:5).

Behold, he smote the rock . . . can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? They had seen the water come from the rock, and still doubted He could give bread. **Therefore the LORD [Jehovah] heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob** (Num. 11:1–3).

> **78:22** *Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:*
> **78:23** *Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,*
> **78:24** *And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.*
> **78:25** *Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.*
> **78:26** *He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.*
> **78:27** *He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:*
> **78:28** *And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.*
> **78:29** *So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;*
> **78:30** *They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths,*
> **78:31** *The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.*
> **78:32** *For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.*
> **78:33** *Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.*

Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation. This is the root sin: unbelief. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19). **Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.** The Lord Jesus said: "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (John 6:31, 32). **Man did eat angels' food.** Literally "the bread of the mighty ones"; the Greek and the Targum render it "the bread of angels." It came from heaven. **he sent them meat to the full.**

He caused an east wind to blow . . . He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea. The quails (Num. 11:31). **So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; They were not estranged from their lust.** They had not turned from their craving. **But while their meat was yet in their mouths, The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them** (Num. 11:33, 34). **For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.** *Vanity* is "a breath": a whole generation died in the wilderness (Num. 14:29–35).

> **78:34** *When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God.*
> **78:35** *And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.*
> **78:36** *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.*
> **78:37** *For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.*
> **78:38** *But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*

> **78:39** *For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.*

When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. *The high God* is *El Elyon*. **Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.** Their repentance was in the mouth only. "This people draw near me with their mouth . . . but have removed their heart far from me" (Isa. 29:13).

But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity. *Forgave* is "covered" (*kaphar*). **and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away . . . For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.** Israel's repentance was false; God's compassion was true. He remembered what they were (103:14).

> **78:40** *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!*
>
> **78:41** *Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.*
>
> **78:42** *They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.*
>
> **78:43** *How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:*
>
> **78:44** *And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.*
>
> **78:45** *He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.*
>
> **78:46** *He gave also their increase unto the caterpiller, and their labour unto the locust.*
>
> **78:47** *He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycomore trees with frost.*
>
> **78:48** *He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.*
>
> **78:49** *He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.*
>
> **78:50** *He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;*
>
> **78:51** *And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham:*

How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Ten times at least in the first two years (Num. 14:22). **Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.** *Limited* is "set a mark," as if to say "this far, and no further." *The Holy One of Israel*: see 71:22. **They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.**

How he had wrought his signs in Egypt . . . And had turned their rivers into blood (the first plague, Ex. 7:20). **He sent divers sorts of flies among them** (the fourth, Ex. 8:24) **and frogs** (the second, Ex. 8:6). **He gave also their increase unto the caterpiller, and their labour unto the locust** (the eighth, Ex. 10:13–15). **He destroyed their vines with hail** (the seventh, Ex. 9:23–25). **He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger . . . by sending evil angels among them.** *Evil angels* is "angels of evils": messengers of calamity, God's agents of judgment (compare 2 Sam. 24:16; Ex. 12:23, "the destroyer"). **He made a way to his anger; he spared**

not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; And smote all the firstborn in Egypt (the tenth plague, Ex. 12:29). **the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham.** Egypt, the land of Ham (105:23). The Psalm does not list all ten plagues; it selects, as a teacher does.

> **78:52** *But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.*
>
> **78:53** *And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.*
>
> **78:54** *And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.*
>
> **78:55** *He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.*

But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. *H* answers *H*: "led" in the wilderness (vv. 13–16), "led forth" to the land. **And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.** The land, and in the end Mount Zion, "the mountain of thine inheritance" (Ex. 15:17). **He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line.** By measuring line (Josh. 13–19).

> **78:56** *Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:*
>
> **78:57** *But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.*
>
> **78:58** *For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.*
>
> **78:59** *When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:*
>
> **78:60** *So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men;*
>
> **78:61** *And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.*
>
> **78:62** *He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.*
>
> **78:63** *The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.*
>
> **78:64** *Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.*

Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies: But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. A bow that misses the mark (Hos. 7:16). **For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images** (Judg. 2:11–13).

When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh. The tabernacle stood at Shiloh from Joshua's day (Josh. 18:1). After the Philistines took the Ark at Aphek, Shiloh was never again God's dwelling (1 Sam. 4; Jer. 7:12–14). **the tent which he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.** The Ark. Phinehas' wife named her son Ichabod, "The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken" (1 Sam. 4:21, 22). **He gave his people over also unto the sword** (thirty thousand fell, 1 Sam. 4:10). **The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.** *Not given to marriage* is

"were not praised": no wedding songs were sung. **Their priests fell by the sword.** Hophni and Phinehas (1 Sam. 4:11). **and their widows made no lamentation.** The widow of Phinehas died in childbirth (1 Sam. 4:19–22).

> **78:65** *Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.*
>
> **78:66** *And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.*
>
> **78:67** *Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:*
>
> **78:68** *But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.*
>
> **78:69** *And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.*
>
> **78:70** *He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:*
>
> **78:71** *From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.*
>
> **78:72** *So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*

Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep. *Lord* is one of the scribes' alterations from *Jehovah*. The figure *Anthropopatheia*. **and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.** Like a warrior roused. **And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.** The Philistines were struck with tumours (1 Sam. 5:6–12; 6:4, 5).

Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim. Ephraim did not lose its inheritance, but it lost its leadership. **But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.** The proof of His love was that He moved the Ark to Zion. **And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.** *High palaces* is "the heights": the sanctuary as high as the heavens, and as firm as the earth.

He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds. The climax of the Psalm. David the shepherd boy (1 Sam. 16:11; 2 Sam. 7:8). **From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.** *To feed* is "to shepherd." *Jacob* is the natural seed; *Israel* the spiritual. **So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.** *Skilfulness* is "understanding," discernment. The Psalm that began with "my law" ends with the shepherd king.

Its close

Psalm 78 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 78 is the second part of member *B*, and the instruction for the whole of member B and *B*. Why did the man of Psalm 73 have to go into "the sanctuary of God" to understand, and why was the sanctuary on Zion? Because Israel had failed again and again, in the wilderness and in the land, and God had

forsaken Shiloh, and chosen Judah, Zion and David. The history ends with the sanctuary and the shepherd king: the place where God dwells, and the man through whom He rules.

Psalm 79 — "O God, the Heathen Are Come into Thine Inheritance"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member *C* (the enemy in the sanctuary). **Writer:** Asaph (a later Asaph; compare Psalm 74). **Occasion:** the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Introduction

Psalm 79 is the companion of Psalm 74. The heathen have entered God's inheritance, defiled the temple, and laid Jerusalem in heaps (v. 1); the dead lie unburied, food for birds and beasts (vv. 2, 3). This is the destruction of 586 B.C. (2 Kings 25:8–10; Lam. 2; 4). *The Companion Bible* connects the Psalm with Shishak's plundering (1 Kings 14:25, 26), but Shishak took treasures and did not lay Jerusalem in heaps. **Weight:** the Babylonian destruction is the best fit, as for Psalm 74. Jeremiah used verses 6 and 7 in his own prayer (Jer. 10:25). The Psalm was well known by the second century B.C., when 1 Maccabees quoted verses 2 and 3 of a later slaughter (1 Macc. 7:17).

Structure

- N | 1–3. Complaint.
- O | 4. Our neighbours: reproach.
- P | r | 5. Question: "How long?"
- s | 6, 7. Prayer against the nations.
- t | 8, 9. Prayer for ourselves.
- *P* | *r* | 10-. Question: "Wherefore?"
- *s* | -10. Prayer against the nations.
- *t* | 11. Prayer for ourselves.
- *O* | 12. Our neighbours: reproach.
- *N* | 13. Praise.

The Psalm

A Psalm of Asaph.

> **1** *O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.*
>
> **2** *The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.*
>
> **3** *Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them.*

> **4** *We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.*
>
> **5** *How long, LORD [Jehovah]? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?*
>
> **6** *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.*
>
> **7** *For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.*
>
> **8** *O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.*
>
> **9** *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.*
>
> **10** *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.*
>
> **11** *Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;*
>
> **12** *And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.*
>
> **13** *So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.*

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 80.

Verse by verse

> **79:1** *O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.*
>
> **79:2** *The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.*
>
> **79:3** *Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them.*
>
> **79:4** *We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.*

O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance. The land, and the city. **thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.** "Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps" (Mic. 3:12; Jer. 26:18). **The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.** *Saints* is *chasidim*, God's beloved ones. The curse of the broken covenant (Deut. 28:26; Jer. 7:33). **Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them. We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.** Edom rejoiced at Jerusalem's fall (137:7; Obad. 10–14).

> **79:5** *How long, LORD [Jehovah]? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?*
>
> **79:6** *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.*
>
> **79:7** *For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.*
>
> **79:8** *O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.*
>
> **79:9** *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.*

How long, LORD [Jehovah]? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. *Dwelling place* is "pasture." The nations were God's instruments of judgment, but they went beyond it, and devoured (Isa. 10:5–7; Zech. 1:15).

O remember not against us former iniquities. Or "the iniquities of our forefathers." They know why the judgment came (2 Kings 23:26, 27). **let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us.** *Prevent* is "come to meet us." **for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.** *Purge away* is *kaphar*, "cover," make atonement. They plead not their own merit but God's name.

> **79:10** *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.*
>
> **79:11** *Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;*

Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? The taunt of 42:3 and 115:2. **let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.** "He will avenge the blood of his servants" (Deut. 32:43; Rev. 6:10). **Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee.** The captives taken to Babylon. **according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die.** *Preserve* is "reserve," let remain. *Those that are appointed to die* is "the sons of death": men under sentence (102:20).

> **79:12** *And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.*
>
> **79:13** *So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.*

And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord. *Lord* is again one of the scribes' alterations from *Jehovah*. *Sevenfold* is in full measure. Into the fold of the garment, as grain is poured (Luke 6:38). It is God they reproached. **So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever.** As 74:1. **we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.** The Psalm that began in ruin ends in praise.

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 80; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 79. It is the plural of *Shushan-eduth*, the sub-scription of Psalm 59: "Lilies: a testimony." As there, it marks a spring festival. *The Chief Musician* takes it as the Feast of Weeks, when Israel was to remember that it had been brought out of bondage and into the land (Deut. 16:9–12); the Psalm of a people brought low, praying to be brought back, was fit for that feast. *The Companion Bible* takes it as the second Passover. See Psalm 59, Its close.

Looking back

Psalm 79 is member *C*: the enemy in the sanctuary, answering to Psalm 74 (C). Both describe the same ruin. Psalm 74 pleaded God's works of old; Psalm 79 pleads God's name and glory. Both lead on to God's presence in the sanctuary (Psalms 75; 80–82).

Psalm 80 — "Turn Us Again, O God"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member *D* (God in the sanctuary), first of three. **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 80 is a prayer for the nation, built around a refrain that grows: "Turn us again, O God" (v. 3); "Turn us again, O God of hosts" (v. 7); "Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts" (v. 19). Each time the Name is fuller, as the prayer rises. In the middle is the parable of the vine: Israel brought out of Egypt, planted, spreading from the sea to the river, and now broken down and burned (vv. 8–16).

The Psalm calls God "Shepherd of Israel" and "thou that dwellest between the cherubims" (v. 1): the God of the Ark, enthroned in the sanctuary. It names Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh (v. 2), the three tribes descended from Rachel, which marched directly behind the Ark in the wilderness (Num. 2:17–24; 10:21–24). It looks for "the man of thy right hand . . . the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself" (v. 17).

Because it names the northern tribes, the Psalm has been placed after the fall of the northern kingdom to Assyria (2 Kings 17:5, 6). The Title does not say. **Weight:** possible; the tribes may be named simply because they marched with the Ark.

Structure

- Q^1 | 1–3. Prayer: "Turn us." "Shine."
- R^1 | 4–6. Representation: the people.
- Q^2 | 7. Prayer: "Turn us." "Shine."
- R^2 | 8–13. Representation: the vine.
- Q^3 | 14, 15. Prayer: "Turn thou."
- R^3 | 16. Representation: the vine and the people.
- Q^4 | 17–19. Prayer: "Turn us." "Shine."

The Psalm

A Psalm of Asaph.

> **1** *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.*
> **2** *Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.*
> **3** *Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*
> **4** *O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?*

5 *Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.*

6 *Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.*

7 *Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*

8 *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.*

9 *Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.*

10 *The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.*

11 *She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.*

12 *Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?*

13 *The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.*

14 *Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;*

15 *And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.*

16 *It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.*

17 *Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.*

18 *So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.*

19 *Turn us again, O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*

To the chief Musician upon Gittith.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 81.

Verse by verse

80:1 *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.*

80:2 *Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.*

80:3 *Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock. In Jacob's blessing of Joseph, God is "the God which fed me" (shepherded me) and "the shepherd, the stone of Israel" (Gen. 48:15; 49:24). *Joseph* stands for all Israel. **thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.** Enthroned above the cherubim over the mercy seat (Ex. 25:22; 1 Sam. 4:4). **Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.** As the Ark went before these three tribes in the wilderness. **Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.** *Turn us* is "restore us": bring us back to Thee. *Cause thy face to shine* is the priestly blessing (Num. 6:25).

80:4 *O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?*

> **80:5** *Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.*
>
> **80:6** *Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.*
>
> **80:7** *Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*

O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts. *Jehovah Elohim Sabaoth* (59:5; 84:8). **how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?** *Be angry* is "smoke" (74:1). **Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.** *In great measure* is "by the third part" of a measure: by the bucketful. **Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves. Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.**

> **80:8** *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.*
>
> **80:9** *Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.*
>
> **80:10** *The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.*
>
> **80:11** *She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.*
>
> **80:12** *Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?*
>
> **80:13** *The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.*

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt. Israel is God's vine (Isa. 5:1–7; Jer. 2:21; Hos. 10:1). **thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.** *Goodly cedars* is "cedars of El": the mightiest cedars. **She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.** From the Mediterranean to the Euphrates: the kingdom of David and Solomon (1 Kings 4:21).

Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it. The wild boar, which roots up a vineyard. In the Hebrew the word for "wood" (*ya'ar*) is written with its middle letter raised above the line, one of four such letters in the Hebrew Bible; Jewish tradition took the boar as a figure of Israel's enemies. **and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.**

> **80:14** *Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;*
>
> **80:15** *And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.*
>
> **80:16** *It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.*

Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine. Here the prayer is "Turn *thou*": let God return to His people before they can return to Him. **And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted.** *Vineyard* is better "stock" or "root." **and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.** *Branch* is "son" (*ben*). Several ancient versions read "the son of man," as in verse 17. **It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.**

> **80:17** *Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.*
>
> **80:18** *So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.*
>
> **80:19** *Turn us again, O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.*

Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand. A play on *Benjamin*, "son of the right hand" (Gen. 35:18). In its first sense, the man of God's right hand is Israel, or its king. In its fullest sense, it is the One whom God has set at His right hand (110:1; Acts 2:33, 34). **upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.** *Son of man* is "son of *adam*." The Son of man, raised up and made strong by God for His own purpose (8:4–6; Dan. 7:13, 14). **So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.** *Quicken* is "make alive," revive. **Turn us again, O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.** The refrain the third time, with the full Name.

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Gittith"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 81; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 80. *Gittith* is "relating to the winepresses" (from *gath*, a winepress), and marks the autumn Feast of Tabernacles, the feast of the vintage (Deut. 16:13). It fits the Psalm of the vine. Psalms 7 and 83 also bear it (Chapter 6).

Looking back

Psalm 80 is the first of the three members of *D*: God in the sanctuary. Israel prays to the God who dwells between the cherubim to shine forth, to return to His vine, and to strengthen the man of His right hand. It answers to Psalm 75 (D), God's Anointed in the sanctuary.

Psalm 81 — "Sing Aloud unto God Our Strength"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member *D* (God in the sanctuary), second. **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** a feast day (v. 3).

Introduction

Psalm 81 is a feast-day Psalm. It calls Israel to sing and to blow the trumpet "in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day" (v. 3). Then God speaks. He reminds them that He brought them out of Egypt, called them to hear Him and have no other god, and promised to fill them (vv. 5–10). "But my people would not hearken to my voice" (v. 11). The Psalm ends with God's lament for what might have been: "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me . . . with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee" (vv. 13–16).

The trumpet at the new moon, and the feast at "the time appointed" (the full moon), point to the seventh month: the Feast of Trumpets on the first day, and the Feast of Tabernacles on the fifteenth (Lev. 23:24, 34). The sub-scription of Psalm 80, *Gittith* (the winepresses), which the King James Version prints over this Psalm, belongs to the same season.

Structure

- S^1 | 1–10. Israel: God's call to praise and to hearken.
- S^2 | 11–16. Israel: refusal, and its consequence.

God's call (1–10):

- T | 1–3. Call to praise. (Positive.)
- U | 4–6. Deliverance from Egypt: the reason.
- V | u | 7-. Israel: prayer.
- v | -7. God's answer.
- *T* | 8, 9. Call to hear. (Negative.)
- *U* | 10-. Deliverance from Egypt: the reason.
- *V* | *u* | -10-. Israel: command.
- *v* | -10. God's promise.

Refusal and consequence (11–16):

- W | 11. Refusal to hear.
- X | 12. Consequence: the worst possible.
- *W* | 13. If they had heard.
- *X* | 14–16. Consequence: the most blessed.

The Psalm

A Psalm of Asaph.

> **1** *Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.*
> **2** *Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.*
> **3** *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.*
> **4** *For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.*
> **5** *This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not.*
> **6** *I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.*
> **7** *Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.*
> **8** *Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;*
> **9** *There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.*
> **10** *I am the LORD [Jehovah] thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*
> **11** *But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.*
> **12** *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.*
> **13** *Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!*
> **14** *I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.*
> **15** *The haters of the LORD [Jehovah] should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.*
> **16** *He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.*

Psalm 81 has no sub-scription. Psalm 82 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of Asaph."

Verse by verse

> **81:1** *Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.*
> **81:2** *Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.*
> **81:3** *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.*

Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. *Take a psalm* is "raise a song." **Blow up the trumpet in the new moon.** The *shophar*, the ram's horn. Trumpets were blown at the new moons and the feasts (Num. 10:10). **in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.** *Time appointed* is "the full moon." The great feasts of Passover and Tabernacles began at the full moon, on the fifteenth day of the month.

> **81:4** *For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.*

> **81:5** *This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not.*
>
> **81:6** *I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.*
>
> **81:7** *Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.*

For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony. *Joseph* is put for all Israel, as in 80:1. **when he went out through the land of Egypt.** When God went out over the land of Egypt in judgment (Ex. 11:4), and Israel went out "in the sight of all the Egyptians" (Num. 33:3). **where I heard a language that I understood not.** Israel heard the speech of Egypt, a foreign tongue (114:1). Some take *I* as God, who heard a voice He had not known, Israel's cry; but the plain sense is Israel in a strange land.

I removed his shoulder from the burden. God now speaks. The burdens of Egypt (Ex. 1:11; 6:6). **his hands were delivered from the pots.** *Pots* are baskets, used for carrying clay and bricks, as Egyptian paintings show. **Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee** (Ex. 2:23–25). **I answered thee in the secret place of thunder.** From the cloud at the sea, and from the thunder of Sinai (Ex. 14:24; 19:16–19). **I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.** Meribah, "strife" (Ex. 17:7; Num. 20:13). The *Selah* connects God's merciful deliverance with the reason Israel should hearken.

> **81:8** *Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;*
>
> **81:9** *There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.*
>
> **81:10** *I am the LORD [Jehovah] thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. The first commandment (Ex. 20:3). **I am the LORD [Jehovah] thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt** (Ex. 20:2). **open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.** As a mother bird fills her young. Only ask.

> **81:11** *But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.*
>
> **81:12** *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.*

But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. *Would none of me* is "had no mind for me." **So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust.** *Lust* is "stubbornness." The worst judgment God can give is to let a man have his own way (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; Acts 7:42). **and they walked in their own counsels.**

> **81:13** *Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!*
>
> **81:14** *I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.*
>
> **81:15** *The haters of the LORD [Jehovah] should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.*
>
> **81:16** *He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.*

Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! The figure *Oeonismos*, a wish. God longs for His people. **I should soon have subdued their enemies.** *Soon* is "almost": in a moment. **and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD [Jehovah] should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.** *Their* is Israel's: Israel's time of prosperity would have lasted for ever. **He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat.** Literally, "the fat of the wheat" (Deut. 32:14). **and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.** "He made him to suck honey out of the rock" (Deut. 32:13). The God who gave water from the rock would have given honey.

Its close

Psalm 81 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 81 is the second member of *D*. God in the sanctuary speaks to His people at the feast, and grieves that they would not hear. It is the voice of Psalm 50 (God speaks to His people) heard again in the sanctuary.

Psalm 82 — "God Standeth in the Congregation of the Mighty"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member *D* (God in the sanctuary), third. **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 82 is a scene in court. God stands in His assembly and judges the judges. The judges of Israel, appointed to give justice to the poor and the fatherless, have favoured the wicked (vv. 2–4). God calls them "gods" and "children of the most High," because they held His office and judged in His name (v. 6). But they will die like men (v. 7). The Psalm ends with a prayer: "Arise, O God, judge the earth" (v. 8).

"Ye are gods." The Lord Jesus quoted verse 6 when the Jews accused Him of blasphemy for saying "I am the Son of God": "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:34–36). His argument was that Scripture itself calls men "gods" (*elohim*) when they act for God; how much more fitting for the One whom God sanctified and sent to call Himself God's Son. The Lord did not claim to be God; He claimed to be the Son of God, and showed from this Psalm that even that was no blasphemy. The word *elohim* is used of the judges of Israel in the Law (Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9, 28). In Exodus 22:28 "the gods" stands parallel to "the ruler of thy people," the line Paul quoted in Acts 23:5. Moses was "a god to Pharaoh" (Ex. 7:1). The case is set out in Appendix J.

Structure

- Y | 1. God, the righteous Judge.
- Z | 2–4. Earthly judges indicted.
- A | 5-. Their wrong judgment. (Negative.)
- *A* | -5. Their wrong judgment. (Positive.)
- *Z* | 6, 7. Earthly judges condemned.
- *Y* | 8. God, the righteous Judge.

The Psalm

A Psalm of Asaph.

> **1** *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.*
> **2** *How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.*
> **3** *Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.*

> **4** *Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.*
>
> **5** *They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.*
>
> **6** *I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.*
>
> **7** *But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.*
>
> **8** *Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.*

Psalm 82 has no sub-scription. Psalm 83 begins with its own super-scription, "A Song or Psalm of Asaph."

Verse by verse

> **82:1** *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.*

God standeth in the congregation of the mighty. *Standeth* is "stands officially," takes His place to judge. *The congregation of the mighty* is "the assembly of *El*": God's own assembly, Israel as gathered under His rule (Num. 27:17; 31:16). **he judgeth among the gods.** *Gods* is *elohim*, the judges who represent Him (see the Introduction). He sits in judgment on those who sit in judgment.

> **82:2** *How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.*
>
> **82:3** *Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.*
>
> **82:4** *Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.*

How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. To accept a man's person is to show partiality (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17). The *Selah* connects the charge with the command that follows. **Defend the poor and fatherless.** *Defend* is "vindicate." **do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.** This was the judge's whole duty (Deut. 24:17; Isa. 1:17, 23).

> **82:5** *They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.*

They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness. The judges do not know and will not learn. **all the foundations of the earth are out of course.** *Out of course* is "shaken." When justice fails, the foundations of society give way (11:3).

> **82:6** *I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.*
>
> **82:7** *But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.*

I have said, Ye are gods. God appointed them, and gave them His own title for their office. **and all of you are children of the most High.** *Children* is "sons." *Most High* is *Elyon*. **But ye shall die like men.** *Men* is *adam*. Whatever their title, they are mortal men and will die. **and fall like one of the princes.** Like any ruler who has fallen (Num. 16:2, 33). The title of *elohim* did not make them more than men; it gave them a duty, and they will answer for it.

> **82:8** *Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.*

Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations. The prayer of the Psalmist. Since men fail as judges, let God judge. *Judge* is "judge Thou." He will inherit all the nations (2:8), and He will judge the world "by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:31).

Its close

Psalm 82 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 82 is the third member of *D*: God in the sanctuary, judging among the judges. Psalm 75 said, "When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly" (75:2). Here He stands in the congregation and judges. The members of *D* (80–82) show God shining forth from between the cherubim, speaking at the feast, and judging in His assembly.

Psalm 83 — "Keep Not Thou Silence, O God"

Place: Book III; Psalms 73–83; member *E* (destruction of the enemies of the sanctuary). **Writer:** Asaph. **Occasion:** a confederacy of nations against Israel.

Introduction

Ten nations have joined to wipe Israel off the map: "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (v. 4). They want to "take to ourselves the houses of God in possession" (v. 12): to seize the sanctuary. The Psalmist asks God to do to them what He did to Midian and to Sisera and Jabin in the days of the Judges (vv. 9–12), so that men may know that "thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth" (v. 18).

Which confederacy? The nearest match in history is the invasion in Jehoshaphat's day, when "the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites" came from beyond the sea with the people of Mount Seir (Edom) (2 Chron. 20:1, 2, 10, 22). Then "the spirit of Jehovah" came upon Jahaziel, a Levite "of the sons of Asaph," and he prophesied the victory (2 Chron. 20:14–17). *The Companion Bible* suggests that Jahaziel wrote this Psalm. Assyria is named only as a helper of "the children of Lot" (Moab and Ammon, v. 8), which fits a time before Assyria became the great power. **Weight:** probable; the list in the Psalm is longer than in 2 Chronicles 20, and the Psalm may describe the full alliance behind that invasion.

Ten and seven. Ten enemies are named (vv. 6–8), and seven destructions are recalled (vv. 9–11: Midian, Sisera, Jabin, Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, Zalmunna). Seventeen in all.

Structure

- B | 1. Appeal against the enemies.
- C | y^1 | 2, 3. Their combination. "For."
- z^1 | 4. Their words.
- y^2 | 5–8. Their combination. "For."
- *C* | y^3 | 9–11. The enemies: their punishment.
- z^2 | 12. Their words.
- y^4 | 13–15. The enemies: their punishment.
- *B* | 16–18. Appeal against the enemies.

The Psalm

A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

> **1** *Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.*

2 *For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.*

3 *They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.*

4 *They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.*

5 *For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee:*

6 *The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes;*

7 *Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;*

8 *Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.*

9 *Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison:*

10 *Which perished at Endor: they became as dung for the earth.*

11 *Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna:*

12 *Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.*

13 *O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.*

14 *As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;*

15 *So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.*

16 *Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD [Jehovah].*

17 *Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:*

18 *That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.*

To the chief Musician upon Gittith.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 84.

Verse by verse

83:1 *Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.*

83:2 *For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.*

83:3 *They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.*

83:4 *They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.*

Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. *God* is *Elohim*, then *El*. Three ways of saying "Do not be silent": the figure *Tapeinosis*, meaning "Act, speak, now." **For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult.** *Make a tumult* is "roar," like the sea (46:3). **and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.** In arrogance (Judg. 8:28). **They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.** God's people are His treasure, hidden in His keeping (27:5; 31:20). **They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.** The aim of Israel's enemies in every age (Esther 3:6; Jer. 48:2).

83:5 *For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee:*

83:6 *The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes;*

> **83:7** *Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;*
>
> **83:8** *Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.*

For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee. *Are confederate* is "have made a covenant." Against God, not only against Israel. **The tabernacles of Edom.** The tents of Edom, Esau's descendants. **and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes.** Desert tribes east of Jordan (1 Chron. 5:10, 19, 20). **Gebal.** Probably the mountain region south of the Dead Sea, near Edom. **and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.** Moab and Ammon were the sons of Lot (Gen. 19:36–38). The *Selah* connects the confederacy of the past with the punishments God gave in the past, which are now prayed for.

> **83:9** *Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison:*
>
> **83:10** *Which perished at Endor: they became as dung for the earth.*
>
> **83:11** *Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna:*
>
> **83:12** *Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.*

Do unto them as unto the Midianites. Gideon's victory (Judg. 7). **as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison: Which perished at Endor.** Barak and Deborah's victory at the Kishon (Judg. 4–5). **they became as dung for the earth.** Their bodies lay unburied. **Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb.** The two princes of Midian (Judg. 7:25). **yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna.** The two kings of Midian (Judg. 8:21). **Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.** *Houses* is "pastures" or "dwelling-places": the land as God's dwelling. They want God's inheritance.

> **83:13** *O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.*
>
> **83:14** *As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;*
>
> **83:15** *So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.*

O my God, make them like a wheel. *Wheel* is *galgal*, the dry head of a wild plant that breaks off and rolls across the plain before the wind (Isa. 17:13). **as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.** *Persecute* is "pursue."

> **83:16** *Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **83:17** *Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:*
>
> **83:18** *That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.*

Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD [Jehovah]. The aim is not only their destruction but that they should seek God. **Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.** This is one of the four places where the King James Version prints the Name in full as JEHOVAH (Ex. 6:3; Isa. 12:2; 26:4). *Most high* is *Elyon*. The end of the Psalm is that the nations know that Jehovah alone is God.

Its close: "To the chief Musician upon Gittith"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 84; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 83. *Gittith*, "relating to the winepresses": the autumn feast. The enemies trodden down like grapes in the winepress (Isa. 63:3; Rev. 14:19, 20).

Looking back

Psalm 83 is member *E*: the destruction of the enemies of the sanctuary. It answers to Psalm 76 (E). There, God broke the weapons at Zion; here, the whole confederacy that wanted to take "the houses of God" is to be driven like chaff, until the nations know that Jehovah alone is Most High. It ends the first division of Book III.

Looking Back on Psalms 73–83

The first division of Book III, all Psalms of Asaph, shows the sanctuary in relation to man.

- **The man outside (73; 77–78).** One envies the wicked, and is set right in the sanctuary. One sinks into himself, and is set right by remembering God's way in the sanctuary and the sea. Psalm 78 explains why the sanctuary is on Zion: God forsook Shiloh and chose Judah, Zion and David.
- **The enemy inside (74; 79).** The sanctuary burned, Jerusalem in heaps, no prophet, and the cry "How long?"
- **God in the sanctuary (75; 80–82).** God's set time of judgment; the Shepherd between the cherubim; God speaking at the feast; God judging the judges.
- **The enemies destroyed (76; 83).** Their weapons broken at Zion; their confederacy scattered like chaff.

The sanctuary is where man sees truly, where the enemy does his worst, where God reigns, and from which His enemies are driven out. The next division shows the sanctuary in relation to Jehovah Himself.

Psalms 84–89: The Sanctuary in Relation to Jehovah

A. What this division is about

The second division of Book III turns from man to Jehovah. The covenant Name now fills the Psalms: Jehovah fifty times in six Psalms. The theme is the blessedness of those who belong to the sanctuary: those who approach it (84, 85), those who dwell in Zion (87), and those who "know the joyful sound" (89:15). Between these stand two prayers (86, 88), which *The Companion Bible* sees as speaking of Messiah's humiliation, the secret and source of all the blessing.

The division ends with Psalm 89, the great Psalm of the covenant with David. It rehearses God's oath that David's seed and throne will endure for ever (89:3, 4, 28–37), and then laments that the crown has been cast to the ground (89:38–45). Book III, which began with a man who nearly lost his footing until he went into the sanctuary, ends with the covenant apparently broken, and with the prayer "Remember, Lord" (89:50), and the doxology "Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] for evermore" (89:52).

B. Its structure

- F^1 | 84, 85. The blessedness of those who approach the sanctuary.
- G^1 | 86. Prayer before God (in the sanctuary). Messiah's humiliation, the secret and source of the blessing.
- F^2 | 87. The blessedness of those who dwell in Zion.
- G^2 | 88. Prayer before God. Instruction (*Maschil*) concerning Messiah's humiliation as the secret and source of the blessing.
- F^3 | 89. The blessedness of those who "know the joyful sound" (v. 15). God in the assembly of His saints (v. 7). Instruction (*Maschil*) concerning God's dealings in His sanctuary, and concerning the whole Book.

Three times the blessedness (F), and twice between them a prayer from the depths (G).

C. Its purpose

This division shows what it means to belong to Jehovah's sanctuary. It is to long for His courts (84), to be forgiven and restored (85), to be enrolled among those "born in Zion" (87), and to walk in the light of His face (89:15). The prayers of the lowly one (86) and of the one in the pit (88) stand beside this blessedness: the way to it is through humiliation. And over all stands the covenant with David, sworn by God's holiness, which cannot fail even when it seems to have failed.

Psalm 84 — "How Amiable Are Thy Tabernacles"

Place: Book III; Psalms 84–89; member F^1 (the blessedness of those who approach the sanctuary), first part. **Writer:** the sons of Korah. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 84 is the song of a pilgrim who longs for God's house. He envies the sparrow and the swallow that nest near the altars (v. 3). He blesses those who dwell in God's house (v. 4), and those whose hearts are set on the pilgrim roads (v. 5), who pass through the dry valley and find springs (v. 6). He would rather stand at the threshold of God's house than live in the tents of the wicked (v. 10).

The sons of Korah were the doorkeepers of the sanctuary (1 Chron. 9:19; 26:1). "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God" (v. 10) is the voice of a Korahite.

Structure

- D | F | 1–4. Blessedness of those who dwell.
- G | 5–7. Blessedness of those who approach.
- E | 8. Prayer.
- *E* | 9. Prayer.
- *D* | *F* | 10. Blessedness of those who dwell. "For." (The reason for F.)
- *G* | 11, 12. Blessedness of those who approach. "For." (The reason for G.)

The dwellers (1–4):

- a | 1. "Thy tabernacles."
- b | 2. Desire for the courts of Jehovah.
- c | 3-. As the sparrow.
- *c* | -3-. As the swallow.
- *b* | -3. Desire for the altars of Jehovah.
- *a* | 4. "Thy house."

The approachers (5–7):

- d | 5-. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee. (Singular.)
- e | -5. In whose heart are Thy ways. (Plural.)
- f | 6-. Passing through the valley of weeping, they make it a place of springs.
- *f* | -6. The early rain filleth its pools.
- *e* | 7-. They go from strength to strength. (Plural.)

- *d* | -7. He appeareth before God in Zion. (Singular.)

The Psalm

A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

> **1** *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts!*
>
> **2** *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD [Jehovah]: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.*
>
> **3** *Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, my King, and my God.*
>
> **4** *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.*
>
> **5** *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.*
>
> **6** *Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.*
>
> **7** *They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*
>
> **8** *O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.*
>
> **9** *Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*
>
> **10** *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*
>
> **11** *For the LORD [Jehovah] God is a sun and shield: the LORD [Jehovah] will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*
>
> **12** *O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 85.

Verse by verse

> **84:1** *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts!*
>
> **84:2** *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD [Jehovah]: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.*
>
> **84:3** *Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, my King, and my God.*
>
> **84:4** *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.*

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts! *Amiable* is "beloved," lovely. *Tabernacles* is plural of majesty: "Thy great dwelling-place." **My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD [Jehovah]: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.** *God* is *El*, "the living El." Compare 42:2.

Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young. These two lines are a parenthesis. **even thine altars, O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, my King, and my God.** Birds could not build in the altars themselves, where the fire burned and the priests served.

The sense is: as the sparrow has found a home and the swallow a nest, so I have found Thine altars. The figure *Ellipsis*: "[Even so have I found] thine altars." The altars, the brazen altar of sacrifice and the golden altar of incense, are his home. **Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.** The priests and Levites who served there (1 Chron. 9:33). The *Selah* connects the dwellers with the approachers, and the blessedness common to all true worshippers.

> **84:5** *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.*
>
> **84:6** *Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.*
>
> **84:7** *They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. *The ways of them* is "the highways": the pilgrim roads to Zion. All the ancient versions read "in whose heart are thy ways." **Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well.** *Baca* is "weeping," or the balsam tree, which grows in dry places. The pilgrims turn a valley of tears into a place of springs (Isa. 41:18). **the rain also filleth the pools.** *Rain* is the early rain, the autumn rain, which comes at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. Some read *pools* as "blessings." **They go from strength to strength.** Not wearier, but stronger, the nearer they come (Isa. 40:31). **every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.** The singular returns: each pilgrim stands before God (Deut. 16:16).

> **84:8** *O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.*
>
> **84:9** *Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*

O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. *The God of Jacob*: not "of Israel." The God who met Jacob when he had nothing and deserved nothing (Gen. 28:13–15). The *Selah* connects this request for a hearing with the prayer itself. **Behold, O God our shield.** God is the shield of His people (Gen. 15:1; Psalm 3:3). **and look upon the face of thine anointed.** The anointed king, or the anointed priest. In the end, God's Anointed, His Messiah. When God looks on the face of His Anointed, He shows favour to all who belong to him.

> **84:10** *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*
>
> **84:11** *For the LORD [Jehovah] God is a sun and shield: the LORD [Jehovah] will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*
>
> **84:12** *O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. The words "elsewhere" are understood. **I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God.** *Be a doorkeeper* is "stand at the threshold." The sons of Korah kept the doors (see the Introduction). **than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.** *Wickedness* is "lawlessness."

For the LORD [Jehovah] God is a sun and shield. This is the only place in the Psalms where God is called a sun. "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2). The sun gives light and life; the shield gives protection. **the LORD [Jehovah] will give grace and glory.** Grace now, glory then: the flower and the fruit (Rom. 8:30). **no good thing will he withhold from**

them that walk uprightly. O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee. *Trusteth* is "confides." The third "blessed" of the Psalm (vv. 4, 5, 12).

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 85 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 84. The words "upon Gittith" printed over Psalm 84 belong to Psalm 83.

Looking back

Psalm 84 is the first part of member F^{1}: the blessedness of those who approach the sanctuary. Here the pilgrim longs for God's house and finds springs in the dry valley on the way. It is the Psalm of Book III in a sentence: blessed are those who come into Jehovah's presence.

Psalm 85 — "Mercy and Truth Are Met Together"

Place: Book III; Psalms 84–89; member F^1 (the blessedness of those who approach the sanctuary), second part: prayer for the land. **Writer:** the sons of Korah. **Occasion:** not named. See the Introduction.

Introduction

Psalm 85 begins with thanks for a restoration already given: "thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people" (vv. 1, 2). Then it prays for a fuller restoration: "Turn us . . . Wilt thou not revive us again?" (vv. 4–6). And then the Psalmist listens for God's answer: "I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace" (v. 8). The answer is one of the most beautiful pictures in the Psalms: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (v. 10).

Which restoration? "Brought back the captivity" is a phrase for any restoration of fortunes (Job 42:10), not only the return from Babylon. *The Companion Bible* places the Psalm after Absalom's rebellion, when David was restored. Many place it after the return from Babylon, when the people were back in the land but its blessing had not yet fully come (Hag. 1:6–11). **Weight:** the Psalm itself does not name the event; either fits, and the prayer reaches beyond both to the day when glory dwells in the land (v. 9).

Structure

- H | 1–3. Mercies to the land.
- J | g | 4. Prayer.
- h | 5, 6. Questions.
- *J* | *g* | 7. Prayer.
- *h* | 8. Answer.
- *H* | 9–13. Mercies to the land.

The Psalm

A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

> **1** *LORD [Jehovah], thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.*
> **2** *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.*
> **3** *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.*
> **4** *Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.*
> **5** *Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?*

> **6** *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?*
>
> **7** *Shew us thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], and grant us thy salvation.*
>
> **8** *I will hear what God the LORD [Jehovah] will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.*
>
> **9** *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.*
>
> **10** *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*
>
> **11** *Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.*
>
> **12** *Yea, the LORD [Jehovah] shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.*
>
> **13** *Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.*

Psalm 85 has no sub-scription. Psalm 86 begins with its own super-scription, "A Prayer of David."

Verse by verse

> **85:1** *LORD [Jehovah], thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.*
>
> **85:2** *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.*
>
> **85:3** *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.*

LORD [Jehovah], thou hast been favourable unto thy land. *Thy land*: the land belongs to Jehovah (Lev. 25:23). **thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.** See the Introduction. *Jacob* is Israel by natural descent, in his earthly standing. **Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.** *Covered* is not *kaphar* (atone) here, but *kasah*, to hide from view (32:1). The *Selah* connects forgiveness with the blessing of the land that follows from it. **Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.**

> **85:4** *Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.*
>
> **85:5** *Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?*
>
> **85:6** *Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?*

Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. "Thou hast turned" (v. 3); now "turn us." **Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?** *Revive* is "make alive." The questions expect the answer No, and Yes.

> **85:7** *Shew us thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], and grant us thy salvation.*
>
> **85:8** *I will hear what God the LORD [Jehovah] will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.*

Shew us thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], and grant us thy salvation. *Mercy* is "lovingkindness." **I will hear what God the LORD [Jehovah] will speak.** *God* is *El*. The Psalmist stops praying and listens (Hab. 2:1). **for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints.** *Saints* is *chasidim*. **but let them not turn again to folly.** Let them not go back to the rebellion that brought the trouble.

> **85:9** *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.*
>
> **85:10** *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*
>
> **85:11** *Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.*
>
> **85:12** *Yea, the LORD [Jehovah] shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.*
>
> **85:13** *Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.*

Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. The glory of Jehovah's presence, the *Shekinah*, which dwelt in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34) and filled the temple (1 Kings 8:11), and departed from it before the destruction (Ezek. 10:18, 19; 11:23). Its return is promised (Ezek. 43:2–5).

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. The figure *Prosopopoeia*: four attributes of God pictured as persons meeting and embracing. Lovingkindness and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss. In God's salvation, His mercy does not cancel His truth, and His peace does not set aside His righteousness. They meet, and are at one. **Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.** Faithfulness springs up like a plant; righteousness looks down like the sun. **Yea, the LORD [Jehovah] shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.** As promised (Lev. 26:4). **Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.** Righteousness goes before God like a herald, and makes His footsteps a path for His people.

Its close

Psalm 85 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 85 is the second part of member F[1]. Psalm 84 longed for God's house; Psalm 85 prays for God's land, and hears the promise of peace. Those who approach the sanctuary are forgiven, restored, and wait for glory to dwell in the land again.

Psalm 86 — "Bow Down Thine Ear, O LORD [Jehovah], Hear Me"

Place: Book III; Psalms 84–89; member G^1 (prayer before God; Messiah's humiliation). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 86 is the only Psalm of David in Book III. It is called "A Prayer" (*tephillah*), a word that describes the whole of Book II, whose last line was "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" (72:20). Almost every line of it echoes another Scripture: Exodus 34:6 (v. 15), and many Psalms of David (25, 26, 27, 40, 54, 56). It is the prayer of one who is "poor and needy" (v. 1), "thy servant" (vv. 2, 4, 16), "the son of thine handmaid" (v. 16). *The Companion Bible* sees in this lowliness the humiliation of David's Son and Lord, who "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7), as the secret and source of the blessing of the sanctuary.

The prayer moves from the Psalmist's need (vv. 1–7) to the greatness of God among the nations (vv. 8–10) and back to his need (vv. 11–17). At its centre stands the promise: "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord" (v. 9).

The title *Lord* (*Adonai*) occurs seven times in the Psalm (vv. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15). In several of these the scribes record that the original text read *Jehovah*.

Structure

- K | 1–6. Prayer.
- L | i | 7-. "I will call."
- k | -7. Reason. "For."
- M | 8-. Jehovah incomparable.
- *M* | -8. His works incomparable.
- *L* | *i* | 9. "All nations shall worship."
- *k* | 10. Reason. "For."
- *K* | 11–17. Prayer.

The second prayer (11–17):

- l | 11, 12. Prayer, and its consequence.
- m | 13. Plea: the goodness of God.
- n | 14-. Man's wickedness: toward man.
- *n* | -14. Man's wickedness: toward God.

- *m* | 15. Plea: the goodness of God.
- *l* | 16, 17. Prayer, and its object.

The Psalm

A Prayer of David.

> **1** *Bow down thine ear, O LORD [Jehovah], hear me: for I am poor and needy.*
> **2** *Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.*
> **3** *Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.*
> **4** *Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*
> **5** *For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*
> **6** *Give ear, O LORD [Jehovah], unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.*
> **7** *In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.*
> **8** *Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.*
> **9** *All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.*
> **10** *For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.*
> **11** *Teach me thy way, O LORD [Jehovah]; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*
> **12** *I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.*
> **13** *For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*
> **14** *O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.*
> **15** *But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*
> **16** *O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.*
> **17** *Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast holpen me, and comforted me.*

Psalm 86 has no sub-scription. Psalm 87 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah."

Verse by verse

> **86:1** *Bow down thine ear, O LORD [Jehovah], hear me: for I am poor and needy.*
> **86:2** *Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.*
> **86:3** *Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.*
> **86:4** *Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.*

> **86:5** *For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*
>
> **86:6** *Give ear, O LORD [Jehovah], unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.*

Bow down thine ear, O LORD [Jehovah], hear me: for I am poor and needy. *Hear me* is "answer me." *Poor and needy* is "afflicted and helpless." **Preserve my soul; for I am holy.** *Holy* is *chasid*: "one whom Thou favourest," one who has received God's lovingkindness. It is not a boast of his own holiness, but a plea of God's favour. **O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.** *Be merciful* is "be gracious." **Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.** As 25:1. **For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.** *Plenteous in mercy* is from God's own Name proclaimed to Moses (Ex. 34:6). **Give ear, O LORD [Jehovah], unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.**

> **86:7** *In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.*
>
> **86:8** *Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.*
>
> **86:9** *All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.*
>
> **86:10** *For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.*

In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord. *Gods* is *elohim*: whether the mighty ones among men, or the gods of the nations, none is like Him (Ex. 15:11). **neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.** The song of the redeemed in Revelation takes up these words: "all nations shall come and worship before thee" (Rev. 15:4). Since God made all nations, all will come to Him (Isa. 66:23). **For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.** *Doest* is "a doer of." *God* is *Elohim*: "Thou art God, Thou alone." The prayer of David's Son stands on the truth that God is One (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29).

> **86:11** *Teach me thy way, O LORD [Jehovah]; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.*
>
> **86:12** *I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.*
>
> **86:13** *For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*

Teach me thy way, O LORD [Jehovah]; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. *Unite my heart*: make it single, undivided. The ancient versions read "let my heart rejoice." **I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.** *Lowest hell* is "Sheol beneath": the grave below. He was brought to the brink of death and delivered.

> **86:14** *O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.*

> **86:15** *But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.*

O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul. *Assemblies* is "congregation": an organised gathering against him. **and have not set thee before them.** As 54:3. **But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.** The Name of God proclaimed on Sinai, word for word (Ex. 34:6). *God* is *El*.

> **86:16** *O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.*
>
> **86:17** *Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast holpen me, and comforted me.*

O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me. *Have mercy* is "be gracious." **give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.** A servant born in the house, belonging to his master from birth (116:16; Ex. 21:4). **Shew me a token for good.** A sign of God's favour. **that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast holpen me, and comforted me.**

Its close

Psalm 86 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 86 is member G^1: prayer before God, from one who is poor and needy, God's servant, the son of His handmaid. The way into the blessedness of the sanctuary passes through humility. At its centre is the promise that all nations will come and worship. It answers to Psalm 88 (G^2), the deeper prayer from the pit.

Psalm 87 — "Glorious Things Are Spoken of Thee, O City of God"

Place: Book III; Psalms 84–89; member F^2 (the blessedness of those who dwell in Zion). **Writer:** the sons of Korah. **Occasion:** the bringing up of the Ark to Zion (see Its close).

Introduction

Psalm 87 is a short song in praise of Zion, the city God founded and loves. Its surprise is in verses 4–6. Jehovah names the nations that know Him: Rahab (Egypt), Babylon, Philistia, Tyre and Ethiopia, Israel's old enemies and neighbours. And of each it is said, "this man was born there." When Jehovah writes up the register of the peoples, He enrolls them as citizens of Zion. It is a prophecy of the nations brought into the blessing of Zion (Isa. 2:2–4; 19:23–25; Zech. 8:20–23).

Structure

- N^1 | 1, 2. Other dwellings spoken of.
- O^1 | 3. Zion spoken to.
- N^2 | 4. Other nations spoken of.
- O^2 | 5. Zion spoken to.
- N^3 | 6. Other peoples spoken of.
- O^3 | 7. Zion spoken to.

The Psalm

A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah.

> **1** *His foundation is in the holy mountains.*
> **2** *The LORD [Jehovah] loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*
> **3** *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.*
> **4** *I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there.*
> **5** *And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.*
> **6** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.*
> **7** *As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.*

A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 88.

Verse by verse

> **87:1** *His foundation is in the holy mountains.*
>
> **87:2** *The LORD [Jehovah] loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*
>
> **87:3** *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.*

His foundation is in the holy mountains. *His* is Jehovah's: the city He founded on the holy hills. **The LORD [Jehovah] loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.** More than all the other towns of Israel (78:67, 68). **Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.** *God* is *ha-Elohim*, "the [true] God." The *Selah* connects this praise with the glorious things that follow.

> **87:4** *I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there.*
>
> **87:5** *And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.*
>
> **87:6** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.*

I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me. Jehovah speaks. *Rahab* ("pride," "arrogance") is a name for Egypt (89:10; Isa. 51:9). Egypt and Babylon, the two great oppressors of Israel, the first and the last. **behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia.** The neighbours to the west and north, and the far south. **this man was born there.** Each nation, or each man from it, is reckoned as born in Zion. **And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her.** *This and that man* is "man by man," "each one." **and the highest himself shall establish her.** *Highest* is *Elyon*. Zion's security does not rest on its walls, but on God.

The LORD [Jehovah] shall count, when he writeth up the people. *Writeth up* is "enrolleth," as in a register of citizens (Isa. 4:3; Ezek. 13:9). **that this man was born there. Selah.** The *Selah* connects the enrolment with the joy that follows.

> **87:7** *As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.*

As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there. *The players on instruments* is better "they that dance": "Singers and dancers alike shall say." **all my springs are in thee.** *Springs* are fountains: sources of joy and life. Every source of blessing is in Zion. This answers to the sub-scription: the dancing of the day the Ark came to Zion.

Its close: "A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 88; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 87. Its first words repeat the super-scription, "A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah." Psalm 87 and Psalm 45 are the only two Psalms in which this occurs, and it emphasises the occasion for which the Psalm was used.

Mahalath Leannoth means "the great dancings with shoutings." It refers to the day David brought the Ark to Zion, when he "danced before Jehovah with all his might," and Israel brought it up "with shouting,

and with the sound of the trumpet" (2 Sam. 6:14, 15; 1 Chron. 15:25–29). The Psalm of Zion, the city of God, was used for the celebration of the Ark's entrance into Zion. Over Psalm 88, the darkest Psalm in the Psalter, "dancings with shoutings" made no sense; under Psalm 87, with its singers and dancers, it fits exactly. It also removes the puzzle of Psalm 88 having two authors, "the sons of Korah" and "Heman the Ezrahite."

Looking back

Psalm 87 is member F^2: the blessedness of those who dwell in Zion. It answers to Psalms 84–85 (F^1) and Psalm 89 (F^3). The pilgrim longed to come to Zion (84); here the nations are enrolled as born there, and all the springs of joy are in her.

Psalm 88 — "Shall the Dead Arise and Praise Thee?"

Place: Book III; Psalms 84–89; member G^2 (prayer before God; instruction concerning Messiah's humiliation). **Writer:** Heman the Ezrahite. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 88 is the darkest Psalm in the Psalter. Other Psalms of lament turn to praise or confidence before the end. This one does not. It begins "O LORD God of my salvation" (v. 1), and that is its only word of hope; it ends with "darkness" (v. 18). The Psalmist has been afflicted "from my youth up" (v. 15), is counted among the dead, shut up, forsaken by his friends, and overwhelmed by God's wrath like waves.

Heman was one of David's three chief musicians (1 Chron. 15:17, 19; 25:1–6), a Kohathite descended from Korah (1 Chron. 6:33–37), and a man famous for wisdom (1 Kings 4:31). *Ezrahite* may refer to his family or district (compare Zerah, 1 Chron. 2:6).

The Psalm is a *Maschil*, a Psalm of instruction. *The Companion Bible* reads it as prophetic of Messiah's humiliation, as Psalm 86 is: the One cut off, shut up, His acquaintance put far from Him, the waves of wrath going over Him. Its language echoes Psalm 22 and Psalm 69, and Isaiah 53:8. It is not quoted in the New Testament, and the application to Christ is by likeness, not by direct citation. **Weight:** the likeness is real; the Psalm is first Heman's own cry.

The dead. The Psalm asks: "Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee?" (v. 10). The dead do not praise God; they are in "the land of forgetfulness" (v. 12). This is the consistent teaching of Scripture (6:5; 30:9; 115:17; Isa. 38:18, 19). The hope of the dead is not praise in death, but resurrection: God's "wonders" shown to the dead when He raises them (Isa. 26:19; John 5:28, 29).

Structure

- P | 1, 2. Prayer.
- Q | R | 3–6. Dissolution near.
- S | 7. Wrath. Waves.
- T | 8, 9-. Desolation.
- *P* | -9–14. Prayer.
- *Q* | *R* | 15. Dissolution near.
- *S* | 16, 17. Wrath. Waves.
- *T* | 18. Desolation.

The second prayer (-9–14):

- o | -9. Declaratory: "I have called daily upon thee."

- p | 10–12. Interrogatory: "Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?"
- *o* | 13. Declaratory: "Unto thee have I cried."
- *p* | 14. Interrogatory: "Why castest thou off my soul?"

The Psalm

Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

> **1** *O LORD [Jehovah] God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:*
> **2** *Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;*
> **3** *For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.*
> **4** *I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength:*
> **5** *Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.*
> **6** *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.*
> **7** *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.*
> **8** *Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.*
> **9** *Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD [Jehovah], I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.*
> **10** *Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.*
> **11** *Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?*
> **12** *Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?*
> **13** *But unto thee have I cried, O LORD [Jehovah]; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.*
> **14** *LORD [Jehovah], why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?*
> **15** *I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.*
> **16** *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.*
> **17** *They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.*
> **18** *Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.*

Psalm 88 has no sub-scription. Psalm 89 begins with its own super-scription, "Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite."

Verse by verse

> **88:1** *O LORD [Jehovah] God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:*
> **88:2** *Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;*

O LORD [Jehovah] God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee. In the darkest Psalm, he still calls God "God of my salvation." **Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry.**

> **88:3** *For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.*

> **88:4** *I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength:*
>
> **88:5** *Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.*
>
> **88:6** *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.*

For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. *Grave* is *Sheol*. **I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength.** *Man* is *geber*, a strong man, now with no strength. **Free among the dead.** *Free* is better "cast off": set loose, abandoned among the dead (the Revised Version). **like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more.** *Grave* here is *qeber*, the sepulchre. **and they are cut off from thy hand.** "He was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8). **Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.**

> **88:7** *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.*
>
> **88:8** *Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.*
>
> **88:9** *Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD [Jehovah], I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.*

Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah. As 42:7. The *Selah* connects the wrath of verse 7 with its fuller description in verses 8 and 9. **Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them.** Like a leper, shunned (Job 19:13–19). At the arrest, "all the disciples forsook him, and fled" (Matt. 26:56). **I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD [Jehovah], I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.**

> **88:10** *Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.*
>
> **88:11** *Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?*
>
> **88:12** *Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?*

Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? God's wonders are for the living to see and praise. **shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.** *The dead* is *rephaim*, the shades, those who are gone. They do not rise to praise unless God raises them (Isa. 26:14, 19). The *Selah* connects this question with its expansion in the next two verses. **Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?** *Grave* is *qeber*, the sepulchre. **or thy faithfulness in destruction?** *Destruction* is *Abaddon*, the place of ruin (Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11). **Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?** The dead "know not any thing" (Eccles. 9:5, 10). The Psalmist pleads: if I die, I can no longer praise Thee. Let me live.

> **88:13** *But unto thee have I cried, O LORD [Jehovah]; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.*
>
> **88:14** *LORD [Jehovah], why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?*

But unto thee have I cried, O LORD [Jehovah]; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. *Prevent* is "come before": his prayer will meet God at dawn. **LORD [Jehovah], why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?** The cry of the forsaken (22:1).

> **88:15** *I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.*

> **88:16** *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.*
>
> **88:17** *They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.*
>
> **88:18** *Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.*

I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up. A whole life lived near death. **while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.** *Distracted* is "at a loss," perplexed. **Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.** *Goeth over me* is the word used of the waves in verse 7: the wrath goes over him like a flood. **They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.** Literally, "my acquaintance is darkness": the only companion he has left is the dark. The Psalm ends there.

Its close

Psalm 88 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 88 is member G^2: prayer before God, and instruction concerning humiliation. It answers to Psalm 86 (G^1). Psalm 86 was lowly but hopeful; Psalm 88 is in the pit. It teaches that the way to the blessedness of God's sanctuary (84; 87; 89) may pass through darkness with no light visible, and that even there one can still say "God of my salvation." It does not end in praise, because its answer is beyond it: in the resurrection, in which God shows His wonders to the dead.

Psalm 89 — "I Will Sing of the Mercies of the LORD [Jehovah] for Ever"

Place: Book III; Psalms 84–89; member F^3 (the blessedness of those who know the joyful sound; instruction concerning God's dealings and the whole Book). **Writer:** Ethan the Ezrahite. **Occasion:** a time when the throne of David had been brought low. See the Introduction.

Introduction

Psalm 89 is the Psalm of God's covenant with David. In 2 Samuel 7 God promised David, through Nathan, that He would establish his seed and his throne for ever; if his sons sinned, He would chasten them, but His mercy would not depart (2 Sam. 7:12–16). Ethan rehearses that promise at length, as God's oath: "I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever" (vv. 3, 4); "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David" (v. 35). Then, with a sudden "But thou" (v. 38), he sets beside the promise what he sees: the king rejected, the crown on the ground, the walls broken, the throne cast down (vv. 38–45). And he asks, "Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?" (v. 49).

The key words are *lovingkindness* (or mercy) and *faithfulness*. *Faithfulness* (*'emunah*) occurs seven times (vv. 1, 2, 5, 8, 24, 33, 49).

Ethan. Ethan the Ezrahite was a wise man in Solomon's day (1 Kings 4:31), and a Merarite, one of David's three chief musicians (1 Chron. 6:44; 15:17, 19), who seems also to be called Jeduthun.

When was it written? If Ethan of David's day wrote it, he lived to see the kingdom divided after Solomon, and Shishak of Egypt invade Judah and strip Jerusalem in the fifth year of Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:25, 26). The warning of verses 30–32 ("If his children forsake my law") was spoken to Solomon himself (1 Kings 9:6, 7), and *The Companion Bible* reads the Psalm in that setting. But "thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground . . . and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast thou shortened" (vv. 39, 44, 45) fits even better the end of the kingdom: Jehoiachin, eighteen years old, reigned three months and was carried to Babylon (2 Kings 24:8–15). The Psalm may be by a later singer of Ethan's family. **Weight:** the Title names Ethan; the lament fits both times, and best the later.

Whatever the time, the answer to the Psalm is the same. The covenant did not fail. God promised David's son Jesus "the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33). He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His right hand, so that David's seed endures for ever (Acts 2:30–36; 13:34).

Structure

- U | 1. Eternal praises.

- V | W | 2–4. Ethan reminds Jehovah of His covenant with David.
- X | 5–18. Ethan praises Jehovah's faithfulness.
- *V* | *W* | 19–37. Ethan reminds Jehovah of His covenant with David.
- *X* | 38–51. Ethan deplores Jehovah's visitation.
- *U* | 52. Eternal praises.

The praise of His faithfulness (5–18):

- q | 5. Jehovah addressed.
- r | 6, 7. The reason. "For."
- *q* | 8–17. Jehovah addressed.
- *r* | 18. The reason. "For."

The covenant rehearsed (19–37):

- s | 19–27. David. "Faithfulness" (v. 24).
- t | 28. The covenant.
- u | 29–32. The seed.
- *s* | 33. David. "Faithfulness."
- *t* | 34, 35. The covenant.
- *u* | 36, 37. The seed.

The visitation (38–51):

- Y¹ | 38–45. The visitation.
- Y² | 46–51. Expostulation.

The visitation (38–45):

- v | 38. Rejection.
- w | 39. Degradation.
- x | 40. Desolation.
- y | 41. Enemies: spoil.
- *y* | 42. Enemies: rejoice.
- *x* | 43. Desolation.
- *w* | 44. Degradation.
- *v* | 45. Rejection.

The expostulation (46–51):

- z | 46. Complaint.
- a | 47, 48. "Remember": frailty.

- *z* | 49. Complaint.
- *a* | 50, 51. "Remember": reproach.

The Psalm

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

> **1** *I will sing of the mercies of the LORD [Jehovah] for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.*
>
> **2** *For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.*
>
> **3** *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,*
>
> **4** *Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.*
>
> **5** *And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD [Jehovah]: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.*
>
> **6** *For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD [Jehovah]? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD [Jehovah]?*
>
> **7** *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.*
>
> **8** *O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, who is a strong LORD [Jah] like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?*
>
> **9** *Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.*
>
> **10** *Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.*
>
> **11** *The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.*
>
> **12** *The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.*
>
> **13** *Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.*
>
> **14** *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*
>
> **15** *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD [Jehovah], in the light of thy countenance.*
>
> **16** *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.*
>
> **17** *For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.*
>
> **18** *For the LORD [Jehovah] is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.*
>
> **19** *Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.*
>
> **20** *I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:*
>
> **21** *With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.*
>
> **22** *The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.*

23 *And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.*
24 *But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.*
25 *I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.*
26 *He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.*
27 *Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.*
28 *My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.*
29 *His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.*
30 *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;*
31 *If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;*
32 *Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.*
33 *Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*
34 *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*
35 *Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.*
36 *His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.*
37 *It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.*
38 *But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.*
39 *Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.*
40 *Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.*
41 *All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours.*
42 *Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.*
43 *Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.*
44 *Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.*
45 *The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.*
46 *How long, LORD [Jehovah]? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?*
47 *Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?*
48 *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.*
49 *Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?*
50 *Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people;*
51 *Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD [Jehovah]; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.*
52 *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] for evermore. Amen, and Amen.*

Psalm 89 ends Book III with its doxology (v. 52). It has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **89:1** *I will sing of the mercies of the LORD [Jehovah] for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.*
>
> **89:2** *For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.*
>
> **89:3** *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,*
>
> **89:4** *Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.*

I will sing of the mercies of the LORD [Jehovah] for ever. *Mercies* is "lovingkindnesses," plural of majesty: the great lovingkindness. **with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.** The first of seven "faithfulness." **For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.** Several ancient versions read "For thou hast said": God's own word. **I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant.** God speaks, reminding of 2 Samuel 7. The word "sworn" is not used there, but the promise is given with the force of an oath (v. 35; 132:11). **Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.** The *Selah* connects the covenant with the praise offered for it.

> **89:5** *And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD [Jehovah]: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.*
>
> **89:6** *For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD [Jehovah]? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD [Jehovah]?*
>
> **89:7** *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.*
>
> **89:8** *O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, who is a strong LORD [Jah] like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?*

And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD [Jehovah]: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. *Saints* here is "holy ones," the angels. **For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD [Jehovah]? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD [Jehovah]?** *Sons of the mighty* is "sons of *Elim*," the angels. **God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints.** *God* is *El*. *Assembly* is "secret council." **and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, who is a strong LORD [Jah] like unto thee?** The short Name, *Jah*. **or to thy faithfulness round about thee?** His faithfulness surrounds Him like a garment.

> **89:9** *Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.*
>
> **89:10** *Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.*
>
> **89:11** *The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.*
>
> **89:12** *The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.*
>
> **89:13** *Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.*

> **89:14** *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. The Lord Jesus, with God's power, stilled the sea (Mark 4:39–41). **Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain.** *Rahab* is Egypt (87:4), broken at the Red Sea. **thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.**

The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. *World* is *tebel*, the habitable world. **The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.** Tabor on the west of Jordan, Hermon in the north-east: with north and south, the four points of the land. **Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.** *Habitation* is "foundation." Righteousness and justice are the base on which His throne rests (97:2). **mercy and truth shall go before thy face.** Lovingkindness and faithfulness go before Him like heralds (85:13).

> **89:15** *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD [Jehovah], in the light of thy countenance.*
>
> **89:16** *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.*
>
> **89:17** *For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.*
>
> **89:18** *For the LORD [Jehovah] is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.*

Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound. *The joyful sound* is the trumpet-blast that called Israel to the feasts and proclaimed the jubilee (Lev. 23:24; 25:9; Num. 10:10). Blessed are those who know it, and respond. **they shall walk, O LORD [Jehovah], in the light of thy countenance.** The priestly blessing (Num. 6:25, 26). **In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.** Several manuscripts read "horns." **For the LORD [Jehovah] is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.** Better, "For our shield belongs to Jehovah, and our king to the Holy One of Israel." The king is Israel's shield, and the king belongs to God. This leads into the covenant with the king.

> **89:19** *Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.*
>
> **89:20** *I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:*
>
> **89:21** *With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.*
>
> **89:22** *The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.*
>
> **89:23** *And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.*
>
> **89:24** *But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.*
>
> **89:25** *I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.*
>
> **89:26** *He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.*
>
> **89:27** *Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.*

Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one. To Nathan, in a vision by night (2 Sam. 7:4, 17). Some manuscripts read "holy ones." **and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.** Paul quoted this in the synagogue at Antioch: "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart" (Acts 13:22; 1 Sam. 16:13). **With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.** As promised (2 Sam. 7:10). **And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.**

I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. From the Mediterranean to the Euphrates (72:8). **He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.** "I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (2 Sam. 7:14). The King calls God "my Father" and "my God": the Son of David calls on the God who is his God (John 20:17). **Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.** *Firstborn* here is a rank that God *makes*: the place of the heir, the first in honour (Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9). David was the youngest of Jesse's sons. Of Christ, John writes, "the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5). *Higher* is *Elyon*, "Most High": the King is made highest among the kings of the earth, as God is Most High over all.

> **89:28** *My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.*
> **89:29** *His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.*
> **89:30** *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;*
> **89:31** *If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;*
> **89:32** *Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.*
> **89:33** *Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*
> **89:34** *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*
> **89:35** *Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.*
> **89:36** *His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.*
> **89:37** *It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.*

My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men" (2 Sam. 7:14). *Break* is "profane." **Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.** *Nevertheless*: the covenant is unconditional. The sons may be punished; the promise stands. "But my mercy shall not depart away from him" (2 Sam. 7:15).

My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. God swears by Himself, for there is none greater (Heb. 6:13, 17, 18). **His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever**

as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah. The moon, constant in the sky, is God's witness to His covenant (Jer. 33:20, 21). Or the faithful witness in heaven is God Himself. Christ is "the faithful witness" (Rev. 1:5; 3:14). The *Selah* connects this solemn promise with the "But thou" that follows.

> **89:38** *But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.*
>
> **89:39** *Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.*
>
> **89:40** *Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.*
>
> **89:41** *All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours.*
>
> **89:42** *Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.*
>
> **89:43** *Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.*
>
> **89:44** *Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.*
>
> **89:45** *The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.*

But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. The turn. **Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant.** *Made void* is "disowned," a word found only here and in Lamentations 2:7. **thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours.** As the vine of 80:12. **Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground. The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.** See the Introduction. The *Selah* connects the visitation with the prayer for its removal.

> **89:46** *How long, LORD [Jehovah]? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?*
>
> **89:47** *Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?*
>
> **89:48** *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.*
>
> **89:49** *Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?*
>
> **89:50** *Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people;*
>
> **89:51** *Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD [Jehovah]; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.*

How long, LORD [Jehovah]? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire? Remember how short my time is. *Time* is "lifetime." **wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?** *Men* is "sons of *adam*." **What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?** *Man* is *geber*, the strongest man. **shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.** *Grave* is *Sheol*. No man can deliver himself from death (49:7–9). Only God can (49:15). The *Selah* connects the frailty of the strongest man with the renewed plea.

Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth? *Lord* is one of the places the scribes altered from *Jehovah*. *Truth* is "faithfulness": the seventh time. **Remember,**

Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people. *Mighty people* is "many peoples." **Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD [Jehovah]; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.** They mocked every step of the anointed king. In the end the Anointed was mocked at every step to the cross (Matt. 27:27–44).

> **89:52** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] for evermore. Amen, and Amen.*

Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] for evermore. Amen, and Amen. The doxology that closes Book III. It is not a part of Ethan's lament but the response of faith to the whole Book: whatever is seen, Jehovah is to be blessed for evermore. "Amen, and Amen," as at the close of Books I and II (41:13; 72:19).

Its close

Psalm 89 closes Book III. It has no sub-scription. Book IV begins with its own super-scription, "A Prayer of Moses the man of God" (90).

Looking back

Psalm 89 is member F^3: the blessedness of those who know the joyful sound, and instruction concerning God's dealings in His sanctuary. It closes the division and the Book. God's covenant with David is rehearsed in full, and then the ruin of David's throne is laid before Him. The Psalm does not resolve the tension, except in its doxology. The resolution is in David's Son, raised from the dead, exalted to God's right hand, and coming again to sit on the throne of His father David.

Looking Back on Psalms 84–89

The second division of Book III shows the sanctuary in relation to Jehovah.

- **The blessedness (84–85; 87; 89).** The pilgrim who longs for God's courts and goes from strength to strength (84). The land forgiven, where mercy and truth meet (85). Zion, where the nations are enrolled as born there (87). The people who know the joyful sound and walk in the light of His face, under His covenant with David (89).
- **The prayers (86; 88).** The poor and needy servant who calls God "God alone" (86); and the one in the pit, cut off, with darkness for his companion (88). The way to the blessing passes through humiliation.

The division begins with "How amiable are thy tabernacles" (84:1) and ends with the throne cast to the ground and "Blessed be the LORD for evermore" (89:52).

Looking Back on Book III

Book III, which Bullinger compared with Leviticus, is about the Sanctuary.

- **Psalms 73–83: the sanctuary in relation to man.** The man outside it is distracted or miserable until he enters it. The enemy burns it. God's Anointed, and God Himself, judge in it. And its enemies are destroyed.
- **Psalms 84–89: the sanctuary in relation to Jehovah.** Blessed are those who approach it, dwell in it, and know its joyful sound. Between the blessings stand the prayers of the humbled one.

Book III begins "Truly God is good to Israel" (73:1), and the man who wrote it found that out in the sanctuary. It ends with the sanctuary's king brought low and the covenant apparently broken, and still "Blessed be the LORD for evermore." Book IV, which Bullinger compared with Numbers, begins with Moses, and with man's days in the wilderness of this world.

Book IV — Psalms 90–106: Concerning the Earth and the Nations

A. The subject of the Book

Book IV is the "Numbers Book" of the Psalter. Book I was about *Man*, Book II about *Israel*, Book III about *the Sanctuary*. Book IV is about *the Earth and the Nations*: the rest that was lost, the rest the earth longs for, and the rest that will come when "the LORD [Jehovah] reigneth" over all the earth. It begins with "A Prayer of Moses the man of God" (90), the man of the wilderness, and it ends with the whole history of Israel's failure in the wilderness and in the land (106), and with the doxology: "Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD [Jah]" (106:48).

B. Its match with Numbers

The English name *Numbers* comes from the Latin and Greek, because of the numberings of the people in its first and twenty-sixth chapters. The Hebrew name is *Bemidbar*, "In the wilderness," from its first verse. It is the book of the wilderness: the forty years of wandering, the generation that died there because of unbelief, and the new generation brought to the border of the land.

The match in Book IV is strong:

- It opens with Moses, the man of the wilderness (90), and is the only Book with a Psalm by him. The "threescore years and ten" of 90:10 fits the generation that died in the wilderness (Num. 14:29–35).
- Psalm 95 calls Israel not to harden their hearts "as in the day of temptation in the wilderness" (95:8), and ends with God's oath that the wilderness generation "should not enter into my rest" (95:11; Num. 14:21–23). Hebrews 3 and 4 build their whole argument about God's rest on this Psalm.
- Psalm 99 names Moses and Aaron and the pillar of cloud (99:6, 7).
- Psalm 105 tells of the journeyings of the patriarchs and of the nation, through Egypt and the wilderness (105:13, 23, 37–41).
- Psalm 106 rehearses the sins of the wilderness one by one: the Red Sea, the lusting, Dathan and Abiram, the golden calf, the refusal to enter the land, Baal-peor, Meribah (106:7–33).

Weight: strong. Of the five Books, the Numbers match is one of the clearest (Chapter 4 of Part One).

The theme of rest. The earth was cursed for man's sake (Gen. 3:17), and has had no rest since. Book IV teaches that there is no rest for the earth until "the wicked cease from troubling" and the King reigns. It speaks again and again of the earth (*'erets*) and the world (*tebel*), and of the nations, and of a "new song" that all the earth will sing when Jehovah comes "to judge the earth" (96:13; 98:9).

The Names of God. In the Hebrew text of Book IV, *Jehovah* occurs 105 times and *Jah* seven times, but *Elohim* only twenty-four times (Appendix H). The covenant Name dominates as it did not in Books II and III.

The writers. Psalm 90 is "of Moses." Psalms 101 and 103 are "of David." All the others are anonymous, though many have Titles of some kind. Ancient Jewish tradition gave Psalms 91–100 to Moses as well, following the rule that an untitled Psalm belongs to the writer of the one before. Hebrews quotes Psalm 95 as spoken "in David" (Heb. 4:7), and the Greek version gives several of these Psalms to David. The Titles do not settle it.

C. Its structure

Book IV has a prologue and an epilogue, and three divisions between them:

- Prologue | 90. The rest: lost, and needed.
- A^1 | 91–94. Rest for the earth desired. No hope for it till "the wicked cease from troubling."
- A^2 | 95–100. Rest for the earth anticipated. The centre verse of the Psalter (96:11), and its reason (96:13).
- A^3 | 101–105. Rest for the earth celebrated. Jehovah's throne in the heavens, and His kingdom over all (103:19).
- Epilogue | 106. The rest: how lost, and valued.

The Prologue and the Epilogue are both Psalms of the wilderness: man's days wasted under God's wrath (90), and Israel's history of rebellion (106). Between them, the rest is desired, anticipated, and celebrated.

Psalm 90 — Prologue: "Lord, Thou Hast Been Our Dwelling Place"

Place: Book IV; the Prologue (the rest lost, and needed). **Writer:** Moses, "the man of God." **Occasion:** not named; the Psalm fits the wilderness years, after the sentence of Numbers 14.

Introduction

Psalm 90 is generally taken to be the oldest Psalm in the Psalter. Its Title calls Moses "the man of God," as Deuteronomy 33:1 does. Only a few men in Scripture bear this title: Moses, Samuel (1 Sam. 9:6–10), David (Neh. 12:24, 36), Elijah (1 Kings 17:18), Elisha (2 Kings 4:7), and some unnamed prophets.

The Psalm sets the eternity of God beside the frailty of man. God has been the dwelling place of His people "in all generations," "from everlasting to everlasting" (vv. 1, 2). Man is turned back to dust, swept away like a flood, cut down like grass in a day, and his whole life is "as a tale that is told" (vv. 3–9). The life of man is "threescore years and ten," or with strength "fourscore," and even those years are labour and sorrow (v. 10).

"Threescore years and ten." After the spies' report, God sentenced the whole generation of Israel from twenty years old and upward to die in the wilderness during the forty years (Num. 14:29–35; 26:64, 65). A man of twenty at the sentence could live no longer than sixty; a man of thirty, seventy; a man of forty, eighty. This explains verse 10. The span of seventy or eighty years is not given as a law for all mankind; Moses himself lived to a hundred and twenty (Deut. 34:7), and Caleb was still strong at eighty-five (Josh. 14:10, 11). It is the span of a generation under God's sentence, "consumed by thine anger" (v. 7). **Weight:** strong; it fits the setting and the words "thy wrath" that run through the Psalm.

This is the rest *lost*: a generation that could not enter God's rest because of unbelief (95:11). And it is the rest *needed*: "Return, O LORD, how long? . . . O satisfy us early with thy mercy" (vv. 13, 14).

Structure

- A^1 | 1, 2. The eternity of Jehovah-El.
- A^2 | 3–11. The frailty of man.
- A^3 | 12–17. The application of both.

The eternity of God (1, 2):

- a | 1-. The Lord our dwelling place.
- b | -1. In time: "in all generations."
- c | 2-. Before the mountains.
- *c* | -2-. Before the earth and the world.

- *b* | -2-. In eternity: "from everlasting to everlasting."
- *a* | -2. "Thou art God" (*El*).

The frailty of man (3–11):

- d^1 | 3. Declaration.
- e^1 | 4. Reason. "For."
- d^2 | 5, 6. Declaration.
- e^2 | 7. Reason. "For."
- d^3 | 8. Declaration.
- e^3 | 9. Reason. "For."
- d^4 | 10-. Declaration.
- e^4 | -10. Reason. "For."
- d^5 | 11. Declaration.

The application (12–17):

- f^1 | 12. Us: our days. Numbering.
- g^1 | 13. Thy servants: favour.
- f^2 | 14, 15. Us: our days. Gladness.
- g^2 | 16. Thy servants: favour.
- f^3 | 17. Us: our works. Establishment.

The Psalm

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

> **1** *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.*
> **2** *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*
> **3** *Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.*
> **4** *For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.*
> **5** *Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.*
> **6** *In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.*
> **7** *For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.*
> **8** *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*
> **9** *For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.*

> **10** *The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*
>
> **11** *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.*
>
> **12** *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*
>
> **13** *Return, O LORD [Jehovah], how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.*
>
> **14** *O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*
>
> **15** *Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.*
>
> **16** *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.*
>
> **17** *And let the beauty of the LORD [Jehovah] our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.*

Psalm 90 has no sub-scription. Psalm 91 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **90:1** *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.*
>
> **90:2** *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. *Lord* is *Adonai*, the Lord as Sovereign over the earth. Book IV begins with this title, because its subject is the earth. *Dwelling place* is "habitation" or "refuge." In the wilderness Israel had no settled home; God was their home. "The eternal God is thy refuge" (Deut. 33:27). **Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world.** *Or ever* is "before." *Formed* is "brought forth as in birth." *World* is *tebel*, the habitable world. **even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.** *El*, the Mighty One. Before time, and after it.

> **90:3** *Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.*
>
> **90:4** *For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.*
>
> **90:5** *Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.*
>
> **90:6** *In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.*

Thou turnest man to destruction. *Man* is *enosh*, frail man. *Destruction* is "dust," crushed matter (Gen. 3:19). **and sayest, Return, ye children of men.** *Children of men* is "sons of Adam." "Return" to the dust (Eccles. 12:7), or, as some read it, return from the dust in resurrection. **For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.** A night-watch of three or four hours, gone while one sleeps. Peter used this verse (2 Pet. 3:8). **Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.** In the east, grass springs up after rain and is burned by the sun in a day (Isa. 40:6–8; James 1:10, 11).

> **90:7** *For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.*

> **90:8** *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*
>
> **90:9** *For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.*
>
> **90:10** *The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*
>
> **90:11** *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.*

For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. *We*: Moses and the people with him. The sentence of Numbers 14. **Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.** *Secret sins* is singular in the Hebrew, "our hidden thing"; some manuscripts read "our secrets." Nothing is hidden from His face. **For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.** *A tale that is told* is literally "a sigh" or "a murmur": our years end like a breath.

The days of our years are threescore years and ten. See the Introduction. **and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow.** *Strength* is plural, "great strength." Even the best of it is toil and trouble. **for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.** *We fly away*: the figure *Euphemy*, a gentle word for dying. **Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.** God's wrath is as great as the reverence due to Him.

> **90:12** *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*
>
> **90:13** *Return, O LORD [Jehovah], how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.*
>
> **90:14** *O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*
>
> **90:15** *Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.*
>
> **90:16** *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.*
>
> **90:17** *And let the beauty of the LORD [Jehovah] our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.*

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Literally, "that we may bring in a heart of wisdom," as one brings in a harvest. To count our days rightly is to know how few they are, and to use them wisely.

Return, O LORD [Jehovah], how long? Moses asked God to "turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people" (Ex. 32:12). **and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy.** *Early* is "in the morning." After the night of wrath, let the morning of lovingkindness come. **that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.** As many days of gladness as there were of trouble: forty years for forty years.

Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. If the fathers die in the wilderness, let the children see God's work and glory. They did: the next generation entered the land. **And let the beauty of the LORD [Jehovah] our God be upon us.** *Beauty* is "pleasantness," "favour." The present Hebrew text reads *Adonai* here; the scribes record that it originally read *Jehovah*. **and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.** Man's days are a

breath, but what God establishes remains. The repetition is the figure *Epanadiplosis*: the Psalm ends where it means to rest.

Its close

Psalm 90 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 90 is the Prologue to Book IV: the rest lost, and needed. The eternal God is set beside a generation that withers like grass under His wrath. The Psalm asks God to return, to satisfy His people in the morning, and to establish their work. Book IV goes on to show how that rest will come. The Epilogue (106) will tell how it was lost.

Psalms 91–94: Rest for the Earth Desired

A. What this division is about

The first division of Book IV shows the rest that the earth longs for. Psalms 91 and 93 show that rest is found only in Jehovah: in "the secret place of the most High" (91:1) and under the throne that "is established of old" (93:2). Psalms 92 and 94 pray for the time when that rest will be the earth's: the "sabbath" when the workers of iniquity are cut off and the righteous flourish (92), and the day when "the judge of the earth" rises to cut off the wicked and give the righteous rest (94:2, 13). Until the wicked cease from troubling, the earth has no rest.

B. Its structure

- B | 91. Rest only in Jehovah in a perishing world: the secret place of the Most High the only place of safety.
- C | 92. Prayer for that "sabbath-keeping" (Heb. 4:9, margin) when all "workers of iniquity" shall be cut off (vv. 7, 9), and the righteous shall flourish (v. 12) in Jehovah their "rock" (v. 15).
- *B* | 93. Rest only in Jehovah: His throne, when established, the place of safety.
- *C* | 94. Prayer for rest to Jehovah, "the judge of the earth" (v. 2), to cut off all "workers of iniquity" (vv. 4, 16, 23), and to give the righteous rest (vv. 13–15) in Jehovah their "rock" and "defence" (v. 22).

C. Its purpose

This division teaches where rest is found now, and when it will be found by all the earth. Now, it is found only in God: under His shadow, behind His throne. Then, it will be found everywhere, when God judges the earth and the wicked are cut off. The believer can dwell in the secret place even while thousands fall around him (91:7), and can say "thy comforts delight my soul" while the throne of iniquity frames mischief by law (94:19, 20).

Psalm 91 — "He That Dwelleth in the Secret Place of the Most High"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 91–94; member B (rest only in Jehovah). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named. See the Introduction.

Introduction

Psalm 91 has no Title. *The Companion Bible* takes it as the second half of Psalm 90, written by Moses for the comfort of "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). In Psalm 90 a whole generation was dying under God's sentence; in Psalm 91 the one who trusts God is kept safe in the midst of it: "A thousand shall fall at thy side . . . but it shall not come nigh thee" (v. 7). Caleb and Joshua were the living proof: of all that generation, they alone entered the land (Num. 14:30, 38). **Weight:** the link with Psalm 90 is strong in theme; Mosaic authorship is possible, not proven.

The Psalm is spoken by more than one voice. Verse 1 speaks *of* the one who dwells in the secret place ("He"). Verse 2 is his answer ("I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge"). Verses 3–13 speak *to* him ("thee"), with a second answer in verse 9 ("thou, O LORD, art my refuge"). And verses 14–16 are God's own answer ("Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him").

The temptation. When the devil tempted the Lord Jesus to throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, he quoted verses 11 and 12 (Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:10, 11). He left out the words "to keep thee in all thy ways," and he did not go on to verse 13: "the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet," the promise of his own defeat (Gen. 3:15). The Lord answered with Deuteronomy 6:16. If Psalm 91 is by Moses, every Scripture quoted in that temptation, by the Lord and by the devil, came from the writings of Moses.

Structure

- B^1 | 1. Address concerning the dweller: "He."
- C^1 | 2. His response: "My."
- B^2 | 3–8. Address to the dweller: "Thee."
- C^2 | 9-. His response: "My."
- B^3 | -9–13. Address to the dweller: "Thee."
- C^3 | 14–16. Jehovah's response: "I."

The Companion Bible takes the speaker of the "He" and "Thee" members as the spirit of God speaking through the Psalmist, and the "My" members as the voice of Messiah, the perfect Dweller in the secret place. In its first sense, the dweller is any man who trusts God.

The Psalm

Psalm 91 has no Title.

> **1** *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*
>
> **2** *I will say of the LORD [Jehovah], He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*
>
> **3** *Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.*
>
> **4** *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*
>
> **5** *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;*
>
> **6** *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*
>
> **7** *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*
>
> **8** *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*
>
> **9** *Because thou hast made the LORD [Jehovah], which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;*
>
> **10** *There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*
>
> **11** *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*
>
> **12** *They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*
>
> **13** *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*
>
> **14** *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.*
>
> **15** *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.*
>
> **16** *With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.*

Psalm 91 has no sub-scription. Psalm 92 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day."

Verse by verse

> **91:1** *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*
>
> **91:2** *I will say of the LORD [Jehovah], He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Two Names: *Elyon* (Most High, possessor of heaven and earth) and *Shaddai* (the Almighty, the All-sufficient, Gen. 17:1). *The secret place* is the hiding place, the covert. *Abide* is "lodge for the night." **I will say of the LORD [Jehovah], He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.** Four Names in two verses: Elyon, Shaddai, Jehovah, Elohim. *Trust* is "confide."

> **91:3** *Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.*
>
> **91:4** *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*
>
> **91:5** *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;*
>
> **91:6** *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*
>
> **91:7** *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*
>
> **91:8** *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler. The trap set for birds: the hidden danger. **and from the noisome pestilence.** *Noisome* is "destroying." **He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.** The figure *Anthropopatheia*: God as a bird sheltering her young (Deut. 32:11; Matt. 23:37). *Trust* here is "flee for refuge." **his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.** *Truth* is "faithfulness." *Buckler* is a coat of mail, a word found only here.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. Four dangers, day and night. In the wilderness: the night journeys (Num. 9:21), the arrows of Amalek and the Amorites (Ex. 17:8; Num. 21:1), the plagues that came on the people (Num. 16:46–49; 25:9), and the burning heat. **A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.** *Wicked* is "lawless ones." He sees the judgment, but is not part of it.

> **91:9** *Because thou hast made the LORD [Jehovah], which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;*
>
> **91:10** *There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*
>
> **91:11** *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*
>
> **91:12** *They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*
>
> **91:13** *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*

Because thou hast made the LORD [Jehovah], which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation. The Hebrew reads: "For Thou, O Jehovah, art my refuge! [Thou hast made] the Most High thy habitation." The change of person marks the structure: the first half is the dweller's second response (C^2), and the second half begins the address again (B^3). **There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.** *Dwelling* is "tent." In the wilderness they lived in tents.

For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. *In all thy ways*: the ways God appoints, not ways of one's own choosing. This is the phrase the devil left out (see the Introduction). **They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder.** *Adder* is the asp. **the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.**

Dragon is the serpent (Ex. 7:9, 10). The serpent's head was to be crushed under the heel of the woman's seed (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20).

> **91:14** *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.*
>
> **91:15** *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.*
>
> **91:16** *With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.*

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. God speaks. *Set his love* is *chashaq*, "cleaved in love," a word of deep attachment (Deut. 7:7; 10:15). **I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.** *Set on high* is "lift out of reach" (20:1). **He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.** *Honour* is "glorify." Seven promises in three verses: deliver, set on high, answer, be with, deliver, honour, satisfy. **With long life will I satisfy him.** *Long life* is "length of days." **and shew him my salvation.** The last word of the Psalm. The generation of Psalm 90 died in the wilderness; the one who dwells in God sees His salvation.

Its close

Psalm 91 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 91 is member B: rest only in Jehovah in a perishing world. It follows Psalm 90 as the answer to it. Under God's wrath a whole generation falls; under God's shadow the one who trusts is kept. It answers to Psalm 93 (*B*), where the place of safety is Jehovah's throne.

Psalm 92 — "A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath Day"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 91–94; member C (prayer and praise for the sabbath rest). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** "for the sabbath day" (Title).

Introduction

Psalm 92 is the only Psalm whose Title names the sabbath. It was sung in the temple on the sabbath day, with the morning sacrifice. But its subject is not the weekly rest. It looks forward to the rest of which the sabbath was a sign: the time when "all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered" (v. 9) and "the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree" (v. 12). "There remaineth therefore a rest [margin, a keeping of sabbath] to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). The sabbath Psalm is a Psalm of that coming rest.

Structure

- D | j | 1–3. The praise of Jehovah.
- k | 4. What He is to me.
- l | 5. His attributes: greatness.
- E | m | 6. A wicked individual. (Singular.)
- n | 7, 8. The wicked. (Plural.)
- F | o | 9-. Thine enemies.
- p | -9. Workers of iniquity.
- G | 10-. Favour to me. (Future.)
- *G* | -10. Favour to me. (Past.)
- *F* | *o* | 11-. Mine enemies.
- *p* | -11. Doers of evil.
- *E* | *m* | 12. A righteous one. (Singular.)
- *n* | 13, 14. The righteous. (Plural.)
- *D* | *j* | 15-. The praise of Jehovah.
- *k* | -15-. What He is to me.
- *l* | -15. His attributes: righteousness.

The Psalm

A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day.

> **1** *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah], and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:*

> **2** *To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,*
>
> **3** *Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.*
>
> **4** *For thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*
>
> **5** *O LORD [Jehovah], how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.*
>
> **6** *A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.*
>
> **7** *When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever:*
>
> **8** *But thou, LORD [Jehovah], art most high for evermore.*
>
> **9** *For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD [Jehovah], for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.*
>
> **10** *But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.*
>
> **11** *Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.*
>
> **12** *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*
>
> **13** *Those that be planted in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] shall flourish in the courts of our God.*
>
> **14** *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;*
>
> **15** *To shew that the LORD [Jehovah] is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

Psalm 92 has no sub-scription. Psalm 93 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **92:1** *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah], and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:*
>
> **92:2** *To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,*
>
> **92:3** *Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.*

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah], and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High. *Most High* is *Elyon*, God as possessor of the earth. **To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.** *Every night* is "in the nights." Morning and evening, as the daily sacrifice (Num. 28:3, 4). **Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.** *Solemn sound* is *higgaion*, "meditation" (9:16; 19:14).

> **92:4** *For thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*
>
> **92:5** *O LORD [Jehovah], how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.*

For thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast made me glad through thy work. *Work* is "doing." **I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O LORD [Jehovah], how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.** Too deep to be understood (Isa. 55:8, 9; Rom. 11:33).

> **92:6** *A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.*
>
> **92:7** *When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever:*
>
> **92:8** *But thou, LORD [Jehovah], art most high for evermore.*

A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. *Brutish man* is *ish ba'ar*, a man like a beast (73:22). What he does not understand is the next verse. **When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.** Their flourishing is the grass of 90:5, 6: up in the morning, cut down at evening. This is what the man of Psalm 73 learned in the sanctuary. **But thou, LORD [Jehovah], art most high for evermore.** *Most high* is "on high," enthroned.

> **92:9** *For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD [Jehovah], for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.*
>
> **92:10** *But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.*
>
> **92:11** *Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.*

For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD [Jehovah], for, lo, thine enemies shall perish. The repetition is for emphasis. **all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn.** *Unicorn* is the wild ox, a strong, untameable animal (Num. 23:22; Job 39:9–11). **I shall be anointed with fresh oil.** As a guest, or as a king. **Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies.** The words "my desire" are supplied: "Mine eye shall look on mine enemies." **and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.** He will hear of their fall.

> **92:12** *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*
>
> **92:13** *Those that be planted in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] shall flourish in the courts of our God.*
>
> **92:14** *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;*

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree. *The righteous* is singular. The palm grows in dry places with its roots deep in hidden water, and stands straight. **he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.** The cedar stands in mountain snow and storm, its roots in the rock. The wicked are grass; the righteous are palm and cedar. **Those that be planted in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] shall flourish in the courts of our God.** As the olive tree of 52:8. **They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.** *Fat* is "full of sap."

> **92:15** *To shew that the LORD [Jehovah] is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

To shew that the LORD [Jehovah] is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. The Song of Moses: "He is the Rock, his work is perfect . . . a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32:4).

Its close

Psalm 92 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 92 is member C: prayer and praise for the sabbath rest. The workers of iniquity are grass; the righteous are palm and cedar, planted in God's house. It answers to Psalm 94 (*C*), the prayer to the Judge of the earth to cut off the workers of iniquity and give the righteous rest.

Psalm 93 — "The LORD [Jehovah] Reigneth"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 91–94; member *B* (rest only in Jehovah: His throne). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 93 is the first of the Psalms that begin "The LORD reigneth" (93; 97; 99). *Reigneth* is "hath become King": it is the cry of a coronation, as when "Absalom reigneth" (2 Sam. 15:10) or "Jehu is king" (2 Kings 9:13). Each of the three Psalms ends with *holiness*: "holiness becometh thine house" (93:5); "the remembrance of his holiness" (97:12); "the LORD our God is holy" (99:9). When Jehovah reigns, "all will be holy" (Zech. 14:20, 21; Rev. 4:8).

The Psalm is five verses long. The floods lift up their voice and their waves; Jehovah on high is mightier.

Structure

- H | 1, 2. Attributes of Jehovah: majesty, strength, eternity.
- J | 3. The floods: high.
- *J* | 4. Jehovah: higher.
- *H* | 5. Attributes of Jehovah: faithfulness, holiness.

The Psalm

Psalm 93 has no Title.

> **1** *The LORD [Jehovah] reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD [Jehovah] is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.*
> **2** *Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.*
> **3** *The floods have lifted up, O LORD [Jehovah], the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.*
> **4** *The LORD [Jehovah] on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.*
> **5** *Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD [Jehovah], for ever.*

Psalm 93 has no sub-scription. Psalm 94 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **93:1** *The LORD [Jehovah] reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD [Jehovah] is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.*
> **93:2** *Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.*

The LORD [Jehovah] reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD [Jehovah] is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself. The King dressed for His coronation, and girded for battle. **the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.** *World* is *tebel*. When He reigns, the earth that has been shaken (82:5) is made firm. **Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.** His throne was not set up yesterday. He has always been King; now He takes His power and reigns (Rev. 11:17).

> **93:3** *The floods have lifted up, O LORD [Jehovah], the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.*
>
> **93:4** *The LORD [Jehovah] on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.*

The floods have lifted up, O LORD [Jehovah], the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. *Floods* is "rivers." Three times, the figure *Anaphora*: the rising flood. The floods are the nations in uproar (46:3, 6; Isa. 17:12, 13; Rev. 17:15). **The LORD [Jehovah] on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.** *Waves* is "breakers." He is above them all.

> **93:5** *Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD [Jehovah], for ever.*

Thy testimonies are very sure. His word stands, like His throne (19:7). **holiness becometh thine house, O LORD [Jehovah], for ever.** *Becometh* is "is fitting for." The reign of Jehovah ends in holiness.

Its close

Psalm 93 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 93 is member *B*: rest only in Jehovah, whose throne is the place of safety. Psalm 91 found rest in His shadow; Psalm 93 finds it under His throne. The floods may roar, but He is higher.

Psalm 94 — "O LORD [Jehovah] God, to Whom Vengeance Belongeth"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 91–94; member *C* (prayer for rest for the earth). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 94 is a cry to "the judge of the earth" (v. 2) against the wicked who crush God's people and murder the widow, the stranger and the fatherless, and who say "JAH shall not see" (v. 7). It teaches the foolish that the God who made the ear can hear, and the God who made the eye can see (v. 9). It blesses the man God chastens, for He gives him "rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked" (v. 13). And it closes with confidence: "the LORD our God shall cut them off" (v. 23).

Structure

- K^1 | 1–7. Address to Jehovah.
- L^1 | 8–11. Declaration concerning Him.
- K^2 | 12, 13. Address to Jehovah.
- L^2 | 14–17. Declaration concerning Him.
- K^3 | 18–21. Address to Jehovah.
- L^3 | 22, 23. Declaration concerning Him.

The Psalm

Psalm 94 has no Title.

> **1** *O LORD [Jehovah] God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.*
> **2** *Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.*
> **3** *LORD [Jehovah], how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?*
> **4** *How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*
> **5** *They break in pieces thy people, O LORD [Jehovah], and afflict thine heritage.*
> **6** *They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.*
> **7** *Yet they say, The LORD [Jah] shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.*
> **8** *Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise?*
> **9** *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?*

10 *He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?*

11 *The LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.*

12 *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD [Jah], and teachest him out of thy law;*

13 *That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.*

14 *For the LORD [Jehovah] will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.*

15 *But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.*

16 *Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?*

17 *Unless the LORD [Jehovah] had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.*

18 *When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], held me up.*

19 *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.*

20 *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?*

21 *They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.*

22 *But the LORD [Jehovah] is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.*

23 *And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] our God shall cut them off.*

Psalm 94 has no sub-scription. Psalm 95 has no Title.

Verse by verse

94:1 *O LORD [Jehovah] God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.*

94:2 *Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.*

94:3 *LORD [Jehovah], how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?*

94:4 *How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*

94:5 *They break in pieces thy people, O LORD [Jehovah], and afflict thine heritage.*

94:6 *They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.*

94:7 *Yet they say, The LORD [Jah] shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.*

O LORD [Jehovah] God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. *God* is *El*: "O El of vengeances." The repetition is the figure *Anaphora*. "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence" (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19). *Shew thyself* is "shine forth" (50:2; 80:1). **Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.** *The judge of the earth*: the title that fits the subject of Book IV (Gen. 18:25). **LORD [Jehovah], how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?**

How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves? They break in pieces thy people, O LORD [Jehovah], and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. The three the Law protected (Ex. 22:21–24; Deut. 24:17). **Yet they say, The LORD [Jah] shall not see.** The Hebrew has *JAH*. **neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.**

> **94:8** *Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise?*
>
> **94:9** *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?*
>
> **94:10** *He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?*
>
> **94:11** *The LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.*

Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? *Brutish* as 92:6. **He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?** The ear is set in the head as a plant in the ground; the eye is shaped like a potter's work. The Maker of hearing and sight must hear and see. **He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct?** He disciplines the nations; will He not punish these? **he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? The LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.** *Man* is *adam*. Paul quoted this of the wisdom of the wise (1 Cor. 3:20).

> **94:12** *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD [Jah], and teachest him out of thy law;*
>
> **94:13** *That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.*

Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD [Jah]. *Man* is *geber*. The Hebrew again has *JAH*. God's chastening is not punishment but training (Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5–11). **and teachest him out of thy law; That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity.** Rest: the word of Book IV. **until the pit be digged for the wicked.**

> **94:14** *For the LORD [Jehovah] will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.*
>
> **94:15** *But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.*
>
> **94:16** *Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?*
>
> **94:17** *Unless the LORD [Jehovah] had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.*

For the LORD [Jehovah] will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. Paul's answer to the question "Hath God cast away his people?" was this verse: "God forbid. . . . God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Rom. 11:1, 2). **But judgment shall return unto righteousness.** Justice, now perverted, will again be righteous. **and all the upright in heart shall follow it. Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Unless the LORD [Jehovah] had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.** *Silence* is the silence of the grave (115:17). *Almost* is "quickly": he would soon have been dead.

> **94:18** *When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], held me up.*
>
> **94:19** *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.*

> **94:20** *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?*
>
> **94:21** *They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.*

When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], held me up. As 73:2, 23. **In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.** *Thoughts* is "perplexities," anxious thoughts. **Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?** A throne that administers injustice, and makes wickedness legal. **They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.** *Blood* is put for the person: they condemn the innocent man to death.

> **94:22** *But the LORD [Jehovah] is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.*
>
> **94:23** *And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD [Jehovah] our God shall cut them off.*

But the LORD [Jehovah] is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. *Defence* is "high tower." **And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness.** Their own sin falls back on them (7:16). **yea, the LORD [Jehovah] our God shall cut them off.**

Its close

Psalm 94 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 94 is member *C*: the prayer for rest for the earth. It answers to Psalm 92 (C). The workers of iniquity, who flourished like grass in Psalm 92, are cut off here by the Judge of the earth, and the righteous are given rest. The first division ends with the earth still longing; the next shows the rest anticipated.

Looking Back on Psalms 91–94

The first division of Book IV shows rest for the earth desired.

- **Rest in Jehovah now (91; 93).** In the secret place of the Most High, while thousands fall; under His throne, while the floods roar.
- **Rest for the earth then (92; 94).** The sabbath of the righteous, when the workers of iniquity are scattered; and the day when the Judge of the earth cuts off the wicked and gives His people rest.

There is no rest for the earth until the wicked cease from troubling. But there is rest now for the man who dwells in God.

Psalms 95–100: Rest for the Earth Anticipated

A. What this division is about

The second division of Book IV looks forward to the rest as if it had come. It is a group of six Psalms of worship. It begins and ends with a call to come before Jehovah's presence: "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving" (95:2); "come before his presence with singing" (100:2). Both call Israel "the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand" (95:7; 100:3). Between them stand two pairs: a summons to sing "a new song" because "he cometh" to judge the earth (96; 98), and the new song itself, "The LORD reigneth" (97; 99).

At the centre of this division stands the verse Bullinger counted the central verse of the whole Psalter: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof" (96:11). And its reason: "for he cometh to judge the earth" (96:13). The whole creation, which "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22), will rejoice when He comes.

B. Its structure

- D | 95. Worship, in view of the rest anticipated. His "people" and "sheep" (v. 7), "come before his presence with thanksgiving" (v. 2). The reason: "the LORD is a great God" (v. 3).
- E | F | 96. A summons to sing the "new song": "For he cometh" (to judge).
- G | 97. The new song: "The LORD reigneth."
- *E* | *F* | 98. A summons to sing the "new song": "For he cometh" (to judge).
- *G* | 99. The new song: "The LORD reigneth."
- *D* | 100. Worship, in view of the rest anticipated. His "people" and "sheep" (v. 3), "come before his presence with singing" (v. 2). The reason: "the LORD is good" (v. 5).

C. Its purpose

This division teaches Israel, and through Israel all the earth, to worship now in view of what is coming. Psalm 95 warns that the generation that hardened its heart in the wilderness did not enter God's rest; "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." The other five Psalms sing the rest as if it were here: Jehovah has become King, He comes to judge in righteousness, and the whole earth is called to rejoice and serve Him with gladness.

Psalm 95 — "O Come, Let Us Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah]"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 95–100; member D (worship, in view of the rest anticipated). **Writer:** not named in the Hebrew; Hebrews 4:7 speaks of it as said "in David." **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 95 has two parts, and they are very different. The first (vv. 1–7) is a joyful call to worship: "O come, let us sing . . . O come, let us worship and bow down." The people speak. The second (vv. -7–11) is a solemn warning: "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." God speaks, and He reminds them of the wilderness, where their fathers tempted Him for forty years and He swore "they should not enter into my rest."

The second part shows what the first part means. True worship is not only joyful singing; it is hearing God's voice and obeying it "to day." The writer to the Hebrews built his warning on this Psalm (Heb. 3:7–4:11). He calls it the word of the holy spirit (Heb. 3:7) and says God spoke it "in David" (Heb. 4:7). He shows that the "rest" of the Psalm was not the land Joshua gave, for David spoke of "another day" long after Joshua (Heb. 4:8). "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9).

"In David." The Hebrew Psalm has no Title; the Greek version gives it to David. Hebrews 4:7 may mean that David wrote it, or that it is "in David," the book of Psalms. **Weight:** either is possible; the Psalm is God's word whoever wrote it.

Structure

- M^1 | 1–7-. Rest to be found in true worship. The people speak.
- M^2 | -7–11. Rest lost through unbelief. God speaks.

The first part (1–7-):

- N | q | 1, 2. Exhortation to praise.
- r | 3. Reason. "For."
- O | 4. The earth is His.
- P | 5-. The sea is His.
- *P* | -5-. He made the sea.
- *O* | -5. He formed the dry land.
- *N* | *q* | 6. Exhortation to worship.
- *r* | 7-. Reason. "For."

The second part (-7–11):

- Q | -7, 8. Time: "To day."
- R | 9. Sin: its committal. Place: "where" (when).
- Q | 10. Time: "Forty years."
- R | 11. Sin: its punishment. Place: "where" (unto whom).

The Psalm

Psalm 95 has no Title.

> **1** *O come, let us sing unto the LORD [Jehovah]: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.*
>
> **2** *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.*
>
> **3** *For the LORD [Jehovah] is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*
>
> **4** *In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.*
>
> **5** *The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.*
>
> **6** *O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD [Jehovah] our maker.*
>
> **7** *For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,*
>
> **8** *Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*
>
> **9** *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.*
>
> **10** *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:*
>
> **11** *Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*

Psalm 95 has no sub-scription. Psalm 96 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **95:1** *O come, let us sing unto the LORD [Jehovah]: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.*
>
> **95:2** *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.*
>
> **95:3** *For the LORD [Jehovah] is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*

O come, let us sing unto the LORD [Jehovah]: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. *The rock*: the rock in the wilderness that gave them water (Ex. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4). **Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving.** *Presence* is "face." To come before His face was to come to the sanctuary. **and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the LORD [Jehovah] is a great God, and a great King above all gods.** *God* is *El*. *Gods* is *elohim*, here the rulers of the earth, or the gods of the nations (96:4, 5).

> **95:4** *In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.*

> **95:5** *The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.*
>
> **95:6** *O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD [Jehovah] our maker.*
>
> **95:7** *For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,*

In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. *Strength* is "the heights," the summits. The depths and the heights are His. **The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.** The figure *Anthropopatheia*. **O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD [Jehovah] our maker.** Three words: *worship* (bow down), *bow down* (bend low), *kneel*. **For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.** He made them a nation, and He shepherds them (100:3). **To day if ye will hear his voice.** The turn. *To day*: now, while the voice is speaking (Heb. 3:13, "while it is called To day").

> **95:8** *Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*
>
> **95:9** *When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.*
>
> **95:10** *Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:*
>
> **95:11** *Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*

Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness. *Provocation* is *Meribah*, "strife"; *temptation* is *Massah*, "testing." Both names were given at Rephidim, where the people quarrelled with Moses for water and said "Is Jehovah among us, or not?" (Ex. 17:7; Num. 20:13). **When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.** They had seen everything God did, and still tested Him.

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation. *Grieved* is "loathed." **and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.** *Unto whom* is "wherefore." God's oath at Kadesh (Num. 14:21–23, 28–30). The Psalm ends abruptly, with the door shut. The rest they lost is the rest Book IV looks for (Heb. 3:11, 18, 19; 4:1–11).

Its close

Psalm 95 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 95 is member D: worship in view of the rest anticipated. It answers to Psalm 100 (*D*). Both call God's people, "the sheep of his pasture," to come before His face. Psalm 95 adds the warning: the generation that would not hear His voice did not enter His rest.

Psalm 96 — "O Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a New Song"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 95–100; member F (a summons to sing the new song). **Writer:** not named; most of it was sung when David brought the Ark to Zion (1 Chron. 16:23–33). **Occasion:** see above.

Introduction

When David brought the Ark into the tent he had pitched for it on Zion, "on that day David delivered first this psalm to thank Jehovah into the hand of Asaph and his brethren" (1 Chron. 16:7). The psalm given there includes most of Psalm 96 (1 Chron. 16:23–33), with parts of Psalms 105 and 106. In Book IV it stands as a summons to all the earth to sing a "new song," because Jehovah "cometh to judge the earth" (v. 13).

Psalm 97 is the answer: the new song itself, "The LORD reigneth."

Structure

- S | 1–3. Exhortation to sing the new song.
- T | 4–6. Reasons. "For."
- *S* | 7–13-. Exhortation to sing the new song.
- *T* | -13. Reasons. "For."

The Psalm

Psalm 96 has no Title.

> **1** *O sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a new song: sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], all the earth.*
> **2** *Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.*
> **3** *Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.*
> **4** *For the LORD [Jehovah] is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.*
> **5** *For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD [Jehovah] made the heavens.*
> **6** *Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.*
> **7** *Give unto the LORD [Jehovah], O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD [Jehovah] glory and strength.*
> **8** *Give unto the LORD [Jehovah] the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.*
> **9** *O worship the LORD [Jehovah] in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.*
> **10** *Say among the heathen that the LORD [Jehovah] reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.*

> **11** *Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.*
>
> **12** *Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice.*
>
> **13** *Before the LORD [Jehovah]: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*

Psalm 96 has no sub-scription. Psalm 97 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **96:1** *O sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a new song: sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], all the earth.*
>
> **96:2** *Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.*
>
> **96:3** *Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.*

O sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a new song: sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], all the earth. A *new song*: a song for something new that God has done (33:3; 40:3; 98:1; Isa. 42:10; Rev. 5:9; 14:3). The new thing is the coming of His kingdom. Three times "Sing unto the LORD." **Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah], bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.** *Heathen* is "nations." The song is for all the earth, and is to be told to the nations.

> **96:4** *For the LORD [Jehovah] is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.*
>
> **96:5** *For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD [Jehovah] made the heavens.*
>
> **96:6** *Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.*

For the LORD [Jehovah] is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols. *Gods* is *elohim*; *idols* is *elilim*, "nothings." The sounds are alike and the meanings opposite: the figure *Paronomasia*. "We know that an idol is nothing in the world" (1 Cor. 8:4). **but the LORD [Jehovah] made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.** 1 Chronicles 16:27 reads "strength and gladness are in his place."

> **96:7** *Give unto the LORD [Jehovah], O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD [Jehovah] glory and strength.*
>
> **96:8** *Give unto the LORD [Jehovah] the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.*
>
> **96:9** *O worship the LORD [Jehovah] in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.*
>
> **96:10** *Say among the heathen that the LORD [Jehovah] reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.*

Give unto the LORD [Jehovah], O ye kindreds of the people. *Kindreds* is "families" of the peoples. Psalm 29:1, 2 called the "mighty" to give glory; here it is all the families of the earth. **give unto the LORD [Jehovah] glory and strength. Give unto the LORD [Jehovah] the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.** *Offering* is *minchah*, the gift offering. The nations will bring offerings to His house (Isa. 56:6, 7; 66:20; Zech. 14:16). **O worship the LORD [Jehovah] in the beauty of holiness.** In holy array, as priests in their garments (29:2). **fear before him, all the earth.** *Fear* is "tremble."

Say among the heathen that the LORD [Jehovah] reigneth. Tell the nations that Jehovah has become King. **the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved.** *World* is *tebel*. **he shall judge the people righteously.** *People* is "peoples."

> **96:11** *Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.*
>
> **96:12** *Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice.*
>
> **96:13** *Before the LORD [Jehovah]: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad. See the division introduction. In Hebrew the first letters of the four words of this line spell the Name *YHVH*, Jehovah: *Yismechu Hashamayim Vetagel Ha'arets*. The Name is hidden in the call to rejoice. **let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice Before the LORD [Jehovah].** The whole creation rejoices, set free from its bondage (Rom. 8:19–22; Isa. 55:12).

for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth. The repetition is the figure *Epizeuxis*: "He is coming, He is coming." **he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.** *Truth* is "faithfulness." There is no rest or righteous rule for the earth until He comes. God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

Its close

Psalm 96 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 96 is member F: the summons to sing the new song, because "he cometh." It answers to Psalm 98 (*F*). Psalm 97 sings the song.

Psalm 97 — "The LORD [Jehovah] Reigneth; Let the Earth Rejoice"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 95–100; member G (the new song: "The LORD reigneth"). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 96 called for a new song. Psalm 97 is that song. It is a picture of Jehovah coming as King in judgment: clouds and darkness, fire, lightning, the hills melting like wax (vv. 2–5), like Sinai (Ex. 19:16–18). The idol-worshippers are put to shame (v. 7). Zion hears and is glad (v. 8). And light is sown for the righteous (v. 11).

Structure

- U | s | 1-. Jehovah reigneth.
- t | -1. Joy and gladness.
- V | u | 2-. Clouds, etc.
- v | -2-. Righteousness.
- w | -2. Judgment.
- *V* | *u* | 3–5. Lightnings, etc.
- *v* | 6, 7. Righteousness.
- *w* | 8. Judgment.
- *U* | *s* | 9, 10. Jehovah reigneth.
- *t* | 11, 12. Joy and gladness.

The Psalm

Psalm 97 has no Title.

> **1** *The LORD [Jehovah] reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.*
> **2** *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*
> **3** *A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.*
> **4** *His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.*
> **5** *The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD [Jehovah], at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.*
> **6** *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.*

> **7** *Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.*
>
> **8** *Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **9** *For thou, LORD [Jehovah], art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.*
>
> **10** *Ye that love the LORD [Jehovah], hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*
>
> **11** *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*
>
> **12** *Rejoice in the LORD [Jehovah], ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*

Psalm 97 has no sub-scription. Psalm 98 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm."

Verse by verse

> **97:1** *The LORD [Jehovah] reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.*
>
> **97:2** *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

The LORD [Jehovah] reigneth; let the earth rejoice. "Hath become King" (93:1). Note that this Book and its Psalms speak of the earth or the land (v. 1, 4, 5, 9). **let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.** *Isles* are the coastlands beyond the land of Israel: the nations of the west, the Gentile world. **Clouds and darkness are round about him.** As at Sinai (Deut. 4:11). **righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.** *Habitation* is "foundation" (89:14).

> **97:3** *A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.*
>
> **97:4** *His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.*
>
> **97:5** *The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD [Jehovah], at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.*
>
> **97:6** *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.*
>
> **97:7** *Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.*

A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD [Jehovah], at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. *Lord* here is *Adon*, "the Lord of the whole earth," a title connected with His rule over the earth (Josh. 3:11, 13; Mic. 4:13; Zech. 4:14; 6:5). **The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.** *The heavens*: they that dwell in heaven. *People* is "peoples."

Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols. *Idols* is *elilim*, "nothings" (96:5). **worship him, all ye gods.** *Gods* is *elohim*: the rulers and judges of the earth, or whatever men call gods (Ex. 22:9). The Greek version reads "all ye his angels." Let every mighty one bow before Him.

> **97:8** *Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **97:9** *For thou, LORD [Jehovah], art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.*
>
> **97:10** *Ye that love the LORD [Jehovah], hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*

Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD [Jehovah]. *Daughters* are the cities of Judah (48:11). **For thou, LORD [Jehovah], art high above all the earth.** *High* is *Elyon*, "Most High." **thou art exalted far above all gods. Ye that love the LORD [Jehovah], hate evil.** "The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil" (Prov. 8:13). **he preserveth the souls of his saints.** *Saints* is *chasidim*, His favoured ones. **he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.**

> **97:11** *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*
>
> **97:12** *Rejoice in the LORD [Jehovah], ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*

Light is sown for the righteous. Like seed scattered in the furrows, to spring up. *The righteous* is singular, the righteous one. **and gladness for the upright in heart.** *Upright* is plural. **Rejoice in the LORD [Jehovah], ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.** *Remembrance* is "memorial," His holy Name (30:4). The song ends with holiness, as 93:5 and 99:9.

Its close

Psalm 97 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 97 is member G: the new song, "The LORD reigneth." It answers to Psalm 99 (*G*). Psalm 96 announced His coming; Psalm 97 sees Him come, the earth trembling and the righteous given light.

Psalm 98 — "O Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a New Song; for He Hath Done Marvellous Things"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 95–100; member *F* (a summons to sing the new song). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 98 is the second summons to sing the new song. It begins as Psalm 96 begins, and ends almost as Psalm 96 ends: "for he cometh to judge the earth" (v. 9). The difference is that Psalm 96 called the nations to praise Jehovah for who He is; Psalm 98 calls them to praise Him for what He has done for Israel: "He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God" (v. 3).

Structure

- W | 1-. Exhortation to praise.
- X | -1–3. Reason. "For."
- *W* | 4–9-. Exhortation to praise.
- *X* | -9. Reasons. "For."

The Psalm

A Psalm.

> **1** *O sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.*
>
> **2** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.*
>
> **3** *He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*
>
> **4** *Make a joyful noise unto the LORD [Jehovah], all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.*
>
> **5** *Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.*
>
> **6** *With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD [Jehovah], the King.*
>
> **7** *Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*
>
> **8** *Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together.*
>
> **9** *Before the LORD [Jehovah]; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.*

Psalm 98 has no sub-scription. Psalm 99 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **98:1** *O sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.*
>
> **98:2** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.*
>
> **98:3** *He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

O sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. *Gotten him the victory* is "wrought salvation for Him." The figure *Anthropopatheia*. God's own right hand did it, with no help (Isa. 59:16; 63:5). **The LORD [Jehovah] hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel.** *Mercy* is "lovingkindness"; *truth* is "faithfulness." Mary sang these words: "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy" (Luke 1:54). **all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.** Word for word in Isaiah 52:10.

> **98:4** *Make a joyful noise unto the LORD [Jehovah], all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.*
>
> **98:5** *Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.*
>
> **98:6** *With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD [Jehovah], the King.*

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD [Jehovah], all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. *Make a loud noise* is "break forth." **Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.** *Psalm* is "melody." The repetition of "with the harp" is the figure *Anadiplosis*. **With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD [Jehovah], the King.** *Trumpets* are the silver trumpets of the priests (Num. 10:2); the *cornet* is the ram's horn, the shophar. The trumpets that sounded at a king's coronation (1 Kings 1:39).

> **98:7** *Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*
>
> **98:8** *Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together.*
>
> **98:9** *Before the LORD [Jehovah]; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.*

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together. *Floods* is "rivers." The figure *Prosopopoeia*: rivers clapping, hills singing. **Before the LORD [Jehovah]; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.** As 96:13. *Equity* is "uprightness."

Its close

Psalm 98 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 98 is member *F*, the summons to sing the new song, answering to Psalm 96 (F). Both end with "he cometh to judge the earth." Psalm 99 sings the song.

Psalm 99 — "The LORD [Jehovah] Reigneth; Let the People Tremble"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 95–100; member *G* (the new song: "The LORD reigneth"). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 99 is the third Psalm to begin "The LORD reigneth" (93; 97; 99), and the second song answering the summons. It is built on the word *holy*: "for it is holy" (v. 3); "for he is holy" (v. 5); "for the LORD our God is holy" (v. 9). Three times, as the seraphim cried "Holy, holy, holy" (Isa. 6:3).

It names Moses and Aaron and Samuel, who called on Jehovah and were answered (v. 6), and speaks of "the cloudy pillar" (v. 7). It describes Jehovah as sitting "between the cherubims" (v. 1): the Psalm was written while the Ark was still in existence.

Structure

- Y | x | 1–4-. Of Jehovah. } Motives.
- y | -4. To Jehovah.
- Z | 5. "Exalt ye," etc.
- *Y* | *x* | 6, 7. Of Jehovah. } Examples.
- *y* | 8. To Jehovah.
- *Z* | 9. "Exalt ye," etc.

The Psalm

Psalm 99 has no Title.

> **1** *The LORD [Jehovah] reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.*
> **2** *The LORD [Jehovah] is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people.*
> **3** *Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.*
> **4** *The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.*
> **5** *Exalt ye the LORD [Jehovah] our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.*
> **6** *Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD [Jehovah], and he answered them.*
> **7** *He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.*

> **8** *Thou answeredst them, O LORD [Jehovah] our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.*
>
> **9** *Exalt the LORD [Jehovah] our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD [Jehovah] our God is holy.*

Psalm 99 has no sub-scription. Psalm 100 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of praise."

Verse by verse

> **99:1** *The LORD [Jehovah] reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.*
>
> **99:2** *The LORD [Jehovah] is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people.*
>
> **99:3** *Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.*
>
> **99:4** *The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.*
>
> **99:5** *Exalt ye the LORD [Jehovah] our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.*

The LORD [Jehovah] reigneth; let the people tremble. *People* is "peoples." **he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.** *Sitteth* is "is enthroned." **The LORD [Jehovah] is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.** *It* may be read "He": "Holy is He." **The king's strength also loveth judgment.** The King, mighty as He is, loves justice. **thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.** As David did (2 Sam. 8:15). **Exalt ye the LORD [Jehovah] our God, and worship at his footstool.** The Ark was His footstool (1 Chron. 28:2; 132:7). **for he is holy.**

> **99:6** *Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD [Jehovah], and he answered them.*
>
> **99:7** *He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.*
>
> **99:8** *Thou answeredst them, O LORD [Jehovah] our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.*

Moses and Aaron among his priests. Moses was of Levi, and served as priest when the covenant was made and when Aaron was consecrated (Ex. 24:6–8; Lev. 8). **and Samuel among them that call upon his name.** Samuel was a Levite (1 Chron. 6:28, 33) and a great intercessor (1 Sam. 7:9; 12:23; Jer. 15:1). **they called upon the LORD [Jehovah], and he answered them. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar.** To Moses and Aaron (Ex. 33:9; Num. 12:5). **they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.**

Thou answeredst them, O LORD [Jehovah] our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them. *God* is *El*. *Them* is the people for whom Moses, Aaron and Samuel interceded. **though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.** *Inventions* is "deeds." God forgave the people at Moses' prayer, yet punished their sin (Ex. 32:14, 34, 35; Num. 14:20–23). Moses and Aaron themselves were forgiven, yet did not enter the land (Num. 20:12).

> **99:9** *Exalt the LORD [Jehovah] our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD [Jehovah] our God is holy.*

Exalt the LORD [Jehovah] our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD [Jehovah] our God is holy. The third "holy," and the fullest.

Its close

Psalm 99 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 99 is member G: the new song, "The LORD reigneth." It answers to Psalm 97 (G). Psalm 97 showed His coming in power; Psalm 99 shows His holiness, and the men who called on Him and were answered.

Psalm 100 — "Make a Joyful Noise unto the LORD [Jehovah], All Ye Lands"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 95–100; member *D* (worship, in view of the rest anticipated). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** "A Psalm of praise" (Title).

Introduction

Psalm 100 is the closing call to worship of the division. *Praise* in the Title is *todah*, "thanksgiving," the word used of the thank offering (Lev. 7:12). It may have been sung when the thank offering was brought. It calls "all ye lands" (all the earth) to serve Jehovah with gladness, to know that He is God, and to enter His gates with thanksgiving, because He is good, His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness endures. It ends the division as Psalm 95 began it: the people and the sheep coming before His face.

Structure

- A | a | 1, 2-. Exhortation to worship.
- b | -2. Entrance into His presence.
- B | 3. What Jehovah is. (Three declarations.)
- *A* | *b* | 4-. Entrance into His presence.
- *a* | -4. Exhortation to worship.
- *B* | 5. What Jehovah is. (Three declarations.)

The Psalm

A Psalm of praise.

> **1** *Make a joyful noise unto the LORD [Jehovah], all ye lands.*
> **2** *Serve the LORD [Jehovah] with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*
> **3** *Know ye that the LORD [Jehovah] he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*
> **4** *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*
> **5** *For the LORD [Jehovah] is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

Psalm 100 has no sub-scription. Psalm 101 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **100:1** *Make a joyful noise unto the LORD [Jehovah], all ye lands.*

> **100:2** *Serve the LORD [Jehovah] with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD [Jehovah], all ye lands. *All ye lands* is "all the earth." **Serve the LORD [Jehovah] with gladness: come before his presence with singing.**

> **100:3** *Know ye that the LORD [Jehovah] he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

Know ye that the LORD [Jehovah] he is God. The first declaration: Jehovah alone is God (Deut. 4:35, 39; 1 Kings 18:39). **it is he that hath made us.** The second: He made us, not only as creatures but as His people (95:6; Deut. 32:6, 15). **and not we ourselves.** The Hebrew word here is written *lo'* ("not"), but the scribes' marginal reading is *lo* ("his"), which gives: "and we are His." The two words sound alike. The Revised Version follows the margin: "It is he that hath made us, and we are his." **we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.** The third declaration. As 95:7.

> **100:4** *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*
>
> **100:5** *For the LORD [Jehovah] is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. *Name* is Himself. **For the LORD [Jehovah] is good.** Psalm 95 gave the reason "the LORD is a great God" (95:3); here, "the LORD is good." **his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.** Three declarations: He is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting; His faithfulness endures.

Its close

Psalm 100 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 100 is member *D*, answering to Psalm 95 (D). The division began with a call to worship and a warning; it ends with a call to worship and thanksgiving. The rest is anticipated: all the earth enters His gates.

Looking Back on Psalms 95–100

The second division of Book IV shows rest for the earth anticipated.

- **Worship now (95; 100).** The people and sheep of His pasture are called to come before His face, with thanksgiving and singing. Psalm 95 adds the warning of the wilderness: hear His voice to day, or lose the rest.
- **The new song (96–99).** All the earth is summoned to sing, because Jehovah comes to judge it in righteousness (96; 98). And the song is sung: "The LORD reigneth," holy is He (97; 99).

At the centre stands the call for the heavens and the earth to rejoice, because "he cometh to judge the earth" (96:11–13). The next division celebrates the rest as come.

Psalms 101–105: Rest for the Earth Celebrated

A. What this division is about

The third division of Book IV celebrates the rest as come. Its key verse is "The LORD [Jehovah] hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (103:19). Three Psalms describe the coming kingdom: its principles, "mercy and judgment" (101:1); its mercies and judgments (103); and its foundation, the covenant with Abraham (105). Between them stand two Psalms of the King: in His humiliation and coming glory, the eternal Creator while all else perishes (102); and in His coming power and glory, as Creator and Sustainer of all the earth (104).

B. Its structure

- H^1 | 101. The coming kingdom. Its principles: "mercy and judgment" (v. 1). The wicked cut off (vv. 5, 8).
- J^1 | 102. The King in His humiliation, and His coming glory as the eternal Creator (vv. 12, 24–27). All else perishing (v. 26).
- H^2 | 103. The coming kingdom. Its mercies and judgments (vv. 4, 6, 17, 19).
- J^2 | 104. The King in His coming glory as the eternal Creator (v. 31). All else perishing (vv. 27–29).
- H^3 | 105. The coming kingdom, based on the covenant (vv. 8–12, 42–45) of "mercy and judgment" (vv. 5–7).

C. Its purpose

This division shows what the rest will be like when it comes: a kingdom ruled in mercy and judgment, in which the wicked are cut off and the faithful dwell with the King (101); God's throne in the heavens and His kingdom over all (103); the earth renewed by His spirit (104:30); and the covenant with Abraham fulfilled (105). And it shows the King: humbled, cut off in the midst of His days, and yet the One whose years have no end (102).

Psalm 101 — "I Will Sing of Mercy and Judgment"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 101–105; member H^1 (the coming kingdom: its principles). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 101 is a king's vow. David says how he will rule: he will walk with a perfect heart in his own house (v. 2), set no wicked thing before his eyes (v. 3), cut off the slanderer and the proud (v. 5), choose the faithful as his servants (v. 6), and morning by morning purge the land of the wicked (v. 8). It is the rule of the king who fears God, as in David's last words: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Sam. 23:3).

David did not keep this vow perfectly. The Psalm describes the kingdom as it ought to be, and as it will be under David's Son, who will "judge the poor of the people" and "break in pieces the oppressor" (72:4).

Structure

- C | 1, 2. "I," "my": "the perfect way," "mercy."
- D | 3–5. Them that "turn aside": "cut off," "judgment."
- *C* | 6. "I," "me," "mine": "perfect way," "mercy."
- *D* | 7, 8. He that "worketh deceit": "cut off," "judgment."

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], will I sing.*
> **2** *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*
> **3** *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.*
> **4** *A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.*
> **5** *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.*
> **6** *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*
> **7** *He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*

> **8** *I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD [Jehovah].*

Psalm 101 has no sub-scription. Psalm 102 begins with its own super-scription, "A Prayer of the afflicted."

Verse by verse

> **101:1** *I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], will I sing.*
>
> **101:2** *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*

I will sing of mercy and judgment. *Mercy* is "lovingkindness." Mercy and judgment are the two principles of the kingdom; the Psalm treats them in turn. **unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah], will I sing. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.** *Perfect* is "blameless." **O when wilt thou come unto me?** He longs for God's presence with him as he rules. **I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.** Integrity begins at home.

> **101:3** *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.*
>
> **101:4** *A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.*
>
> **101:5** *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.*

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. *Wicked thing* is "a thing of Belial," worthless and evil. **I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me.** *Froward* is "perverse." **I will not know a wicked person.** Will not be intimate with. **Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off.** *Cut off* is "destroy." **him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.** *Proud heart* is "broad heart": swollen, insatiable.

> **101:6** *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*

Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He chooses his ministers for faithfulness, not cleverness.

> **101:7** *He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*
>
> **101:8** *I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD [Jehovah].*

He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land. *Early* is "morning by morning." In the east the king judged in the morning, at the gate (2 Sam. 15:2; Jer. 21:12). **that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD [Jehovah].** Zion, God's city, must be clean.

Its close

Psalm 101 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 101 is member H^1: the coming kingdom and its principles, mercy and judgment. It answers to Psalms 103 and 105 (H^2, H^3). The rest for the earth comes with a King who rules in righteousness.

Psalm 102 — "A Prayer of the Afflicted"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 101–105; member J^1 (the King in His humiliation and coming glory). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** "A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD" (Title).

Introduction

Psalm 102 has the only Title in the Psalter that describes a condition rather than naming a writer or an event. It is the prayer of one afflicted: his days are consumed like smoke, his heart withered like grass, alone like a bird on a rooftop, mocked by enemies, cut down in the midst of his days (vv. 3–11, 23, 24). Then he turns to Jehovah, who endures for ever (v. 12), and who will arise and have mercy on Zion, for "the set time is come" (v. 13). The afflicted one's prayer is the prayer of Zion itself.

The New Testament quotes verses 25–27 of the Son: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest . . ." (Heb. 1:10–12). *The Companion Bible* concludes that the whole Psalm is prophetic of Messiah: His humiliation (vv. 1–11, 23, 24) and His glory (vv. 12–22, 25–28).

How Hebrews reads it. In the Hebrew text the afflicted one prays to God the Creator, and verses 25–27 are addressed to God. Hebrews quotes the Greek version, where verse 23 reads differently: "He answered him in the way of his strength." In the Greek, God *answers* the afflicted one, and the words that follow are God's words *to him*: "declare to me the fewness of my days . . . Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth." God addresses His humbled Messiah as Lord, and tells Him that He will lay the foundation of an earth and heavens which will outlast the present ones. Hebrews says plainly which world is meant: "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection *the world to come*, whereof we speak" (Heb. 2:5). The Son is the one through whom God brings in the new heavens and the new earth (Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13). **Weight:** this reading follows the text Hebrews actually quotes, and Hebrews' own statement of its subject. It is set out in Appendix J. In the Hebrew of the Psalm, the words praise the eternal Creator.

Structure

- E | c | 1, 2. Prayer.
- d | 3–11. Humiliation: "My days" cut short.
- F | 12. Jehovah everlasting.
- G | 13–22. Favour to His people.
- *E* | *d* | 23. Humiliation: "My days" cut short.
- *c* | 24-. Prayer.
- *F* | -24–27. Jehovah everlasting.

- *G* | 28. Favour to His people.

The favour to His people (13–22):

- H | e | 13, 14. Favour to Zion.
- f | 15. Favour to the nations.
- J | g | 16. Jehovah's glory in Zion.
- h | 17. Jehovah's grace to the needy.
- K | 18-. For a future people.
- *K* | -18. For a future people.
- *J* | *g* | 19. Jehovah's glory in Zion.
- *h* | 20. Jehovah's grace to the needy.
- *H* | *e* | 21. Favour to Zion.
- *f* | 22. Favour to the peoples.

The Psalm

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD [Jehovah].

> **1** *Hear my prayer, O LORD [Jehovah], and let my cry come unto thee.*
> **2** *Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily.*
> **3** *For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.*
> **4** *My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.*
> **5** *By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.*
> **6** *I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert.*
> **7** *I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.*
> **8** *Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.*
> **9** *For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping,*
> **10** *Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.*
> **11** *My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.*
> **12** *But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.*
> **13** *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.*
> **14** *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.*
> **15** *So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD [Jehovah], and all the kings of the earth thy glory.*
> **16** *When the LORD [Jehovah] shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.*

> **17** *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.*
>
> **18** *This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD [Jah].*
>
> **19** *For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD [Jehovah] behold the earth;*
>
> **20** *To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;*
>
> **21** *To declare the name of the LORD [Jehovah] in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;*
>
> **22** *When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **23** *He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.*
>
> **24** *I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.*
>
> **25** *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.*
>
> **26** *They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:*
>
> **27** *But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*
>
> **28** *The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*

Psalm 102 has no sub-scription. Psalm 103 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **102:1** *Hear my prayer, O LORD [Jehovah], and let my cry come unto thee.*
>
> **102:2** *Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily.*

Hear my prayer, O LORD [Jehovah], and let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily. Almost every phrase is found in other Psalms (27:9; 31:2; 39:12; 69:17).

> **102:3** *For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.*
>
> **102:4** *My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.*
>
> **102:5** *By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.*
>
> **102:6** *I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert.*
>
> **102:7** *I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.*
>
> **102:8** *Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.*
>
> **102:9** *For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping,*
>
> **102:10** *Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.*
>
> **102:11** *My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.*

For my days are consumed like smoke. Several ancient versions read "in smoke." **and my bones are burned as an hearth.** *Hearth* is charred wood, a firebrand. **My heart is smitten, and withered like grass;**

so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. *Skin* is "flesh." Wasted to skin and bone.

I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. Both unclean birds of desolate places (Lev. 11:17, 18; Isa. 34:11). **I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.** Sleepless and alone. **Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.** They swear by him as a curse, or they have bound themselves by oath against him (Acts 23:12). **For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.** The ashes of mourning (Isa. 61:3). **Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.** As a man lifts something only to hurl it. **My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.** The evening shadow, lengthening as the sun sets.

> **102:12** *But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.*
>
> **102:13** *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.*
>
> **102:14** *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.*

But thou, O LORD [Jehovah], shalt endure for ever. *Shalt endure* is "sittest enthroned." The great turn: from "my days" to "thou . . . for ever." **and thy remembrance unto all generations.** *Remembrance* is "memorial," His Name (135:13). **Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion.** *Mercy* is "compassion." **for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.** *The set time*: the time God has appointed. Daniel learned from Jeremiah that the desolations of Jerusalem would last seventy years (Dan. 9:2). There is a set time still to come in God's counsels for Zion's restoration (Acts 1:6, 7). **For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.** They love even the ruins. The Psalm need not be dated after Jerusalem's fall; David was a prophet (Acts 2:30), and so were the singers (1 Chron. 25:1).

> **102:15** *So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD [Jehovah], and all the kings of the earth thy glory.*
>
> **102:16** *When the LORD [Jehovah] shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.*
>
> **102:17** *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.*

So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD [Jehovah], and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the LORD [Jehovah] shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. The glory of God returns when Zion is rebuilt (Isa. 60:1, 2; 62:1, 2). **He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.** *Destitute* is "stripped bare," like a tree in winter.

> **102:18** *This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD [Jah].*
>
> **102:19** *For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD [Jehovah] behold the earth;*
>
> **102:20** *To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;*
>
> **102:21** *To declare the name of the LORD [Jehovah] in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;*
>
> **102:22** *When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD [Jehovah].*

This shall be written for the generation to come. The Psalm is written for a future generation. **and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD [Jah].** The Hebrew has *JAH*. *Shall be created*: a people not yet in existence, a new creation, Israel made new (22:31; Isa. 43:1, 7, 21). **For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD [Jehovah] behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.** *Appointed to death* is "sons of death," condemned men (79:11). **To declare the name of the LORD [Jehovah] in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem; When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD [Jehovah].** *People* is "peoples." The nations gathered with Israel (22:27; Isa. 2:2, 3).

> **102:23** *He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.*
>
> **102:24** *I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.*

He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. The return to his humiliation. See the Introduction: the Greek reads "He answered him in the way of his strength." **I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days.** *My God* is *Eli*, "my El." **thy years are throughout all generations.** His days are cut short; God's years go on.

> **102:25** *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.*
>
> **102:26** *They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:*
>
> **102:27** *But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. See the Introduction for how Hebrews 1:10–12 reads these verses of the Son and the world to come. **They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.** The heavens and earth will be changed like worn-out clothes (Isa. 51:6; 2 Pet. 3:10–13; Rev. 21:1). **But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.** *Thou art the same* is "Thou art He." God does not change (Mal. 3:6); and the Son, raised from the dead and exalted, "dieth no more" and is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Rom. 6:9; Heb. 13:8). The One whose days were cut short has years without end.

> **102:28** *The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*

The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee. *Continue* is "dwell" in the land. The Psalm that began in the smoke of affliction ends with the seed established before God.

Its close

Psalm 102 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 102 is member J^1: the King in His humiliation and His coming glory. His days are cut short, His heart withered like grass; yet His years have no end, and through Him Zion is rebuilt and the nations gathered. It answers to Psalm 104 (J^2), where the King's glory as Creator is celebrated in full.

Psalm 103 — "Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O My Soul"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 101–105; member H^2 (the coming kingdom: its mercies and judgments). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 103 is a Psalm of pure praise. There is no petition in it from beginning to end. David speaks to his own soul, and calls on it to remember God's benefits: forgiveness, healing, redemption, lovingkindness, satisfaction (vv. 2–5). Then he praises God's dealings with Israel: His ways made known to Moses, His mercy as high as the heavens, His forgiveness as far as east from west, His pity as a father's, His remembrance that we are dust (vv. 6–18). And it ends with the throne in the heavens and the kingdom over all, and all creation called to bless Him (vv. 19–22).

Structure

- L | 1–5. Exhortation to bless.
- M | 6, 7. Jehovah's kingdom: Israel.
- N | 8. Merciful goodness.
- O | 9. Sparing goodness. (Time.)
- P | 10. Pardoning goodness.
- *P* | 11–13. Pardoning goodness.
- *O* | 14–16. Sparing goodness. (Time.)
- *N* | 17, 18. Merciful goodness.
- *M* | 19. Jehovah's kingdom: universal.
- *L* | 20–22. Exhortation to bless.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*
> **2** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*
> **3** *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*
> **4** *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;*
> **5** *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*
> **6** *The LORD [Jehovah] executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.*
> **7** *He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*

> **8** *The LORD [Jehovah] is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*
>
> **9** *He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.*
>
> **10** *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*
>
> **11** *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*
>
> **12** *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*
>
> **13** *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD [Jehovah] pitieth them that fear him.*
>
> **14** *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*
>
> **15** *As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.*
>
> **16** *For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*
>
> **17** *But the mercy of the LORD [Jehovah] is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;*
>
> **18** *To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.*
>
> **19** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*
>
> **20** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.*
>
> **21** *Bless ye the LORD [Jehovah], all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.*
>
> **22** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul.*

Psalm 103 has no sub-scription. Psalm 104 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **103:1** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*
>
> **103:2** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*
>
> **103:3** *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*
>
> **103:4** *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;*
>
> **103:5** *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul. The figure *Apostrophe*: he speaks to his own soul. **and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.** *Benefits* is "dealings," what He has done. **Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.** *Forgiveth* is *salach*, a word used only of God: no man can forgive in this sense. **who healeth all thy diseases.** As He promised Israel (Ex. 15:26). **Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.** *Redeemeth* is *ga'al*, as a kinsman. *Destruction* is "the pit." **who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things.** *Mouth* is "years" or "ornament"; the word is uncertain, but the sense is "satisfies thee with good." **so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.** "They shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Isa. 40:31). The eagle seems to renew its strength after moulting.

> **103:6** *The LORD [Jehovah] executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.*
>
> **103:7** *He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*

The LORD [Jehovah] executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. Moses asked, "Shew me now thy way" (Ex. 33:13). Moses was told God's *ways*, the reasons and purposes behind what He did; the people saw only His *acts*.

> **103:8** *The LORD [Jehovah] is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*
>
> **103:9** *He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.*
>
> **103:10** *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

The LORD [Jehovah] is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. The Name proclaimed to Moses (Ex. 34:6). *Merciful* is "compassionate." **He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.** If He had, none would stand (130:3).

> **103:11** *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*
>
> **103:12** *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*
>
> **103:13** *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD [Jehovah] pitieth them that fear him.*

For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. *Great* is "mighty." As high as the heavens. **As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.** East and west never meet. **Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD [Jehovah] pitieth them that fear him.** *Pitieth* is "has compassion on."

> **103:14** *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*
>
> **103:15** *As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.*
>
> **103:16** *For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*

For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. *Frame* is our "formation," how we were made: from dust (Gen. 2:7). God remembers what man forgets: that he is weak. And God forgets what man remembers: his sins (Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34). **As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.** *Man* is *enosh*, frail man. As 90:5, 6. **For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone.** The hot east wind. **and the place thereof shall know it no more.** No trace of it is left (Job 7:10).

> **103:17** *But the mercy of the LORD [Jehovah] is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;*
>
> **103:18** *To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.*

But the mercy of the LORD [Jehovah] is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. Man is grass; God's lovingkindness is everlasting. The contrast with verses 15 and 16 is the whole point.

> **103:19** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

The LORD [Jehovah] hath prepared his throne in the heavens. *Prepared* is "established." **and his kingdom ruleth over all.** The key verse of the division: His throne in the heavens, His kingdom over all.

> **103:20** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.*
>
> **103:21** *Bless ye the LORD [Jehovah], all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.*
>
> **103:22** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul.*

Bless the LORD [Jehovah], ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. *Excel in strength* is "mighty in strength." The angels do His word. **Bless ye the LORD [Jehovah], all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.** The *hosts* are the armies of heaven; *ministers* are servants, the angels again (104:4; Heb. 1:14). **Bless the LORD [Jehovah], all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul.** From the angels, to all creation, and back to his own soul. The Psalm ends where it began.

Its close

Psalm 103 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 103 is member H^2: the coming kingdom, its mercies and judgments. It answers to Psalms 101 and 105 (H^1, H^3). His kingdom rules over all, and it is a kingdom of mercy: everlasting lovingkindness for frail, dust-made man.

Psalm 104 — "O LORD [Jehovah] My God, Thou Art Very Great"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 101–105; member J^2 (the King in His coming power and glory, as Creator). **Writer:** not named; it begins and ends as Psalm 103 does, "Bless the LORD, O my soul." **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 104 is the great Psalm of creation. It begins with God clothed in light and stretching out the heavens (v. 2), and goes on through the waters, the springs, the beasts and birds, the grass and the trees, the sun and moon, the lions at night and man at work by day, the sea and its creatures, all waiting on God for their food (vv. 3–28). When He hides His face they die; when He sends forth His spirit they are created, and He renews the face of the earth (vv. 29, 30). It ends with God rejoicing in His works, the sinners consumed, and the first "Hallelujah" in the Bible (v. 35).

The order of the Psalm follows the days of creation in Genesis 1: light and the heavens (Day 1–2), the waters and the dry land (Day 2–3), the plants (Day 3), the sun and moon (Day 4), the creatures of sea and air (Day 5), the beasts and man (Day 6).

Structure

- Q | 1-. Jehovah to be praised.
- R | S^1 | -1, 2. "Thou." (Light; the heavens.)
- T^1 | 3–5. "He," "who." (The earth.)
- S^2 | 6–9. "Thou." (The waters.)
- T^2 | 10–19. "He," "who." (Springs, plants, moon and sun.)
- S^3 | 20-. "Thou." (Darkness.)
- T^3 | -20–23. "They." (The beasts and man.)
- S^4 | 24–30. "Thou." (The sea and its creatures; life and death.)
- T^4 | 31, 32. "He."
- Q | 33–35. Jehovah to be praised.

The Psalm

Psalm 104 has no Title.

> **1** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul. O LORD [Jehovah] my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.*
> **2** *Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:*

3 *Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:*

4 *Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:*

5 *Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.*

6 *Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.*

7 *At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.*

8 *They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.*

9 *Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.*

10 *He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.*

11 *They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.*

12 *By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.*

13 *He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.*

14 *He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;*

15 *And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.*

16 *The trees of the LORD [Jehovah] are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;*

17 *Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.*

18 *The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.*

19 *He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.*

20 *Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.*

21 *The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.*

22 *The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.*

23 *Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.*

24 *O LORD [Jehovah], how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.*

25 *So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.*

26 *There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.*

27 *These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.*

28 *That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.*

29 *Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.*

30 *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.*

31 *The glory of the LORD [Jehovah] shall endure for ever: the LORD [Jehovah] shall rejoice in his works.*

32 *He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*

> **33** *I will sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.*
>
> **34** *My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **35** *Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 104 has no sub-scription. Psalm 105 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **104:1** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul. O LORD [Jehovah] my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.*
>
> **104:2** *Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:*
>
> **104:3** *Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:*
>
> **104:4** *Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:*

Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul. O LORD [Jehovah] my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. The figure *Anthropopatheia*, which runs through the Psalm. **Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment.** The first work of creation: "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). "God is light" (1 John 1:5). **who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.** Like a tent curtain (Isa. 40:22). **Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters.** His upper rooms, built on the waters above the firmament (Gen. 1:7). **who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.**

Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire. *Spirits* is "winds" (*ruach*). The verse may be read "who maketh the winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants." Hebrews quotes it of the angels, to show that they are servants, while the Son is set on the throne (Heb. 1:7, 8).

> **104:5** *Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.*
>
> **104:6** *Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.*
>
> **104:7** *At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.*
>
> **104:8** *They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.*
>
> **104:9** *Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.*

Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. As in Genesis 1:2, 9. **At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.** Better: "the mountains rose, the valleys sank down, to the place which thou hadst founded for them." **Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.** God's promise after the Flood (Gen. 9:11; Job 38:8–11; Jer. 5:22).

> **104:10** *He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.*
>
> **104:11** *They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.*
>
> **104:12** *By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.*
>
> **104:13** *He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.*
>
> **104:14** *He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;*
>
> **104:15** *And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.*
>
> **104:16** *The trees of the LORD [Jehovah] are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;*
>
> **104:17** *Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.*
>
> **104:18** *The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.*

He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from his chambers. Rain from the upper rooms (v. 3). **the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.**

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man. *Service* is "cultivation": man must till it. **that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.** Grass, herb and food; wine, oil and bread: God's gifts for the beasts and for man. *Man* is *enosh*, frail man.

The trees of the LORD [Jehovah] are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted. Trees no man planted. **Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.** *Conies* are the rock hyrax, small animals that live among the rocks (Prov. 30:26).

> **104:19** *He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.*
>
> **104:20** *Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.*
>
> **104:21** *The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.*
>
> **104:22** *The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.*
>
> **104:23** *Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.*

He appointed the moon for seasons. For the feasts and the months (Gen. 1:14). **the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.** *God* is *El*. Even the lion's roar is a prayer to God for food (Job 38:39–41). **The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.** The beasts have the night; man has the day.

> **104:24** *O LORD [Jehovah], how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.*
>
> **104:25** *So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.*
>
> **104:26** *There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.*

O LORD [Jehovah], how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. "Jehovah by wisdom hath founded the earth" (Prov. 3:19; 8:22–31). **the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.** The great sea creature, whatever it is (Job 41), is God's plaything, made to sport in the sea.

> **104:27** *These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.*
>
> **104:28** *That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.*
>
> **104:29** *Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.*
>
> **104:30** *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.*

These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. "The eyes of all wait upon thee" (145:15, 16). **Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.** *Breath* is *ruach*, spirit. When God takes it, they return to dust (Gen. 3:19; Eccles. 12:7). **Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.** *Spirit* is *ruach*: God's breath, His power giving life. Every new generation of creatures is God's creating. The verse looks also to the day when the face of the earth itself is renewed (Isa. 65:17; Acts 3:21).

> **104:31** *The glory of the LORD [Jehovah] shall endure for ever: the LORD [Jehovah] shall rejoice in his works.*
>
> **104:32** *He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*
>
> **104:33** *I will sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.*
>
> **104:34** *My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **104:35** *Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

The glory of the LORD [Jehovah] shall endure for ever: the LORD [Jehovah] shall rejoice in his works. As He saw that it was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). **He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.** As at Sinai (Ex. 19:18). **I will sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD [Jehovah].**

Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. The one discord in creation is sin. For the earth to be at rest, sin and sinners must be removed. **Bless thou the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].** *Praise ye the LORD* is *Hallelu-Jah*. This is the first

"Hallelujah" in the Bible, and it is connected with the removal of the wicked from the earth. The first "Alleluia" in the New Testament is the same: it is sung over the fall of Babylon (Rev. 19:1–6).

Its close

Psalm 104 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 104 is member J^2: the King in His coming power and glory, as Creator and Sustainer. It answers to Psalm 102 (J^1). There the heavens and earth wax old and are changed; here they are renewed by His spirit. The rest of the earth comes when the sinners are consumed and the face of the earth is made new.

Psalm 105 — "He Hath Remembered His Covenant for Ever"

Place: Book IV; Psalms 101–105; member H^3 (the coming kingdom, based on the covenant). **Writer:** not named; verses 1–15 were sung when David brought the Ark to Zion (1 Chron. 16:8–22). **Occasion:** see above.

Introduction

Psalm 105 is the first of a pair of historical Psalms that close Book IV. Psalm 105 tells the history of God's faithfulness: the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the patriarchs protected as they wandered; Joseph sent ahead into Egypt; Israel multiplied; Moses and Aaron sent; the plagues; the exodus with silver and gold; the cloud and fire, the quails, the manna, the water from the rock; and the land given (vv. 8–44). It never mentions Israel's sin. Psalm 106 tells the same history again, and mentions little else.

The key is verse 8: "He hath remembered his covenant for ever." The kingdom to come rests on that covenant: the land promised to Abraham and given to his seed (vv. 9–11, 44).

Structure

- U | 1–7. Exhortation to praise (second person plural).
- V | 8–12. The basis of praise: the covenant in promise.
- W | i | 13. Journeyings.
- k | 14, 15. Favour.
- l | 16. Affliction.
- m | 17–22. Mission of deliverance: Joseph. } History of the patriarchs.
- *W* | *i* | 23. Journeyings.
- *k* | 24. Favour.
- *l* | 25. Affliction.
- *m* | 26–41. Mission of deliverance: Moses and Aaron. } History of the nation.
- *V* | 42–45-. The basis of praise: the covenant in performance.
- *U* | -45. Exhortation to praise.

The covenant in promise (8–12) and in performance (42–45-):

- n | 8–10. The covenant remembered.
- o | 11. The land given.
- p | 12. The people described.

- *n* | 42, 43. The covenant remembered.
- *o* | 44. The land possessed.
- *p* | 45-. The people described.

The two missions (17–22; 26–41):

- q | 17. The sending of the deliverer.
- r | 18, 19. Trial by the word (Joseph).
- s | 20–22. The deliverance.
- *q* | 26. The sending of the deliverers.
- *r* | 27–36. Trial by the word (Egypt's).
- *s* | 37–41. The deliverance.

The Psalm

Psalm 105 has no Title.

> **1** *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.*
> **2** *Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.*
> **3** *Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **4** *Seek the LORD [Jehovah], and his strength: seek his face evermore.*
> **5** *Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;*
> **6** *O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.*
> **7** *He is the LORD [Jehovah] our God: his judgments are in all the earth.*
> **8** *He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.*
> **9** *Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;*
> **10** *And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant:*
> **11** *Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:*
> **12** *When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.*
> **13** *When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people;*
> **14** *He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;*
> **15** *Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*
> **16** *Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.*
> **17** *He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant:*
> **18** *Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:*
> **19** *Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD [Jehovah] tried him.*

20 *The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.*
21 *He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:*
22 *To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.*
23 *Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.*
24 *And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.*
25 *He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.*
26 *He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen.*
27 *They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.*
28 *He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.*
29 *He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.*
30 *Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.*
31 *He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts.*
32 *He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land.*
33 *He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts.*
34 *He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillers, and that without number,*
35 *And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.*
36 *He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.*
37 *He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.*
38 *Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.*
39 *He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.*
40 *The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.*
41 *He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.*
42 *For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.*
43 *And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness:*
44 *And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people;*
45 *That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 105 has no sub-scription. Psalm 106 has no Title.

Verse by verse

105:1 *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.*
105:2 *Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.*
105:3 *Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD [Jehovah].*
105:4 *Seek the LORD [Jehovah], and his strength: seek his face evermore.*
105:5 *Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;*

105:6 *O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.*

105:7 *He is the LORD [Jehovah] our God: his judgments are in all the earth.*

O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. *People* is "peoples." **Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD [Jehovah]. Seek the LORD [Jehovah], and his strength: seek his face evermore.** *His strength*: the Ark, "the ark of thy strength" (132:8; 78:61). This Psalm was sung as the Ark came to Zion. **Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.** The miracles in Egypt, and the decisions given at Sinai. **O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.** 1 Chronicles 16:13 reads "seed of Israel." **He is the LORD [Jehovah] our God: his judgments are in all the earth.**

105:8 *He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.*

105:9 *Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;*

105:10 *And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant:*

105:11 *Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:*

105:12 *When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.*

He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. *Word* is "promise." **Which covenant he made with Abraham** (Gen. 12:7; 15:18; 17:7, 8). **and his oath unto Isaac** (Gen. 26:3, 4). **And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant** (Gen. 28:13–15; 35:11, 12). *Jacob* is the natural man; *Israel*, the man God renamed. **Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.** *Lot* is "measuring line": the inheritance measured out. **When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.** *Few men in number* is "men of number," so few they could be counted (Gen. 34:30; Deut. 7:7).

105:13 *When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people;*

105:14 *He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;*

105:15 *Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*

105:16 *Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.*

When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob wandered from Canaan to Egypt to Gerar and back. **He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes.** Pharaoh (Gen. 12:17) and Abimelech (Gen. 20:3; 26:11). **Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.** The patriarchs are called God's anointed ones and prophets. Of Abraham God said to Abimelech, "he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee" (Gen. 20:7). **Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.** Bread is the staff on which life leans (Lev. 26:26; Gen. 41:54).

105:17 *He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant:*

105:18 *Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:*

105:19 *Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD [Jehovah] tried him.*

105:20 *The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.*

105:21 *He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:*

105:22 *To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.*

He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant. God sent him; his brothers sold him. Joseph said so himself: "God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5; 50:20). **Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron.** Literally, "his soul came into iron": the iron entered his soul. **Until the time that his word came.** Joseph's word, his interpretation of the dreams, came to pass (Gen. 40:20–23; 41:12, 13). **the word of the LORD [Jehovah] tried him.** God's promise, given in Joseph's own dreams (Gen. 37:5–11), tested and refined him through the years in prison. **The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom** (Gen. 41:40–44). *Senators* is "elders."

105:23 *Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.*

105:24 *And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.*

105:25 *He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.*

Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies (Ex. 1:7, 9). **He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.** God turned the Egyptians' hearts, or allowed them to turn, so that Israel would be ready to leave (Ex. 1:8–14).

105:26 *He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen.*

105:27 *They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.*

105:28 *He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.*

105:29 *He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.*

105:30 *Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.*

105:31 *He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts.*

105:32 *He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land.*

105:33 *He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts.*

105:34 *He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillers, and that without number,*

105:35 *And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.*

105:36 *He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.*

He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen. They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. *His signs* is "the words of His signs": they announced each plague before it came. **He sent darkness, and made it dark.** The ninth plague (Ex. 10:21–23), put first here. **and they rebelled not against his word.** Moses and Aaron did not rebel against God's word, though Pharaoh threatened them (Ex. 10:28, 29). The Greek version reads "and they rebelled against his words," of the Egyptians. **He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.** The first plague (Ex. 7:20, 21). **Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.** The second (Ex. 8:3). **He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts.** The fourth and third (Ex. 8:17, 24). **He**

gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts. The seventh (Ex. 9:23–25). **He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillers, and that without number, And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.** The eighth (Ex. 10:13–15). **He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.** The tenth (Ex. 12:29). As in Psalm 78, not all ten are listed; the murrain and the boils are left out.

> **105:37** *He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.*
>
> **105:38** *Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.*
>
> **105:39** *He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.*
>
> **105:40** *The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.*
>
> **105:41** *He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.*

He brought them forth also with silver and gold. As promised to Abraham: "they shall come out with great substance" (Gen. 15:14; Ex. 12:35, 36). **and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them. He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.** Here there is no word of their murmuring. Psalm 106 will tell it.

> **105:42** *For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.*
>
> **105:43** *And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness:*
>
> **105:44** *And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people;*
>
> **105:45** *That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant. *Promise* is "word," as in verse 8. This is why He did all of it. **And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness: And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people.** Cities they did not build, vineyards they did not plant (Deut. 6:10, 11). **That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.** The purpose of the gift was obedience. **Praise ye the LORD [Jah].** *Hallelu-Jah*.

Its close

Psalm 105 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 105 is member H^3: the coming kingdom, based on the covenant. It answers to Psalms 101 and 103 (H^1, H^2). The kingdom rests not on Israel's faithfulness but on God's: "He hath remembered his covenant for ever." The covenant made with Abraham was kept through Joseph and Moses, and it will be kept in the kingdom to come.

Looking Back on Psalms 101–105

The third division of Book IV celebrates the rest for the earth.

- **The kingdom (101; 103; 105).** It is ruled in mercy and judgment (101). God's throne is in the heavens and His kingdom over all, and His lovingkindness is from everlasting to everlasting (103). It rests on His covenant with Abraham, which He has remembered for ever (105).
- **The King (102; 104).** Humbled, His days cut short, yet with years that have no end (102); the Creator who renews the face of the earth, when the sinners are consumed (104).

The division ends with the first two Hallelujahs of the Bible (104:35; 105:45). The Epilogue follows.

Psalm 106 — Epilogue: "Praise Ye the LORD [Jah]"

Place: Book IV; the Epilogue (the rest: how lost, and valued). **Writer:** not named; verses 1, 47 and 48 were sung when David brought the Ark to Zion (1 Chron. 16:34–36). **Occasion:** see the Introduction.

Introduction

Psalm 106 is the other side of Psalm 105. Psalm 105 told the history of God's faithfulness; Psalm 106 tells the history of Israel's unfaithfulness. "We have sinned with our fathers" (v. 6). At the Red Sea they provoked Him (v. 7). In the wilderness they lusted (v. 14), envied Moses and Aaron (v. 16), made the calf (v. 19), despised the pleasant land and murmured in their tents (vv. 24, 25), joined themselves to Baal-peor (v. 28), and provoked Moses at Meribah (v. 32). In the land they did not destroy the nations, but mingled with them, served their idols, and sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons (vv. 34–38). And again and again, "Nevertheless he regarded their affliction" (v. 44).

This is how the rest was *lost*: Israel did not believe and did not obey. And this is how it is *valued*: God remembered His covenant, and saved them for His name's sake (vv. 8, 45). The Epilogue answers the Prologue (90). There, a generation consumed in the wilderness; here, the whole history of that generation and those that followed, and the prayer, "Save us . . . and gather us from among the heathen" (v. 47).

When was it written? Verse 47, "gather us from among the heathen," and verse 46, "He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives," have led many to date the Psalm to the exile. But the same prayer was sung when David brought the Ark to Zion: "Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen" (1 Chron. 16:35). Israel had already known captivity under the Judges (Judg. 2:14; 18:30) and the loss of the Ark to the Philistines (78:61). **Weight:** the Chronicles passage shows the prayer was in use in David's day; the Psalm reads most fully in the exile.

Structure

- A | 1-. Hallelujah.
- B | -1–3. Exhortation to praise.
- C | 4, 5. Prayer.
- D | t^1 | 6, 7. Sin.
- u^1 | 8–12. "Nevertheless."
- E^1 | v^1 | 13–16. Sin.
- w^1 | 17, 18. Punishment.
- v^2 | 19–22. Sin.
- w^2 | 23-. Punishment.

- F[1] | -23. Deliverance: Moses.
- E[2] | v[3] | 24, 25. Sin.
- w[3] | 26, 27. Punishment.
- v[4] | 28, 29-. Sin.
- w[4] | -29. Punishment.
- F[2] | 30, 31. Deliverance: Phinehas.
- E[3] | v[5] | 32-. Sin.
- w[5] | -32, 33. Punishment.
- v[6] | 34–39. Sin.
- w[6] | 40–42. Punishment.
- F[3] | 43-. Deliverance: "He."
- *D* | *t* | -43. Sin.
- *u* | 44–46. "Nevertheless."
- *C* | 47. Prayer.
- *B* | 48-. Exhortation to praise.
- *A* | -48. Hallelujah.

Three times sin, punishment, and deliverance. The first deliverer is Moses; the second, Phinehas; the third, God Himself ("He"). The Psalm begins and ends with Hallelujah.

The Psalm

Psalm 106 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
> **2** *Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD [Jehovah]? who can shew forth all his praise?*
> **3** *Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.*
> **4** *Remember me, O LORD [Jehovah], with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;*
> **5** *That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.*
> **6** *We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.*
> **7** *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea.*
> **8** *Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.*

9 *He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.*

10 *And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.*

11 *And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.*

12 *Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.*

13 *They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel:*

14 *But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.*

15 *And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.*

16 *They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD [Jehovah].*

17 *The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.*

18 *And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.*

19 *They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.*

20 *Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.*

21 *They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;*

22 *Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.*

23 *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.*

24 *Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:*

25 *But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD [Jehovah].*

26 *Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:*

27 *To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.*

28 *They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.*

29 *Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.*

30 *Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed.*

31 *And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.*

32 *They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:*

33 *Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.*

34 *They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD [Jehovah] commanded them:*

35 *But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.*

36 *And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.*

37 *Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,*

38 *And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.*

39 *Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.*

40 *Therefore was the wrath of the LORD [Jehovah] kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.*

> **41** *And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.*
>
> **42** *Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.*
>
> **43** *Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.*
>
> **44** *Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:*
>
> **45** *And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.*
>
> **46** *He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.*
>
> **47** *Save us, O LORD [Jehovah] our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.*
>
> **48** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 106 ends Book IV with its doxology (v. 48). It has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **106:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
>
> **106:2** *Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD [Jehovah]? who can shew forth all his praise?*
>
> **106:3** *Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.*
>
> **106:4** *Remember me, O LORD [Jehovah], with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;*
>
> **106:5** *That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. *Hallelu-Jah*: the first of the Psalms to begin with it. **O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.** The refrain of the temple worship (1 Chron. 16:34, 41; 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Jer. 33:11). **Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD [Jehovah]? who can shew forth all his praise? Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.** Few have; that is the subject of the Psalm.

Remember me, O LORD [Jehovah], with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance. The Psalmist asks to share in the good God will do for Israel.

> **106:6** *We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.*
>
> **106:7** *Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea.*
>
> **106:8** *Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.*
>
> **106:9** *He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.*

106:10 *And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.*

106:11 *And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.*

106:12 *Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.*

We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. The confession of Solomon (1 Kings 8:47) and of Daniel (Dan. 9:5). Three words, as in 51:1, 2. **Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea.** At the sea they said, "Were there no graves in Egypt?" (Ex. 14:11, 12). **Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.** Not for their sake (Ezek. 20:9). **He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.** As easily as across a plain. **And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.** *Redeemed* is *ga'al*. **And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left** (Ex. 14:28). **Then believed they his words; they sang his praise** (Ex. 14:31; 15:1).

106:13 *They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel:*

106:14 *But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.*

106:15 *And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.*

106:16 *They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD [Jehovah].*

106:17 *The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.*

106:18 *And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.*

They soon forgat his works. Three days later, at Marah (Ex. 15:22–24). **they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.** The quails, and the plague that followed (Num. 11:31–34). They got what they wanted, and lost what they needed.

They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD [Jehovah]. *Saint* is "holy one": Aaron was consecrated to Jehovah. The rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16). **The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.** The two hundred and fifty who offered incense (Num. 16:31–35). Korah is not named here; his sons were spared (Num. 26:11), and wrote many Psalms.

106:19 *They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.*

106:20 *Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.*

106:21 *They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;*

106:22 *Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.*

106:23 *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.*

They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. *Their glory* is God Himself, the glory of Israel (Jer. 2:11). They exchanged Him for a figure of a grass-eating ox. Paul uses the words of the Gentiles: they "changed the

glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts" (Rom. 1:23). **They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.**

Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them. Moses stood in the gap in the wall, like a soldier in a breach (Ex. 32:10–14; Deut. 9:25; Ezek. 22:30). The first deliverer.

> **106:24** *Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:*
> **106:25** *But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **106:26** *Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:*
> **106:27** *To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.*

Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word: But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD [Jehovah]. The spies' report (Num. 13–14; Deut. 1:27). This was the sin that lost them the rest (95:11). **Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness.** To lift the hand is to swear (Num. 14:28–30; Ezek. 20:15). **To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.** The warning was given in the wilderness (Lev. 26:33; Deut. 28:64).

> **106:28** *They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.*
> **106:29** *Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.*
> **106:30** *Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed.*
> **106:31** *And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.*

They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. The idolatry and immorality of Moab (Num. 25:1–3). *The dead*: lifeless idols, in contrast with the living God. **Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.** Twenty-four thousand died (Num. 25:9). **Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed.** The second deliverer (Num. 25:7, 8). **And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.** God gave him "the covenant of an everlasting priesthood" (Num. 25:11–13). The same words are used of Abraham's faith (Gen. 15:6).

> **106:32** *They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:*
> **106:33** *Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.*
> **106:34** *They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD [Jehovah] commanded them:*
> **106:35** *But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.*
> **106:36** *And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.*
> **106:37** *Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,*
> **106:38** *And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.*
> **106:39** *Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.*

They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. At Meribah Moses struck the rock and said "Must we fetch you water?" (Num. 20:10–12). For that, Moses did not enter the land. *His spirit* is Moses' spirit, provoked by the people. **They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD [Jehovah] commanded them** (Judg. 1:21–36). **But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them** (Judg. 2:3; Ex. 23:33).

Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils. *Devils* is *shedim*, demons (Deut. 32:17). Behind the idols were evil spirits (1 Cor. 10:20). **And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.** Molech worship (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6; Jer. 7:31). **Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.**

> **106:40** *Therefore was the wrath of the LORD [Jehovah] kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.*
>
> **106:41** *And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.*
>
> **106:42** *Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.*
>
> **106:43** *Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.*
>
> **106:44** *Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:*
>
> **106:45** *And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.*
>
> **106:46** *He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.*

Therefore was the wrath of the LORD [Jehovah] kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. The pattern of the book of Judges (Judg. 2:11–19). **Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.** The third deliverer is God Himself.

Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry. The second "Nevertheless" (v. 8). **And he remembered for them his covenant.** The key word of Psalm 105. **and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.** *Repented* is "relented." **He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.** As Solomon prayed (1 Kings 8:50), and as Daniel, Nehemiah and Jehoiachin found (Dan. 1:9; Neh. 1:11; 2 Kings 25:27–30).

> **106:47** *Save us, O LORD [Jehovah] our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.*

Save us, O LORD [Jehovah] our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise. The prayer for the regathering of Israel (Deut. 30:3–5; Ezek. 36:24). It will be answered when Jehovah reigns.

> **106:48** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. The doxology that closes Book IV, as at the bringing of the Ark (1 Chron. 16:36): "And all the people said, Amen, and praised Jehovah." **Praise ye the LORD [Jah].** *Hallelu-Jah*. Books I–III ended with "Amen, and Amen"; Book IV ends with "Amen. Hallelujah."

Its close

Psalm 106 closes Book IV. It has no sub-scription. Book V begins with its own words, "O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good" (107:1), the very words with which Psalm 106 opened.

Looking back

Psalm 106 is the Epilogue of Book IV: the rest, how lost, and how valued. It answers to Psalm 90, the Prologue. Psalm 90 showed a generation dying in the wilderness under God's wrath; Psalm 106 tells why: they believed not His word. But it also tells that "Nevertheless" God saved them, again and again, for His name's sake and His covenant's. The rest was lost by Israel's unbelief; it will be given by God's faithfulness.

Looking Back on Book IV

Book IV, which Bullinger compared with Numbers, is about the Earth and the Nations, and the rest God will give them.

- **Prologue (90).** The rest lost and needed: the eternal God, and man withering like grass in the wilderness.
- **Psalms 91–94: rest desired.** Rest in Jehovah now, in His secret place and under His throne; and the prayer for the day when the wicked are cut off and the righteous rest.
- **Psalms 95–100: rest anticipated.** "To day if ye will hear his voice"; the new song; "The LORD reigneth"; "for he cometh to judge the earth."
- **Psalms 101–105: rest celebrated.** The kingdom in mercy and judgment; the King humbled and eternal; His throne in the heavens and His kingdom over all; the face of the earth renewed; the covenant remembered for ever.
- **Epilogue (106).** The rest, how lost: Israel's unbelief from the Red Sea to the land. And how valued: "Nevertheless," God remembered His covenant.

Book IV begins "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations" (90:1) and ends "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting" (106:48). From everlasting to everlasting God has been the home of His people, through the wilderness and the exile, until the rest comes. Book V, which Bullinger compared with Deuteronomy, is about God and His Word.

Book V — Psalms 107–150: Concerning God and His Word

A. The subject of the Book

Book V is the "Deuteronomy Book" of the Psalter. Book I was about *Man*, Book II about *Israel*, Book III about *the Sanctuary*, Book IV about *the Earth and the Nations*. Book V is about *God and His Word*. Its key verse stands near its beginning: "He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (107:20). Its centre is Psalm 119, the Psalm of the Word. And it ends with five "Hallelujah" Psalms, the last of which closes the whole Psalter: "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the LORD [Jah]" (150:6).

B. Its match with Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is Greek for "the second law," because in it the Law was repeated to the new generation before they entered the land. Its Hebrew name is its opening words, *'elleh haddebarim*, "These be the words." It is the book of the *words* of God. From it the Lord Jesus answered the tempter three times: "It is written" (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Deut. 8:3; 6:16; 6:13). And it teaches that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live" (Deut. 8:3).

Book V matches it closely:

- It opens with the Word that heals and delivers (107:20), and its centre is the Word that gives life (119:25, 50, 93).
- It gathers what the other Books taught. All blessing for man (Book I), for Israel (Book II), for the sanctuary (Book III), and for the earth (Book IV) is bound up in the Word of God.
- Its last five Psalms answer in turn to the five books of Moses (see Psalms 146–150).

Weight: strong. In the Hebrew text of Book V, *Jehovah* occurs 236 times and *Jah* thirty-two times (most of them in *Hallelu-Jah*), while *Elohim* occurs only twenty-nine times (Appendix H). It is the Book of the covenant Name and the covenant Word.

Its order. Book V has forty-four Psalms. Fifteen are David's (108–110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138–145), one is Solomon's (127), and the rest are not named in their Titles. *The Companion Bible* holds that Hezekiah gathered the Book and wrote some of the unnamed Psalms (see the Songs of Degrees below).

C. Its structure

- A^1 | 107. Deliverance by the healing Word.
- B^1 | 108–118. The true David's humiliation, deliverance and exaltation (108–110); praise (111–113); deliverance from Egypt and its idols (114–115); praise (116–118).
- A^2 | 119. Quickening and sustaining by the revealed Word.

- B^2 | 120–150. Deliverance (the Songs of Degrees, 120–134); praise (135–136); deliverance of captives (137); praise (138); deliverance from an evil heart (139); prayer and praise (140–144); the true David leading the praises of His people (145); and five Hallelujah Psalms (146–150).

The two great Psalms of the Word (107; 119) stand at the head of each half. In each half, deliverance and praise alternate. *The Companion Bible* prints a fuller outline with sub-letters; this study gives its divisions as above, and sets out the members at each group.

Psalm 107 — "He Sent His Word, and Healed Them"

Place: Book V; member A^1 (deliverance by the healing Word). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 107 opens Book V with the same words that closed Book IV: "O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (106:1; 107:1). Psalm 106 ended with the prayer "gather us from among the heathen" (106:47). Psalm 107 begins with the answer: the redeemed, "gathered . . . out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south" (v. 3).

Then come four pictures of men in trouble, each followed by the same cry, the same deliverance, and the same refrain: wanderers lost in the wilderness (vv. 4–9); prisoners in darkness and chains (vv. 10–16); fools sick to death because of their sin (vv. 17–22); and sailors in a storm (vv. 23–32). "Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses." "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" At the centre of the four is the key verse of the Book: "He sent his word, and healed them" (v. 20). The Psalm ends with God's ways of judgment and blessing on the land (vv. 33–43).

Structure

- A | 1–3. Praise for Jehovah's lovingkindness.
- B | 4–32. Distress and deliverance.
- *B* | 33–41. Judgment and blessing.
- *A* | 42, 43. Praise for Jehovah's lovingkindness.

The distress and deliverance (4–32) has four parts, each with four members:

- C^1 | a^1 | 4, 5. Trouble: wanderers in the wilderness.
- b^1 | 6-. Cry.
- c^1 | -6, 7. Deliverance.
- d^1 | 8, 9. Praise, and reason.
- C^2 | a^2 | 10–12. Trouble: rebels in prison.
- b^2 | 13-. Cry.
- c^2 | -13, 14. Deliverance.
- d^2 | 15, 16. Praise, and reason.
- C^3 | a^3 | 17, 18. Trouble: fools in sickness.
- b^3 | 19-. Cry.
- c^3 | -19, 20. Deliverance.

- d^{3} | 21, 22. Praise, and injunction.
- C^{4} | a^{4} | 23–27. Trouble: wanderers on the deep.
- b^{4} | 28-. Cry.
- c^{4} | -28–30. Deliverance.
- d^{4} | 31, 32. Praise, and injunction.

The judgment and blessing (33–41):

- e | 33, 34. Judgment.
- f | 35–38. Lovingkindness.
- *e* | 39, 40. Judgment.
- *f* | 41. Lovingkindness.

The Psalm

Psalm 107 has no Title.

> **1** *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah], for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
> **2** *Let the redeemed of the LORD [Jehovah] say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;*
> **3** *And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.*
> **4** *They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.*
> **5** *Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.*
> **6** *Then they cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.*
> **7** *And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.*
> **8** *Oh that men would praise the LORD [Jehovah] for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*
> **9** *For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*
> **10** *Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron;*
> **11** *Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:*
> **12** *Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.*
> **13** *Then they cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.*
> **14** *He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.*
> **15** *Oh that men would praise the LORD [Jehovah] for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*
> **16** *For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.*
> **17** *Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.*

18 *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.*

19 *Then they cry unto the LORD [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.*

20 *He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*

21 *Oh that men would praise the LORD [Jehovah] for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

22 *And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.*

23 *They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;*

24 *These see the works of the LORD [Jehovah], and his wonders in the deep.*

25 *For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.*

26 *They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.*

27 *They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.*

28 *Then they cry unto the LORD [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.*

29 *He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.*

30 *Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.*

31 *Oh that men would praise the LORD [Jehovah] for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

32 *Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.*

33 *He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground;*

34 *A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*

35 *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.*

36 *And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;*

37 *And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.*

38 *He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.*

39 *Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.*

40 *He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.*

41 *Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.*

42 *The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*

43 *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD [Jehovah].*

Psalm 107 has no sub-scription. Psalm 108 begins with its own super-scription, "A Song or Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **107:1** *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah], for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
>
> **107:2** *Let the redeemed of the LORD [Jehovah] say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;*
>
> **107:3** *And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.*

O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah], for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. *Mercy* is "lovingkindness," the key word of the Psalm (vv. 8, 15, 21, 31, 43). **Let the redeemed of the LORD [Jehovah] say so.** *Redeemed* is *ga'al*, redeemed as by a kinsman (Isa. 62:12). **whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.** *South* is "the sea": the western sea, or the Red Sea. The last regathering of Israel is in view (Isa. 43:5, 6; 49:12; Matt. 24:31).

> **107:4** *They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.*
>
> **107:5** *Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.*
>
> **107:6** *Then they cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.*
>
> **107:7** *And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.*
>
> **107:8** *Oh that men would praise the LORD [Jehovah] for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*
>
> **107:9** *For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*

They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way. *A solitary way* is "a trackless waste." **they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.** The first trouble: lost, with no road and no home. **Then they cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.** *Distresses* is "straits," tight places. **And he led them forth by the right way.** Not the shortest or the easiest, but the right one: God's way (Deut. 8:2). **that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the LORD [Jehovah] for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!** The refrain. **For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.** Mary sang it: "He hath filled the hungry with good things" (Luke 1:53).

> **107:10** *Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron;*
>
> **107:11** *Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:*
>
> **107:12** *Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.*
>
> **107:13** *Then they cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.*
>
> **107:14** *He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.*

> **107:15** *Oh that men would praise the LORD [Jehovah] for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*
>
> **107:16** *For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.*

Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron. The second trouble: prisoners. **Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High.** *God* is *El*; *Most High* is *Elyon*. Their prison was the fruit of rebellion against the Word. **Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried . . . He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.** Zacharias sang of the Dayspring who would "give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79). **For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder** (Isa. 45:2).

> **107:17** *Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.*
>
> **107:18** *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.*
>
> **107:19** *Then they cry unto the LORD [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.*
>
> **107:20** *He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*
>
> **107:21** *Oh that men would praise the LORD [Jehovah] for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*
>
> **107:22** *And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.*

Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. The third trouble: sickness that comes from folly. *Fools* are those who trust their own wisdom (Prov. 1:7). **Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry . . . He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.** The key verse of Book V. God's Word is sent like a messenger, and it heals. The centurion said, "speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matt. 8:8). *Destructions* is "pits," a word found only here and in Lamentations 4:20: He rescues them from the grave's mouth. **And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.**

> **107:23** *They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;*
>
> **107:24** *These see the works of the LORD [Jehovah], and his wonders in the deep.*
>
> **107:25** *For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.*
>
> **107:26** *They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.*
>
> **107:27** *They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.*
>
> **107:28** *Then they cry unto the LORD [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.*
>
> **107:29** *He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.*
>
> **107:30** *Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.*

> **107:31** *Oh that men would praise the LORD [Jehovah] for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*
>
> **107:32** *Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.*

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD [Jehovah], and his wonders in the deep. The fourth trouble: the storm. **For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.** Literally, "all their wisdom is swallowed up." **Then they cry . . . He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.** "Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matt. 8:26). **Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.**

> **107:33** *He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground;*
>
> **107:34** *A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*
>
> **107:35** *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.*
>
> **107:36** *And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;*
>
> **107:37** *And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.*
>
> **107:38** *He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.*
>
> **107:39** *Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.*
>
> **107:40** *He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.*
>
> **107:41** *Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.*

He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. Judgment (e). As He did to the cities of the plain (Gen. 13:10; 19:24, 25). **He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.** Blessing (f) (Isa. 35:6, 7; 41:18). **And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.**

Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. Judgment again. **He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.** *No way* is *tohu*, the word of Genesis 1:2, "without form": a waste. **Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.**

> **107:42** *The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*
>
> **107:43** *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD [Jehovah].*

The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD [Jehovah]. *Lovingkindness* is plural, "the great lovingkindnesses," and the Psalm ends where it began (v. 1).

Its close

Psalm 107 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 107 is member A^1: deliverance by the healing Word. It answers to Psalm 119 (A^2), quickening and sustaining by the Word. Four kinds of men in four kinds of trouble cry out, and four times God delivers. At the centre, "He sent his word, and healed them." Book V begins as it will continue: with the Word of God.

Psalms 108–110: The True David's Humiliation, Deliverance and Exaltation

A. What this group is about

The first group of Book V is three Psalms of David. *The Companion Bible* reads them as relating to "the true David," David's Son: His deliverance (108), His humiliation (109), and His exaltation (110). The last of the three is the Psalm the New Testament quotes more than any other: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (110:1).

B. Its structure

- E^1 | 108. The true David's deliverance.
- E^2 | 109. The true David's humiliation and deliverance.
- E^3 | 110. The true David's exaltation.

Psalm 108 — "O God, My Heart Is Fixed"

Place: Book V; Psalms 108–110; member E[1] (the true David's deliverance). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 108 joins two earlier Psalms of David: verses 1–5 are Psalm 57:7–11, and verses 6–13 are Psalm 60:5–12 (Chapter 12, F). The first was sung in the cave; the second after the war with Aram and Edom. Here they are joined, without the trouble that first called them out, into one song of confident praise and confident victory. It opens Book V's group of the true David's deliverance and triumph.

The changes are small. Where Psalm 57:9 has "O Lord" (*Adonai*), verse 3 here has "O LORD" (*Jehovah*); and "Philistia, triumph thou because of me" (60:8) becomes "over Philistia will I triumph" (v. 9).

Structure

- D | 1–6. God spoken to. Prayer.
- E | g | 7, 8. Israel. } God spoken of.
- h | 9, 10. Enemies.
- *D* | 11, 12. God spoken to. Prayer.
- *E* | *g* | 13-. Israel. } God spoken of.
- *h* | -13. Enemies.

The Psalm

A Song or Psalm of David.

> **1** *O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.*
> **2** *Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*
> **3** *I will praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah], among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.*
> **4** *For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.*
> **5** *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth;*
> **6** *That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.*
> **7** *God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*
> **8** *Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;*
> **9** *Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.*

> **10** *Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?*
>
> **11** *Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?*
>
> **12** *Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.*
>
> **13** *Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 109.

Verse by verse

> **108:1** *O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.*
>
> **108:2** *Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*
>
> **108:3** *I will praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah], among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.*
>
> **108:4** *For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.*
>
> **108:5** *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth;*
>
> **108:6** *That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.*

O God, my heart is fixed. Steadfast. Psalm 57 repeated it; here it stands once. **I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.** His glory is his tongue or his soul (57:8). **Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.** "I will awake the dawn." **I will praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah], among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great above the heavens.** Psalm 57:10 had "unto the heavens"; here "above." **and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth; That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.** *Beloved* is plural. See Psalms 57 and 60 for the fuller notes.

> **108:7** *God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*
>
> **108:8** *Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;*
>
> **108:9** *Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.*
>
> **108:10** *Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?*

God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph. Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? As 60:6–9. The land and the nations are God's, and He gives them to His King.

> **108:11** *Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?*
>
> **108:12** *Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.*
>
> **108:13** *Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*

Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts? Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. *Man* is *adam*. **Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

The King James Version places this line over Psalm 109; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 108.

Looking back

Psalm 108 is member E^1. The fixed heart and the sure victory open the group of the true David. What was won in David's wars, God will give fully to David's Son.

Psalm 109 — "Hold Not Thy Peace, O God of My Praise"

Place: Book V; Psalms 108–110; member E^2 (the true David's humiliation and deliverance). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 109 is the strongest of the Psalms of imprecation. David is attacked with lies, hated without a cause, repaid evil for his love (vv. 1–5). Then follows a long curse on one man: "Let his days be few; and let another take his office" (v. 8), and much more (vv. 6–20). Then David prays for himself: poor and needy, wounded, fading like a shadow, mocked (vv. 21–27). And it ends: "For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor" (v. 31).

Who speaks the curses? Two readings are held. The usual reading is that David speaks them against his enemy. *The Companion Bible* reads verses 6–19 as the words of David's enemies *against him*: the word "saying" is understood at the end of verse 5, as often in the Psalms (2:2; 22:7, 8). Then David answers in verse 20: "Let this be the reward of mine adversaries," that is, let what they have said against me come back on them. This reading explains the change from "they" (vv. 2–5, plural) to "him" (vv. 6–19, singular), and back to "they" (vv. 20, 25, 28, 29). **Weight:** the second reading fits the change of number well; but Peter quotes verse 8 of Judas as the word of Scripture: "Let his habitation be desolate . . . and his bishoprick let another take" (Acts 1:20). Whichever voice speaks the curses within the Psalm, the Holy Spirit through David spoke of Judas. Chapter 3 of Part One explains how this study reads imprecations: they belong to the administration of law, and are not the language of grace (Rom. 12:14).

Structure

- F | 1–5. Prayer for himself.
- G | 6–15. Enemies. Their cursing.
- H | 16–20. Reward of those who curse his soul.
- *F* | 21–27. Prayer for himself.
- *G* | 28, 29. Enemies. Their cursing.
- *H* | 30, 31. Deliverance from those who condemn his soul.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise;*

2 *For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.*

3 *They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.*

4 *For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.*

5 *And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.*

6 *Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.*

7 *When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.*

8 *Let his days be few; and let another take his office.*

9 *Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.*

10 *Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.*

11 *Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour.*

12 *Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.*

13 *Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.*

14 *Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD [Jehovah]; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.*

15 *Let them be before the LORD [Jehovah] continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.*

16 *Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.*

17 *As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.*

18 *As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.*

19 *Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.*

20 *Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD [Jehovah], and of them that speak evil against my soul.*

21 *But do thou for me, O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.*

22 *For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.*

23 *I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.*

24 *My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.*

25 *I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.*

26 *Help me, O LORD [Jehovah] my God: O save me according to thy mercy:*

27 *That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast done it.*

> **28** *Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.*
>
> **29** *Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.*
>
> **30** *I will greatly praise the LORD [Jehovah] with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.*
>
> **31** *For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.*

Psalm 109 has no sub-scription. Psalm 110 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **109:1** *Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise;*
>
> **109:2** *For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.*
>
> **109:3** *They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.*
>
> **109:4** *For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.*
>
> **109:5** *And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.*

Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise. The God whom he praises. **For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.** As 35:7; 69:4; John 15:25. **For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.** Literally, "but I [am all] prayer." **And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.**

> **109:6** *Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.*
>
> **109:7** *When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.*
>
> **109:8** *Let his days be few; and let another take his office.*
>
> **109:9** *Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.*
>
> **109:10** *Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.*
>
> **109:11** *Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour.*
>
> **109:12** *Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.*
>
> **109:13** *Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.*
>
> **109:14** *Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD [Jehovah]; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.*
>
> **109:15** *Let them be before the LORD [Jehovah] continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.*

Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. *Satan* is "an adversary," an accuser, standing at the place of the accuser in court (Zech. 3:1). **When he shall be judged, let him be**

condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. *Office* is "oversight." Peter: "his bishoprick let another take" (Acts 1:20), and Matthias was chosen. **Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg . . . Let the extortioner catch all that he hath . . . Let there be none to extend mercy unto him . . . Let his posterity be cut off . . . Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD [Jehovah] . . . Let them be before the LORD [Jehovah] continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.** See the Introduction.

> **109:16** *Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.*
>
> **109:17** *As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.*
>
> **109:18** *As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.*
>
> **109:19** *Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.*
>
> **109:20** *Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD [Jehovah], and of them that speak evil against my soul.*

Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. The curse returns on the curser (Gal. 6:7). **As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD [Jehovah], and of them that speak evil against my soul.**

> **109:21** *But do thou for me, O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.*
>
> **109:22** *For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.*
>
> **109:23** *I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.*
>
> **109:24** *My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.*
>
> **109:25** *I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.*
>
> **109:26** *Help me, O LORD [Jehovah] my God: O save me according to thy mercy:*
>
> **109:27** *That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast done it.*

But do thou for me, O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord, for thy name's sake. *Jehovah Adonai*. **because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.** Shaken off like a locust from a garment. **My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness. I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.** As at the cross (Matt. 27:39). **Help me, O LORD [Jehovah] my God: O save me according to thy mercy: That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD [Jehovah], hast done it.**

> **109:28** *Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.*
>
> **109:29** *Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.*
>
> **109:30** *I will greatly praise the LORD [Jehovah] with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.*
>
> **109:31** *For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.*

Let them curse, but bless thou. The answer to all the cursing: God's blessing. **when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame . . . as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the LORD [Jehovah] with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.** The accuser stood at the wicked man's right hand (v. 6); Jehovah stands at the right hand of the poor. In Psalm 110 the Son is seated at Jehovah's right hand.

Its close

Psalm 109 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 109 is member E^2: the true David's humiliation. Hated without a cause, repaid evil for love, betrayed by one whose office another took, poor, wounded and mocked, the King trusts God, who stands at His right hand. Psalm 110 follows: the One who was humbled is seated at God's right hand.

Psalm 110 — "Sit Thou at My Right Hand"

Place: Book V; Psalms 108–110; member E^3 (the true David's exaltation). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 110 is quoted or alluded to in the New Testament more than any other passage of the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus used its first verse to ask the Pharisees, "If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matt. 22:41–46). Peter used it on the day of Pentecost to show that God had raised Jesus and exalted Him to His right hand: "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:34–36). Hebrews builds on it twice: verse 1, that the Son sits at God's right hand (Heb. 1:13; 10:12, 13); and verse 4, that He is a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6; 7:17, 21).

"My Lord." The first verse has two Lords. The first is *Jehovah*. The second is *adoni*, "my lord," a word used in Scripture of men, of kings and masters and husbands (Gen. 18:12; 1 Sam. 22:12; 1 Kings 1:13), and never of God, who is called *Adonai*. Jehovah speaks to David's Lord, the Messiah, and sets Him at His own right hand. There are two persons here: the One God, and the Man He exalts. Paul shows the end of it: "when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:25–28). The case is set out in Appendix J.

Structure

- J | 1. What Jehovah has uttered.
- K | 2-. What He will do.
- L | -2. Messiah's enemies.
- M | 3. Refreshment: dew.
- *J* | 4. What Jehovah has uttered.
- *K* | 5. What He will do.
- *L* | 6. Messiah's enemies.
- *M* | 7. Refreshment: the brook.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *The LORD [Jehovah] said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*
>
> **2** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*
>
> **3** *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.*
>
> **4** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*
>
> **5** *The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.*
>
> **6** *He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.*
>
> **7** *He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.*

Psalm 110 has no sub-scription. Psalm 111 has no Title, but begins "Praise ye the LORD."

Verse by verse

> **110:1** *The LORD [Jehovah] said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*
>
> **110:2** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*

The LORD [Jehovah] said unto my Lord. *Said* is *ne'um*, "the oracle of": the word used of a direct, solemn utterance of God, almost always in the prophets. David heard it by the spirit (Matt. 22:43). *My Lord* is *adoni* (see the Introduction). **Sit thou at my right hand.** The place of honour and authority. After His resurrection the Lord Jesus "was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19; Eph. 1:20–22). **until I make thine enemies thy footstool.** It is God who subdues the enemies. The conqueror set his foot on the neck of the defeated king (Josh. 10:24). **The LORD [Jehovah] shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.** *Rod* is the sceptre. He rules while His enemies are still around Him.

> **110:3** *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.*

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. *Willing* is "freewill offerings": His people will offer themselves gladly (Judg. 5:2; Rom. 12:1). **in the beauties of holiness.** In holy array, as priests. **from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.** The line is difficult. The best sense: as dew is born from the womb of the dawn, fresh and countless, so His young men, His people, come to Him. Some read "thy youth" as His own unfading youth. Several manuscripts read "on the holy mountains" for "in the beauties of holiness."

> **110:4** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

The LORD [Jehovah] hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. A second oracle, with an oath. Melchizedek was king of Salem and "priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14:18–20), a king-priest, before Levi. Hebrews 5–7 shows why this matters: the Levitical priests died and were replaced, but Christ was made priest "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:16), and "by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament" (Heb. 7:20–22). He is not of Levi but of Judah; His priesthood rests on God's oath and on His resurrection.

> **110:5** *The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.*
>
> **110:6** *He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.*
>
> **110:7** *He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.*

The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. *Lord* here is one of the 134 places where the scribes record that the original text read *Jehovah* (Chapter 9). Jehovah, at the Messiah's right hand, fights for Him. **He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.** *Heads* is singular: "the head over a great land," the great enemy of the last days (Rev. 19:11–21). **He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.** Like Gideon's men at the water, or a warrior pursuing the enemy, He is refreshed on the way and goes on to victory (Judg. 7:5, 6; 15:18, 19).

Its close

Psalm 110 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 110 is member E^3: the true David's exaltation. It answers Psalm 109. The One who stood poor and needy, with God at His right hand (109:31), is set at God's right hand, a King-Priest for ever, until His enemies are His footstool. It is the Psalm of the resurrection and the ascension, and of the coming day of His power.

Psalms 111–113: Praise

A. What this group is about

Three "Hallelujah" Psalms follow the true David's exaltation. Each begins with *Hallelu-Jah*, "Praise ye the LORD [Jah]," and the third also ends with it. Psalm 111 praises Jehovah for His *works*; Psalm 112 praises Him for His *ways* in the man who fears Him; Psalm 113 praises Him for *Himself*.

Psalms 111 and 112 are a pair of acrostics. After the Hallelujah, each has twenty-two lines, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, set in eight couplets and two triplets. Psalm 111 describes Jehovah; Psalm 112 describes the man who fears Jehovah, often in the very same words. "His righteousness endureth for ever" is said of God (111:3) and of the righteous man (112:3, 9). God is "gracious and full of compassion" (111:4); so is the upright man (112:4).

B. Its structure

- F^1 | 111. Praise for Jehovah's works.
- F^2 | 112. Praise for Jehovah's ways (in the man who fears Him).
- F^3 | 113. Praise to Jehovah Himself.

Psalm 111 — "The Works of the LORD [Jehovah] Are Great"

Place: Book V; Psalms 111–113; member F[1] (praise for Jehovah's works). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 111 is the first of three Hallelujah Psalms. After "Praise ye the LORD," each half-line begins with the next letter of the alphabet. Its subject is the works of Jehovah (vv. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7), and its last verse is one of the best known in the Bible: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (v. 10).

Structure

- N | 1. Praise to Jehovah.
- O | P | 2–4. For His works.
- Q | 5, 6. His bounty, and the objects of it.
- *O* | *P* | 7, 8. For His works.
- *Q* | 9, 10-. His bounty, and the objects of it.
- *N* | -10. Praise to Jehovah.

The Psalm

Psalm 111 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. I will praise the LORD [Jehovah] with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.*
> **2** *The works of the LORD [Jehovah] are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*
> **3** *His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*
> **4** *He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD [Jehovah] is gracious and full of compassion.*
> **5** *He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.*
> **6** *He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.*
> **7** *The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.*
> **8** *They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.*
> **9** *He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.*

> **10** *The fear of the LORD [Jehovah] is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*

Psalm 111 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **111:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. I will praise the LORD [Jehovah] with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.*
>
> **111:2** *The works of the LORD [Jehovah] are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*
>
> **111:3** *His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*
>
> **111:4** *He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD [Jehovah] is gracious and full of compassion.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. *Hallelu-Jah*. **I will praise the LORD [Jehovah] with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.** *Assembly* is the intimate circle, the council; *congregation* is the whole gathering. **The works of the LORD [Jehovah] are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.** Studied by all who delight in them. These words were carved over the entrance of the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge. **His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.** By the feasts and the memorials He gave (Ex. 12:14; Josh. 4:7). **the LORD [Jehovah] is gracious and full of compassion.** From Exodus 34:6.

> **111:5** *He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.*
>
> **111:6** *He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.*

He hath given meat unto them that fear him. *Meat* is "prey": food provided, as the manna and the quails. **he will ever be mindful of his covenant. He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.** The land of Canaan.

> **111:7** *The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.*
>
> **111:8** *They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.*

The works of his hands are verity and judgment. Truth and justice. **all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.** His works and His Word are of one piece.

> **111:9** *He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.*
>
> **111:10** *The fear of the LORD [Jehovah] is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*

He sent redemption unto his people. From Egypt; and, in the fulness of time, in Christ (Luke 1:68). **he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.** *Reverend* is "to be feared," awesome. The word is used in Scripture of God alone. **The fear of the LORD [Jehovah] is the beginning**

of wisdom. *Beginning* is "the first part," the chief thing (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Job 28:28). **a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.**

Its close

Psalm 111 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 111 is member F^{1}: praise for Jehovah's works. It describes God; Psalm 112 describes the man who fears Him, in the same words.

Psalm 112 — "Blessed Is the Man That Feareth the LORD [Jehovah]"

Place: Book V; Psalms 111–113; member F^2 (praise for Jehovah's ways). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 111 ended, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 112 begins, "Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD." It is the second acrostic of the pair, and it shows God's character reflected in the man who fears Him. Paul quoted verse 9 of the generous giver: "He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever" (2 Cor. 9:9).

Structure

- R | o | 1–3-. Happiness.
- p | -3, 4-. Righteousness.
- q | -4, 5. Goodness.
- S | 6–8. He shall stand.
- *R* | *q* | 9-. Goodness.
- *p* | -9-. Righteousness.
- *o* | -9. Happiness.
- *S* | 10. The wicked shall fall.

The Psalm

Psalm 112 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD [Jehovah], that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*
> **2** *His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*
> **3** *Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*
> **4** *Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.*
> **5** *A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.*
> **6** *Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*
> **7** *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **8** *His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.*

> **9** *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.*
>
> **10** *The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

Psalm 112 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **112:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD [Jehovah], that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*
>
> **112:2** *His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*
>
> **112:3** *Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*
>
> **112:4** *Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.*
>
> **112:5** *A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD [Jehovah]. *Blessed* is "O the happinesses of," as 1:1. *Man* is *ish*. **that delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.** The same words as 111:3, now of the man. Under the Law, God promised prosperity to the obedient (Deut. 28:1–14). **Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.** As the sun rises. **he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.** Said of God in 111:4; here of the godly man, who is like his God. **A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.** *Discretion* is "judgment," justice.

> **112:6** *Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*
>
> **112:7** *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **112:8** *His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.*

Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. *The righteous* is singular. **He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD [Jehovah].** *Fixed* is "steadfast" (57:7; 108:1). **His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.**

> **112:9** *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.*
>
> **112:10** *The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour. See the Introduction. **The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.** The blessed man (v. 1) and the wicked man (v. 10), as in Psalm 1.

Its close

Psalm 112 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 112 is member F^2: praise for Jehovah's ways, seen in the man who fears Him. The God of Psalm 111 is gracious, compassionate and righteous; the man of Psalm 112 becomes so too.

Psalm 113 — "Who Is Like unto the LORD [Jehovah] Our God?"

Place: Book V; Psalms 111–113; member F^3 (praise to Jehovah Himself). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 113 is the third Hallelujah Psalm, and it begins and ends with Hallelujah. It is also the first of the *Hallel* (Psalms 113–118), the Psalms of praise sung in Jewish homes at the Passover. Psalms 113 and 114 were sung before the Passover meal, and 115–118 after it. When the Lord Jesus and His disciples had eaten the last supper, "when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matt. 26:30). The hymn was most likely the second part of the Hallel, ending with Psalm 118.

The subject is God Himself: high above all nations, and yet stooping to raise the poor from the dust.

Structure

- T | 1-. Hallelujah.
- U | -1. Praise Jehovah.
- V | -1. Praise His Name. } Command given.
- *V* | 2, 3. Bless His Name.
- *U* | 4–9-. Praise Jehovah. } Command obeyed.
- *T* | -9. Hallelujah.

The Psalm

Psalm 113 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD [Jehovah], praise the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **2** *Blessed be the name of the LORD [Jehovah] from this time forth and for evermore.*
> **3** *From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD [Jehovah]'s name is to be praised.*
> **4** *The LORD [Jehovah] is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.*
> **5** *Who is like unto the LORD [Jehovah] our God, who dwelleth on high,*
> **6** *Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!*
> **7** *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;*
> **8** *That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.*

> **9** *He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 113 has no sub-scription. Psalm 114 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **113:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD [Jehovah], praise the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **113:2** *Blessed be the name of the LORD [Jehovah] from this time forth and for evermore.*
>
> **113:3** *From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD [Jehovah]'s name is to be praised.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD [Jehovah], praise the name of the LORD [Jehovah]. Three times "praise." **Blessed be the name of the LORD [Jehovah] from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD [Jehovah]'s name is to be praised.** In all time and in all places (Mal. 1:11).

> **113:4** *The LORD [Jehovah] is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.*
>
> **113:5** *Who is like unto the LORD [Jehovah] our God, who dwelleth on high,*
>
> **113:6** *Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!*
>
> **113:7** *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;*
>
> **113:8** *That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.*
>
> **113:9** *He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

The LORD [Jehovah] is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the LORD [Jehovah] our God. The cry of the Song at the sea (Ex. 15:11). **who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!** *Dwelleth on high* is "who setteth Himself on high to sit"; *humbleth himself* is "who setteth Himself low to see." He is enthroned so high that even to look at heaven He must stoop. **He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.** Word for word from Hannah's song (1 Sam. 2:8). **He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.** As He did for Sarah, Rachel, Hannah and Elisabeth. **Praise ye the LORD [Jah].**

Its close

Psalm 113 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 113 is member F^3: praise to Jehovah Himself. The three Hallelujah Psalms praise His works (111), His ways (112), and Himself (113): the God who is high above all, and stoops to lift the lowly. It opens the Passover Hallel.

Psalms 114–118: Deliverance from Egypt, and Praise

A. What this group is about

Two Psalms recall the deliverance from Egypt and from Egypt's idols (114–115), and three Psalms of praise follow (116–118). All five belong to the Passover *Hallel* (113–118). Psalm 118 is the last Psalm the Lord Jesus sang with His disciples before He went out to Gethsemane (Matt. 26:30), and it contains the verses about the stone the builders refused and "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD" (118:22, 26).

B. Its structure

- G^1 | 114. Israel's deliverance from Egypt.
- G^2 | 115. Israel's deliverance from Egypt's idolatry.
- H^1 | 116. Praise for deliverance.
- H^2 | 117. Praise.
- H^3 | 118. Praise.

Psalm 114 — "When Israel Went Out of Egypt"

Place: Book V; Psalms 114–118; member G^1 (deliverance from Egypt). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 114 is short and vivid. In eight verses it tells the Exodus as a picture: the sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned back, the mountains skipped like rams. Then it asks the sea and the mountains why, and answers: "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord" (v. 7). God Himself is not named until verse 7; until then He is present only in what He does.

Structure

- W | 1, 2. God's mercies to Jacob.
- X | r | 3. By water. } Statements.
- s | 4. On land.
- *X* | *r* | 5. Water. } Questions.
- *s* | 6. Land.
- *W* | 7, 8. God's mercies to Jacob.

The Psalm

Psalm 114 has no Title.

> **1** *When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;*
> **2** *Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.*
> **3** *The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back.*
> **4** *The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.*
> **5** *What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?*
> **6** *Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?*
> **7** *Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;*
> **8** *Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.*

Psalm 114 has no sub-scription. Psalm 115 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **114:1** *When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;*
> **114:2** *Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.*

When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language. A people who spoke a foreign tongue (81:5). **Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.** God's people became His sanctuary and His kingdom: "ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:6).

> **114:3** *The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back.*
>
> **114:4** *The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.*
>
> **114:5** *What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?*
>
> **114:6** *Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?*

The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back. The Red Sea at the beginning of the journey (Ex. 14:21) and the Jordan at its end (Josh. 3:16). **The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.** Sinai quaked (Ex. 19:18). **What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?** The figure *Erotesis*: questions asked for effect.

> **114:7** *Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;*
>
> **114:8** *Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.*

Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord. *Lord* is *Adon*, the Lord of all the earth. **at the presence of the God of Jacob.** *God* is *Eloah*. **Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters** (Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11). The answer to the questions: the sea fled, the mountains shook, the rock gave water, because God was present.

Its close

Psalm 114 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 114 is member G^{1}: Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The God who made the sea flee made His people His sanctuary.

Psalm 115 — "Not unto Us, O LORD [Jehovah], Not unto Us"

Place: Book V; Psalms 114–118; member G^2 (deliverance from Egypt's idolatry). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 114 told of deliverance from Egypt; Psalm 115 tells of deliverance from the gods of Egypt and the nations. The heathen mock, "Where is now their God?" The answer: "our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (v. 3). Their gods are silver and gold, with mouths that do not speak, eyes that do not see, and ears that do not hear; "They that make them are like unto them" (v. 8). The Psalm then calls Israel, the house of Aaron, and all who fear Jehovah to trust Him (vv. 9–11), and ends with a blessing and with praise.

Structure

- Y | t | 1-. Negative. } The praise given.
- u | -1. Positive.
- Z | v | 2. Heathen theology.
- w | 3. Israelite theology.
- *Z* | *v* | 4–8. Heathen theology.
- *w* | 9–16. Israelite theology.
- *Y* | *t* | 17. Negative. } The praise-givers.
- *u* | 18. Positive.

The Psalm

Psalm 115 has no Title.

> **1** *Not unto us, O LORD [Jehovah], not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*
> **2** *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?*
> **3** *But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*
> **4** *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.*
> **5** *They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:*
> **6** *They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:*
> **7** *They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.*

> **8** *They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.*
>
> **9** *O Israel, trust thou in the LORD [Jehovah]: he is their help and their shield.*
>
> **10** *O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD [Jehovah]: he is their help and their shield.*
>
> **11** *Ye that fear the LORD [Jehovah], trust in the LORD [Jehovah]: he is their help and their shield.*
>
> **12** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath been mindful of us: he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.*
>
> **13** *He will bless them that fear the LORD [Jehovah], both small and great.*
>
> **14** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall increase you more and more, you and your children.*
>
> **15** *Ye are blessed of the LORD [Jehovah] which made heaven and earth.*
>
> **16** *The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD [Jehovah]'s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.*
>
> **17** *The dead praise not the LORD [Jah], neither any that go down into silence.*
>
> **18** *But we will bless the LORD [Jah] from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 115 has no sub-scription. Psalm 116 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **115:1** *Not unto us, O LORD [Jehovah], not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*
>
> **115:2** *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?*
>
> **115:3** *But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*

Not unto us, O LORD [Jehovah], not unto us, but unto thy name give glory. The repetition is for emphasis. **for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.** Lovingkindness and faithfulness. **Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?** As 79:10. **But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.** Their gods have a place; our God has a throne.

> **115:4** *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.*
>
> **115:5** *They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:*
>
> **115:6** *They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:*
>
> **115:7** *They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.*
>
> **115:8** *They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.*

Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. *Men* is *adam*. **They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.** Seven parts, all useless (Isa. 44:9–20; Jer. 10:3–5). **They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.** Men become like what they worship: senseless and dead.

> **115:9** *O Israel, trust thou in the LORD [Jehovah]: he is their help and their shield.*

> **115:10** *O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD [Jehovah]: he is their help and their shield.*
>
> **115:11** *Ye that fear the LORD [Jehovah], trust in the LORD [Jehovah]: he is their help and their shield.*

O Israel, trust thou in the LORD [Jehovah]: he is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD [Jehovah] . . . Ye that fear the LORD [Jehovah], trust in the LORD [Jehovah] . . . Three calls to trust, to three groups: the nation, the priests, and all who fear Him, which may include Gentile worshippers. *Trust* is "confide."

> **115:12** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath been mindful of us: he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.*
>
> **115:13** *He will bless them that fear the LORD [Jehovah], both small and great.*
>
> **115:14** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall increase you more and more, you and your children.*
>
> **115:15** *Ye are blessed of the LORD [Jehovah] which made heaven and earth.*
>
> **115:16** *The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD [Jehovah]'s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.*

The LORD [Jehovah] hath been mindful of us: he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless them that fear the LORD [Jehovah], both small and great. The three groups again, now blessed. **The LORD [Jehovah] shall increase you more and more, you and your children. Ye are blessed of the LORD [Jehovah] which made heaven and earth.** Not made by men's hands; He made all. **The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD [Jehovah]'s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men** (Gen. 1:28).

> **115:17** *The dead praise not the LORD [Jah], neither any that go down into silence.*
>
> **115:18** *But we will bless the LORD [Jah] from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD [Jah].*

The dead praise not the LORD [Jah], neither any that go down into silence. The dead are silent; they do not praise (6:5; 88:10–12; Isa. 38:18). **But we will bless the LORD [Jah] from this time forth and for evermore.** The living praise, and those raised from the dead will praise (Isa. 38:19). **Praise the LORD [Jah].** *Hallelu-Jah.*

Its close

Psalm 115 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 115 is member G^2: deliverance from Egypt's idolatry. Psalm 114 showed God's power over sea and mountain; Psalm 115 shows the folly of gods made by hands. All glory belongs to His Name.

Psalm 116 — "I Love the LORD [Jehovah], Because He Hath Heard My Voice"

Place: Book V; Psalms 114–118; member H^1 (praise for deliverance). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named; it fits Hezekiah's recovery (Isa. 38).

Introduction

Psalm 116 is a personal song of thanksgiving from one delivered from death. "The sorrows of death compassed me" (v. 3); "thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling" (v. 8). He will pay his vows in the courts of Jehovah's house (vv. 14, 18, 19). The details fit Hezekiah, who was sick to death, wept, prayed, and was raised up, and who said, "Jehovah was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs . . . all the days of our life in the house of Jehovah" (Isa. 38:1–20). **Weight:** possible; the Title names no writer.

Paul quotes verse 10, "I believed, therefore have I spoken," of the spirit of faith that speaks because it believes in the God who raised Jesus (2 Cor. 4:13, 14).

Structure

- A^1 | 1, 2. Resolve to praise.
- B | 3. Afflictions.
- C | E | 4-. Promise.
- F | d | -4. Prayer.
- e | 5, 6-. Jehovah's goodness to others.
- D | -6. His goodness to me.
- A^2 | 7–9. Resolve to praise.
- B | 10, 11. Afflictions.
- C | E | 12–14. Promise.
- F | e | 15. Jehovah's goodness to others.
- d | 16-. Prayer.
- D | -16. His goodness to me.
- A^3 | 17–19. Resolve to praise.

The Psalm

Psalm 116 has no Title.

> **1** *I love the LORD [Jehovah], because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.*

2 *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*

3 *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.*

4 *Then called I upon the name of the LORD [Jehovah]; O LORD [Jehovah], I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*

5 *Gracious is the LORD [Jehovah], and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.*

6 *The LORD [Jehovah] preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.*

7 *Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD [Jehovah] hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

8 *For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*

9 *I will walk before the LORD [Jehovah] in the land of the living.*

10 *I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:*

11 *I said in my haste, All men are liars.*

12 *What shall I render unto the LORD [Jehovah] for all his benefits toward me?*

13 *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*

14 *I will pay my vows unto the LORD [Jehovah] now in the presence of all his people.*

15 *Precious in the sight of the LORD [Jehovah] is the death of his saints.*

16 *O LORD [Jehovah], truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.*

17 *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*

18 *I will pay my vows unto the LORD [Jehovah] now in the presence of all his people,*

19 *In the courts of the LORD [Jehovah]'s house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 116 has no sub-scription. Psalm 117 has no Title.

Verse by verse

116:1 *I love the LORD [Jehovah], because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.*

116:2 *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*

116:3 *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.*

116:4 *Then called I upon the name of the LORD [Jehovah]; O LORD [Jehovah], I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*

116:5 *Gracious is the LORD [Jehovah], and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.*

116:6 *The LORD [Jehovah] preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.*

I love the LORD [Jehovah], because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Literally, "I love, for Jehovah hears." **Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me.** *Sorrows* is "cords," the bands of death (18:4, 5). **and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.** *Hell* is *Sheol*, the grave. **I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon**

the name of the LORD [Jehovah]; O LORD [Jehovah], I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the LORD [Jehovah], and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. *Merciful* is "full of compassion." **The LORD [Jehovah] preserveth the simple.** The simple are the guileless, who do not scheme. **I was brought low, and he helped me.**

> **116:7** *Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD [Jehovah] hath dealt bountifully with thee.*
>
> **116:8** *For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*
>
> **116:9** *I will walk before the LORD [Jehovah] in the land of the living.*
>
> **116:10** *I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:*
>
> **116:11** *I said in my haste, All men are liars.*

Return unto thy rest, O my soul. *Rest* is plural: "full rest." **for the LORD [Jehovah] hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the LORD [Jehovah] in the land of the living.** Hezekiah: "I shall not see JAH, even JAH, in the land of the living" (Isa. 38:11). Raised up, he walks before God in that land. **I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted.** See the Introduction. **I said in my haste, All men are liars.** *In my haste* is "in my alarm." In his panic he trusted no man; and he was right that only God could save.

> **116:12** *What shall I render unto the LORD [Jehovah] for all his benefits toward me?*
>
> **116:13** *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **116:14** *I will pay my vows unto the LORD [Jehovah] now in the presence of all his people.*

What shall I render unto the LORD [Jehovah] for all his benefits toward me? *Benefits* is "dealings." **I will take the cup of salvation.** The drink offering of thanksgiving, or the cup of deliverance God gives. He takes rather than gives: the only return for grace is to receive more. **and call upon the name of the LORD [Jehovah]. I will pay my vows unto the LORD [Jehovah] now in the presence of all his people.**

> **116:15** *Precious in the sight of the LORD [Jehovah] is the death of his saints.*
>
> **116:16** *O LORD [Jehovah], truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.*

Precious in the sight of the LORD [Jehovah] is the death of his saints. *Precious* is "costly," weighty. God does not let His saints die cheaply; their death is a serious thing to Him, and so He delivered the Psalmist (72:14). *Saints* is *chasidim*. **O LORD [Jehovah], truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.** Born in His house (86:16). **thou hast loosed my bonds.** The cords of death (v. 3).

> **116:17** *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **116:18** *I will pay my vows unto the LORD [Jehovah] now in the presence of all his people,*
>
> **116:19** *In the courts of the LORD [Jehovah]'s house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD [Jehovah]. I will pay my vows unto the LORD [Jehovah] now in the presence of all his people, In the courts of the

LORD [Jehovah]'s house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Hezekiah's sign of recovery was that "I shall go up into the house of Jehovah" (Isa. 38:22).

Its close

Psalm 116 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 116 is member H^1: praise for deliverance, from death to the land of the living, with vows paid in God's house.

Psalm 117 — "O Praise the LORD [Jehovah], All Ye Nations"

Place: Book V; Psalms 114–118; member H^2 (praise). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 117 is the shortest Psalm and the shortest chapter in the Bible: two verses. It calls all nations to praise Jehovah for His lovingkindness and His truth toward Israel. Paul quotes verse 1 to show that God always purposed that the Gentiles should glorify Him for His mercy (Rom. 15:9–11).

Structure

- G | 1. Praise.
- H | 2-. His lovingkindness. } Motives.
- *H* | -2-. His truth.
- *G* | -2. Praise.

The Psalm

Psalm 117 has no Title.

> **1** *O praise the LORD [Jehovah], all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.*
>
> **2** *For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD [Jehovah] endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 117 has no sub-scription. Psalm 118 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **117:1** *O praise the LORD [Jehovah], all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.*
>
> **117:2** *For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD [Jehovah] endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

O praise the LORD [Jehovah], all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. *People* is "peoples." **For his merciful kindness is great toward us.** *Merciful kindness* is "lovingkindness"; *is great* is "prevails," is mighty. *Toward us*: Israel. God's mercy to Israel is the reason the nations praise. **and the truth of the LORD [Jehovah] endureth for ever.** His faithfulness to His promises. **Praise ye the LORD [Jah].**

Its close

Psalm 117 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 117 is member H^2. Two verses: all nations, because of God's faithfulness to Israel.

Psalm 118 — "The Stone Which the Builders Refused"

Place: Book V; Psalms 114–118; member H^3 (praise). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 118 is the last of the Hallel, and it closes the group of praise. It begins and ends with "O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever" (vv. 1, 29). In it the King tells how all nations surrounded him, how Jehovah helped him, and how he did not die but lives (vv. 10–18). Then he enters the gates of righteousness (vv. 19–21), and the people sing of the stone the builders rejected (vv. 22–24), cry *Hosanna* (v. 25, "Save now"), and bless him that comes in the name of Jehovah (v. 26).

The New Testament quotes it again and again of Christ:

- "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord": the crowds at the triumphal entry (Matt. 21:9; John 12:13), and the Lord of His return (Matt. 23:39).
- "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner": the Lord of Himself (Matt. 21:42), Peter before the council, of the One "whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 4:10, 11), and Peter in his epistle (1 Pet. 2:7).
- "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6, from v. 6).

Structure

- J | 1–4. "O give thanks."
- K^1 | L^1 | 5. Acknowledgment: my deliverer.
- M^1 | e | 6, 7. Help.
- f | 8, 9. Trust.
- *f* | 10–12. Trust.
- *e* | 13. Help.
- K^2 | L^2 | 14. Acknowledgment: my strength.
- M^2 | g | 15-. Tents of the righteous.
- h | -15, 16. Cause: the hand.
- *h* | 17, 18. Effect: life.
- *g* | 19, 20. Gates of righteousness.
- K^3 | L^3 | 21. Acknowledgment: my salvation.
- M^3 | i | 22–24. Messiah.
- k | 25-. Prayer.

- *k* | -25. Prayer.
- *i* | 26–28. Messiah.
- *J* | 29. "O give thanks."

The Psalm

Psalm 118 has no Title.

> **1** *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.*
> **2** *Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*
> **3** *Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*
> **4** *Let them now that fear the LORD [Jehovah] say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*
> **5** *I called upon the LORD [Jah] in distress: the LORD [Jah] answered me, and set me in a large place.*
> **6** *The LORD [Jehovah] is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?*
> **7** *The LORD [Jehovah] taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.*
> **8** *It is better to trust in the LORD [Jehovah] than to put confidence in man.*
> **9** *It is better to trust in the LORD [Jehovah] than to put confidence in princes.*
> **10** *All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD [Jehovah] will I destroy them.*
> **11** *They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD [Jehovah] I will destroy them.*
> **12** *They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD [Jehovah] I will destroy them.*
> **13** *Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD [Jehovah] helped me.*
> **14** *The LORD [Jah] is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.*
> **15** *The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD [Jehovah] doeth valiantly.*
> **16** *The right hand of the LORD [Jehovah] is exalted: the right hand of the LORD [Jehovah] doeth valiantly.*
> **17** *I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD [Jah].*
> **18** *The LORD [Jah] hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.*
> **19** *Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD [Jah]:*
> **20** *This gate of the LORD [Jehovah], into which the righteous shall enter.*
> **21** *I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.*
> **22** *The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*
> **23** *This is the LORD [Jehovah]'s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.*
> **24** *This is the day which the LORD [Jehovah] hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

> **25** *Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD [Jehovah]: O LORD [Jehovah], I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*
>
> **26** *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD [Jehovah]: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **27** *God is the LORD [Jehovah], which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*
>
> **28** *Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.*
>
> **29** *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Psalm 118 has no sub-scription. Psalm 119 has no Title.

Verse by verse

> **118:1** *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.*
>
> **118:2** *Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*
>
> **118:3** *Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*
>
> **118:4** *Let them now that fear the LORD [Jehovah] say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*

O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say . . . Let the house of Aaron now say . . . Let them now that fear the LORD [Jehovah] say, that his mercy endureth for ever. The three groups of 115:9–11.

> **118:5** *I called upon the LORD [Jah] in distress: the LORD [Jah] answered me, and set me in a large place.*
>
> **118:6** *The LORD [Jehovah] is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?*
>
> **118:7** *The LORD [Jehovah] taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.*
>
> **118:8** *It is better to trust in the LORD [Jehovah] than to put confidence in man.*
>
> **118:9** *It is better to trust in the LORD [Jehovah] than to put confidence in princes.*

I called upon the LORD [Jah] in distress: the LORD [Jah] answered me, and set me in a large place. Out of the straits into a broad place. **The LORD [Jehovah] is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?** Quoted in Hebrews 13:6. **The LORD [Jehovah] taketh my part with them that help me.** Literally, "Jehovah is for me among my helpers": He is my help. **It is better to trust in the LORD [Jehovah] than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD [Jehovah] than to put confidence in princes.** *Trust* is "flee for refuge"; *put confidence* is "confide."

> **118:10** *All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD [Jehovah] will I destroy them.*
>
> **118:11** *They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD [Jehovah] I will destroy them.*
>
> **118:12** *They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD [Jehovah] I will destroy them.*
>
> **118:13** *Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD [Jehovah] helped me.*

All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD [Jehovah] will I destroy them. *Destroy* is "cut off," or "cut them down." **They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about . . . They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns.** Thorns flare up and burn out at once (58:9; Eccles. 7:6). **Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall.** He turns to the enemy. **but the LORD [Jehovah] helped me.**

> **118:14** *The LORD [Jah] is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.*
>
> **118:15** *The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD [Jehovah] doeth valiantly.*
>
> **118:16** *The right hand of the LORD [Jehovah] is exalted: the right hand of the LORD [Jehovah] doeth valiantly.*
>
> **118:17** *I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD [Jah].*
>
> **118:18** *The LORD [Jah] hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.*

The LORD [Jah] is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. Word for word from the song at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:2; Isa. 12:2). **The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD [Jehovah] doeth valiantly. The right hand of the LORD [Jehovah] is exalted: the right hand of the LORD [Jehovah] doeth valiantly.** Three times "the right hand of Jehovah." **I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD [Jah]. The LORD [Jah] hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.** The King's life was at stake, and God brought him through. In the fullest sense this is the Son, who was given over to death and raised from it (Acts 2:24).

> **118:19** *Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD [Jah]:*
>
> **118:20** *This gate of the LORD [Jehovah], into which the righteous shall enter.*
>
> **118:21** *I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.*

Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD [Jah]. The gates of the temple. **This gate of the LORD [Jehovah], into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.**

> **118:22** *The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*
>
> **118:23** *This is the LORD [Jehovah]'s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.*
>
> **118:24** *This is the day which the LORD [Jehovah] hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. In the first sense, the king (or the nation) rejected by the great powers and set at the head by God. In its fulfilment, the Lord Jesus, rejected by the rulers of Israel, "whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead . . . This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner" (Acts 4:10, 11). *The head stone of the corner* is the chief corner-stone that holds two walls together (Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20). **This is the LORD [Jehovah]'s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.** The exaltation is God's own work. **This is the day which the LORD [Jehovah] hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.** The day of the exaltation of the rejected stone.

> **118:25** *Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD [Jehovah]: O LORD [Jehovah], I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*
>
> **118:26** *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD [Jehovah]: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **118:27** *God is the LORD [Jehovah], which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*
>
> **118:28** *Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.*

Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD [Jehovah]. *Save now* is *hoshi'a-na*, which gives us *Hosanna*. The crowds cried it as the Lord entered Jerusalem (Matt. 21:9). **O LORD [Jehovah], I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD [Jehovah].** The crowds cried it at His entry; and the Lord said that Jerusalem would not see Him again "till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:39). **we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD [Jehovah].** The priests answer from the temple. **God is the LORD [Jehovah], which hath shewed us light.** *God* is *El*. **bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.** *Sacrifice* is "the festal sacrifice." Bind it until it is brought to the altar. **Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.**

> **118:29** *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. The Psalm ends as it began.

Its close

Psalm 118 has no sub-scription.

Looking back

Psalm 118 is member H^3, the last Psalm of the Hallel. The King surrounded by all nations is helped, does not die but lives, enters the gates of righteousness, and is the rejected stone made head of the corner. On the night before He was crucified, the Lord Jesus sang it with His disciples. It looks forward to the day when Israel will say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Looking Back on Psalms 107–118

The first half of Book V shows deliverance by the Word and the praise that answers it.

- **The healing Word (107).** He sent His Word, and healed them.
- **The true David (108–110).** Delivered, humbled, and exalted to God's right hand, a priest for ever.
- **Praise (111–113).** For His works, His ways, and Himself.
- **Deliverance from Egypt and its idols (114–115).** The sea fled, and the idols are nothing.
- **Praise (116–118).** From death to the land of the living; all nations; and the rejected stone made the head of the corner.

Psalm 119 — The Word of God: "Quicken Thou Me according to Thy Word"

Place: Book V; member A^2 (quickening and sustaining by the revealed Word), standing alone at the centre of the Book and answering Psalm 107 (A^1, deliverance by the healing Word). **Writer:** not named in the Title. See the Introduction. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 119 is the longest Psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible: 176 verses. It has one subject, the Word of God, and it comes back to it in almost every verse. It is the great acrostic of Scripture. It has twenty-two stanzas, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each stanza has eight verses. Every one of the eight verses in a stanza begins with that stanza's letter: the first eight with *Aleph*, the next eight with *Beth*, and so on to *Tau* (22 × 8 = 176). An English reader cannot see this, but a Hebrew reader could not miss it. It is as if someone had written a poem about the Word in which every line of the first verse began with A, every line of the second with B, all through the alphabet. The form says what the Psalm says: the Word of God covers everything, from Aleph to Tau. (Chapter 7, D, describes the other acrostic Psalms.)

Its place in Book V. Book V, the "Deuteronomy Book," is about God and His Word. It opens with Psalm 107, where the redeemed cry out in four kinds of trouble, and "He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (107:20). Psalm 119 stands by itself in the middle of the Book as the answer: the Word that heals is also the Word that gives life, guides, guards, comforts and sustains. Its key prayer is "quicken thou me," which occurs eleven times (vv. 25, 37, 40, 50, 88, 93, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159). *Quicken* is "make alive" or "keep alive." The Psalmist is afflicted (vv. 50, 67, 71, 75, 92, 107, 153), persecuted by princes (vv. 23, 161), mocked by the proud (vv. 21, 51, 69, 78, 85, 122), and close to death (v. 87). And again and again he says the same thing: the Word of God has kept him alive (v. 50).

Who wrote it? The Title names no writer. Jewish tradition gave it to David; others have placed it in Ezra's day. *The Companion Bible* holds that it was "probably by Hezekiah." The case is this: the writer is young (vv. 9, 99, 100), and Hezekiah came to the throne at twenty-five (2 Kings 18:2). He is surrounded, robbed, and reproached by "princes" and "the proud" (vv. 23, 61, 122, 161), as Hezekiah was by Sennacherib and Rabshakeh (2 Kings 18:17–37). He speaks of testimonies "before kings" (v. 46), and after the deliverance kings brought gifts to Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:22, 23). And he is near death and prays to be made alive, as Hezekiah was (Isa. 38:1–20). **Weight:** possible, not proven. Each of these points fits Hezekiah, and each fits other godly men as well. What the Psalm itself makes plain is that its writer was young, afflicted, opposed by men in power, and kept alive by the Word.

The words for the Word. The Psalm uses a set of different Hebrew words for God's Word. The King James Version translates most of them consistently, so the English reader can follow them: law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments. But "word" stands for two different

Hebrew words, and "way" for two or three. Each word shows a different side of the one Word of God, and the Psalm moves from one to another from verse to verse. They are explained in the next section, before the Psalm is read.

The Words for the Word in Psalm 119

The words that follow are not ten different things. They are ten ways of looking at one thing: what God has spoken. Each one shows a different side of it: what it teaches, what it witnesses, what it charges, what it fixes, what it commands, what it decides, what it says, what it promises, and where it leads. A reader who knows these words will find that almost every verse of the Psalm says something new.

How they are marked. In the text of Psalm 119 in this study, each of these words is followed by its Hebrew name in green brackets: "the law [torah] of the LORD [Jehovah]." Green, as everywhere in this study, marks what is added to the text of Scripture. The reader can then see at a glance which word is being used in each verse, and in particular which of the two Hebrew words stands behind the English "word."

The counts given are of the Hebrew words in the Psalm.

1. Law — *torah* (25 times)

Torah comes from *yarah*, "to point," "to direct," "to teach," as one points out the way. Its first sense is not a legal code but *instruction*: teaching that shows the way to go. A mother's *torah* is her teaching (Prov. 1:8); the priests were to "teach [*yarah*] Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law [*torah*]" (Deut. 33:10). The word was used for the five books of Moses, and so for the whole of God's revealed teaching. In Psalm 119 it is the widest of the words: the whole body of what God has taught. It is the word of the first verse: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD." It is also the word the Psalmist says he *loves*: "O how love I thy law!" (v. 97).

2. Testimonies — *eduth* and *edah* (23 times)

From *'ud*, "to bear witness," "to say again and again." A testimony is what God has solemnly declared and borne witness to. The two tables of stone were "the tables of testimony" (Ex. 31:18), and the Ark that held them was "the ark of the testimony" (Ex. 25:22). God's testimonies are His own witness to who He is and what He requires: His word, put on record. Two closely related forms of the word are used in the Psalm; both are marked [eduth] in this study. The Psalmist calls them his "delight" and his "counsellors" (v. 24), and says "thy testimonies are wonderful" (v. 129).

3. Precepts — *piqqudim* (21 times)

From *paqad*, "to oversee," "to appoint," "to charge," the word used of an officer who looks after men and gives them their orders. *Precepts* are the particular charges of One who oversees His people and attends to every detail. They are God's instructions for each part of life. The word is found only in the Psalms: twenty-one times here, and three times elsewhere (19:8; 103:18; 111:7). It is the word of verse 4: "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently." It is marked [piqqud].

4. Statutes — *choq* (22 times)

From *chaqaq*, "to cut in," "to engrave," "to inscribe." A *choq* is something cut into stone: fixed, settled, permanent. The same word is used of the bound God set for the sea, "by a perpetual decree [*choq*], that it cannot pass it" (Jer. 5:22), and of the ordinances of the sun and moon (Jer. 31:35, 36). God's statutes are His fixed decrees, which do not change. In one verse a related form, *chuqqah*, is used (v. 16); both are marked [choq]. Seven times the Psalmist prays to be taught God's statutes (vv. 12, 26, 33, 64, 68, 124, 135).

5. Commandments — *mitzvah* (22 times)

From *tsavah*, "to command," "to give orders." A *mitzvah* is the order of a king: what must be done because He has said so. Where *precepts* speak of God's care in detail, *commandments* speak of His authority. The Psalmist says, "I will run the way of thy commandments" (v. 32), and, at the very end, "I do not forget thy commandments" (v. 176).

6. Judgments — *mishpat* (23 times)

From *shaphat*, "to judge." A *mishpat* is the decision of a judge: a verdict, a ruling, and so a settled right. God's judgments are His decisions about what is right and wrong, given as the Judge of all the earth; they are also His acts of judgment on the wicked. The word can also mean "justice" (v. 121), "what is right," and "manner" or "custom" (v. 132, where "as thou usest to do" is literally "according to thy *mishpat*," "according to thy rule"). It is marked [mishpat], and in Psalm 119 it is the word most often joined to God's righteousness: "thy righteous judgments" (vv. 7, 62, 106, 160, 164) is literally "the judgments of thy righteousness."

7. Word — *dabar* (23 times)

From *dabar*, "to speak." A *dabar* is a word spoken, and so the matter of what is said: the substance of God's revelation. It is the word in "the word of Jehovah came unto" the prophets. In Psalm 119 it is God's Word as a whole: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet" (v. 105); "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (v. 89). It is marked [dabar].

8. Word, or saying — *imrah* (19 times)

From *amar*, "to say." An *imrah* is a saying, an utterance: a particular thing God has said. Very often in Psalm 119 it is a *promise*: "Stablish thy word unto thy servant" (v. 38); "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me" (v. 50); "according to thy word unto thy servant" (v. 76). Where *dabar* is the Word as a whole, *imrah* is often the particular promise the Psalmist is leaning on. "Thy word is very pure" (v. 140) is *imrah*: every single saying of God is refined like silver (12:6). The King James Version renders both *dabar* and *imrah* as "word," so the brackets are the only way an English reader can tell them apart. It is marked [imrah].

9. Way — *derek* and *orach* (18 times)

Derek (13 times) is a trodden road, a journey, and so a course of life. *Orach* (5 times) is a well-worn track. Both are used of God's ways, the course He has marked out, and of man's ways, his conduct. The Psalm begins with "the undefiled in the way" (v. 1) and prays "cause me to understand the way of thy precepts" (v. 27). Twice another word is used, *nathiv*, a footpath (vv. 35, 105). They are marked [derek], [orach] and [nathiv].

10. Righteousness and faithfulness

Bullinger counted ten words in all. Beside the nine above he set God's *righteousness* (*tsedeq*), which is joined to the Word throughout: "thy righteous judgments," "the righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting" (v. 144), "all thy commandments are righteousness" (v. 172). Others count God's *faithfulness* (*emunah*), His truth, which stands behind every word He speaks: "all thy commandments are faithful" (v. 86); "thy law is the truth" (v. 142). These are not names for the Word but what the Word is: right and true. They are not marked in the text.

Every verse

All but two verses of the Psalm (90 and 122) use at least one of the eight words for the Word, and verse 132 uses *mishpat* in its other sense. Even verse 90, "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth," belongs with verse 89: God's Word is settled in heaven, and His faithfulness is seen in the earth He established. And verse 122, "Be surety for thy servant for good," is the prayer of one who has staked everything on that Word.

The Structure of Psalm 119

The Psalm is built on the Hebrew alphabet: twenty-two stanzas of eight verses. Each stanza has a subject and a structure of its own, shown at its head. *The Companion Bible* gives the subjects:

- א Aleph | 1–8. The undefiled in the way.
- ב Beth | 9–16. Cleansing of the way.
- ג Gimel | 17–24. Prayer for strengthening.
- ד Daleth | 25–32. Prayer. Preservation.
- ה He | 33–40. Prayer. Teaching.
- ו Vau | 41–48. Prayer. Strengthening.
- ז Zain | 49–56. Prayer. Comfort and remembrance.
- ח Cheth | 57–64. Prayer and profession.
- ט Teth | 65–72. Prayer. Jehovah's dealings.
- י Jod | 73–80. Prayer. Instruction and deliverance.
- כ Caph | 81–88. Prayer in distress.
- ל Lamed | 89–96. Jehovah and His Word.
- מ Mem | 97–104. Jehovah's Word the source of wisdom.
- נ Nun | 105–112. Jehovah's Word the source of light and joy.
- ס Samech | 113–120. Jehovah's law: the security it gives.
- ע Ain | 121–128. Jehovah's servant's confidence.
- פ Pe | 129–136. Guidance by the Word.
- צ Tzaddi | 137–144. Jehovah's Word and the Psalmist.
- ק Koph | 145–152. Prayer for faithfulness in distress.
- ר Resh | 153–160. Prayer for faithfulness in distress.
- ש Schin | 161–168. Jehovah's Word gives peace and comfort.
- ת Tau | 169–176. Petitions and statements.

The two halves. Read straight through, the Psalm falls into two halves of eighty-eight verses. The first half (Aleph to Caph) is mostly prayer: the young man asking to be cleansed, taught, strengthened, comforted, kept alive, and ending in distress, "They had almost consumed me upon earth" (v. 87). The second half begins with the great turn of Lamed: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (v. 89). From there the Psalm speaks more of what the Word *is* and *does*: the source of wisdom (Mem), of light and joy (Nun), of security (Samech), of guidance (Pe), of peace (Schin). The Psalmist is still afflicted, but he now stands on the Word that is fixed in heaven. (This division into halves is this study's observation from the text; it is offered as a help in reading, not as a structure Bullinger gave.)

How the Psalm is presented. Because the Psalm is long, its treatment is simpler than that of other Psalms, as Chapter 12 promised. Each stanza has:

- its letter and subject;
- the words for the Word used in it;
- its structure;
- its eight verses, with the Hebrew words marked;
- a commentary on the stanza as a whole, taking up the verses that most need it, and showing how the words for the Word are used.

The Psalm

Psalm 119 has no Title.

א Aleph (vv. 1–8): The Undefiled in the Way

The words in this stanza: way [derek] (vv. 1, 3, 5), law [torah] (v. 1), testimonies [eduth] (v. 2), precepts [piqqud] (v. 4), statutes [choq] (vv. 5, 8), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 6), judgments [mishpat] (v. 7).

Structure

- N | 1. The way.
- O | 2. Their condition: blessed.
- P | 3. They: upright.
- Q | 4. Command.
- *N* | 5. My ways.
- *O* | 6. My condition: not ashamed.
- *P* | 7. I: upright.
- *Q* | 8. Promise.

The first four verses speak of others ("they": general); the last four of the Psalmist himself ("I": individual).

> **119:1** *Blessed are the undefiled in the way [derek], who walk in the law [torah] of the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **119:2** *Blessed are they that keep his testimonies [eduth], and that seek him with the whole heart.*
> **119:3** *They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways [derek].*
> **119:4** *Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts [piqqud] diligently.*
> **119:5** *O that my ways [derek] were directed to keep thy statutes [choq]!*
> **119:6** *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments [mitzvah].*

> **119:7** *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments [mishpat].*
>
> **119:8** *I will keep thy statutes [choq]: O forsake me not utterly.*

The stanza

The Psalm begins as the whole Psalter begins: "Blessed" (1:1). *Blessed* is plural, "O the happinesses of." Twice the word begins a verse (vv. 1, 2): the figure *Beatitudo*. Who are the blessed? Those who are *undefiled in the way*: not sinless, but whole, sincere, without a double heart. They *walk* in the law: they live by it, step by step. They *keep* His testimonies, as a watchman keeps guard over something precious. They *seek him with the whole heart*. Notice that it is God Himself they seek, not only His words: "seek *him*." And so "they also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways" (v. 3). Iniquity is *'avel*, perverseness, crookedness: the opposite of the straight way.

Verse 4 is God's command: "Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently," *very much*, with all care. And verse 5 is the turn from "they" to "I," and from statement to longing: "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" The Psalmist knows what he ought to be, and that he is not yet. The rest of the Psalm is the prayer of a man who wants his ways to be made straight.

The second half of the stanza answers the first. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments" (v. 6): *all* of them, not a chosen few. "I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments" (v. 7): praise comes from learning, and the learning is never finished. Then the first promise, and the first prayer: "I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly" (v. 8). He promises to keep the Word, and in the same breath asks God not to leave him. He does not trust himself to keep it alone.

Seven of the words for the Word appear in these eight verses. The stanza is the whole Psalm in small: the blessed man, the Word in all its parts, a man who longs to be what the Word describes, and a prayer that God will not let him go.

ב Beth (vv. 9–16): Cleansing of the Way

The words in this stanza: way [orach] (vv. 9, 15), word [dabar] (vv. 9, 16), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 10), word [imrah] (v. 11), statutes [choq] (vv. 12, 16), judgments [mishpat] (v. 13), way [derek] (v. 14), testimonies [eduth] (v. 14), precepts [piqqud] (v. 15).

Structure

- R | 9. The way to be cleansed. (Future.)
- S | I^1 | 10-. What I have done: my heart.
- m^1 | -10. Prayer. (Negative.)
- I^2 | 11. What I have done: my heart.

- m² | 12. Prayer. (Positive.)
- l³ | 13, 14. What I have done: my lips.
- *R* | 15, 16. The way to be cleansed. (Future.)

> **119:9** *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way [orach]? by taking heed thereto according to thy word [dabar].*
>
> **119:10** *With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments [mitzvah].*
>
> **119:11** *Thy word [imrah] have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*
>
> **119:12** *Blessed art thou, O LORD [Jehovah]: teach me thy statutes [choq].*
>
> **119:13** *With my lips have I declared all the judgments [mishpat] of thy mouth.*
>
> **119:14** *I have rejoiced in the way [derek] of thy testimonies [eduth], as much as in all riches.*
>
> **119:15** *I will meditate in thy precepts [piqqud], and have respect unto thy ways [orach].*
>
> **119:16** *I will delight myself in thy statutes [choq]: I will not forget thy word [dabar].*

The stanza

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" (v. 9). The question is asked in the Psalmist's own person: the young man is himself. *Way* here is *orach*, a well-worn track, the path his life has already worn into the ground. How can a path like that be made clean? "By taking heed thereto according to thy word": by guarding it with God's *dabar*, His Word as a whole. *Taking heed* is the word for keeping watch. The answer is not a resolution but a guard set over the road.

Then he tells what he has done, and what he asks. "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments" (v. 10). Even the man who seeks God with his whole heart can wander; so he prays. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (v. 11). This is *imrah*, the particular saying. He has stored up God's sayings, one by one, the way a man hides treasure (Prov. 2:1; Col. 3:16). When the Lord Jesus was tempted, He answered from such hidden sayings: "It is written" (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). Then the prayer: "Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes" (v. 12). It is the first of seven prayers to be taught God's statutes. He blesses God before he asks.

"With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth" (v. 13). What went into the heart (v. 11) comes out of the lips. "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches" (v. 14). God's testimonies are a road (*derek*), and walking it is better than wealth (19:10; v. 72).

The stanza ends with three resolves for the future: "I will meditate . . . I will delight . . . I will not forget" (vv. 15, 16). *Meditate* is to muse, to talk it over with oneself. *Have respect unto thy ways* is "look attentively at thy paths" (*orach* again, answering v. 9): God's paths in place of his own. And "I will not forget thy word": *dabar*, the Word as a whole, which opened the stanza (v. 9) and now closes it.

The young man's way is cleansed by the Word guarding his road, by the sayings hidden in his heart, by the statutes God Himself teaches, and by the testimonies he walks in with joy.

ג Gimel (vv. 17–24): Prayer for Strengthening

The words in this stanza: word [dabar] (v. 17), law [torah] (v. 18), commandments [mitzvah] (vv. 19, 21), judgments [mishpat] (v. 20), testimonies [eduth] (vv. 22, 24), statutes [choq] (v. 23).

Structure

- T | 17–19. Prayer, and reasons.
- U | 20, 21. A twofold statement: himself, and the wicked.
- *T* | 22. Prayer, and reasons.
- *U* | 23, 24. A twofold statement: himself, and the wicked.

> **119:17** *Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word [dabar].*
> **119:18** *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law [torah].*
> **119:19** *I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments [mitzvah] from me.*
> **119:20** *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments [mishpat] at all times.*
> **119:21** *Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments [mitzvah].*
> **119:22** *Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies [eduth].*
> **119:23** *Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes [choq].*
> **119:24** *Thy testimonies [eduth] also are my delight and my counsellors.*

The stanza

The third stanza introduces the trouble that runs through the rest of the Psalm. "Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word" (v. 17). *Deal bountifully* is to do good, to reward. He asks to live, and his reason for living is to keep God's Word. This is the first hint of the prayer "quicken me," which begins in the next stanza (v. 25).

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (v. 18). *Open* is "uncover," "unveil." The Word is not hidden; his eyes are. The *wondrous things* are not in some secret beyond the law, but in it, to be seen when God takes the veil from the reader's eyes (2 Cor. 3:14–16; Luke 24:45). It is the prayer every reader of this study can make.

"I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me" (v. 19). A stranger is a foreigner living in a land not his own (39:12; 1 Chron. 29:15). He has no home here and no map; God's commandments are the only guide he has. "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times" (v. 20). *Breaketh* is "is crushed": he longs for them so much that it hurts.

Then the first mention of the enemies. "Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments" (v. 21). The *proud* are the arrogant, the presumptuous; they appear again and

again in the Psalm (vv. 51, 69, 78, 85, 122). "Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies" (v. 22). *Remove* is "roll away," like a stone. "Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes" (v. 23). Men of power sat in council against him; he sat with God's statutes. *The Companion Bible* reads the princes as Sennacherib's officers (see the Introduction).

"Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors" (v. 24). Literally, "the men of my counsel." The princes had their council (v. 23); he has his: God's testimonies are his advisers. The stanza ends where the stanza's structure points: on one side, the proud and the princes; on the other, a stranger in the earth with the Word for his counsel.

ד Daleth (vv. 25–32): Prayer for Preservation

The words in this stanza: word [dabar] (vv. 25, 28), ways [derek] (vv. 26, 27, 29, 30, 32), statutes [choq] (v. 26), precepts [piqqud] (v. 27), law [torah] (v. 29), judgments [mishpat] (v. 30), testimonies [eduth] (v. 31), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 32).

Structure

- V | n | 25-. Depression.
- o | -25. "Quicken me."
- W | p | 26-. Profession. (Past.)
- q | -26. Prayer: "Teach me."
- *q* | 27-. Prayer.
- *p* | -27. Profession: "I will talk."
- *V* | *n* | 28-. Depression.
- *o* | -28. "Strengthen me."
- *W* | r | 29. Prayer: "Remove."
- s | 30, 31-. Profession. (Past.)
- *r* | -31. Prayer: "Put me not to shame."
- *s* | 32. Profession. (Future.)

> **119:25** *My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word [dabar].*
> **119:26** *I have declared my ways [derek], and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes [choq].*
> **119:27** *Make me to understand the way [derek] of thy precepts [piqqud]: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.*
> **119:28** *My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word [dabar].*
> **119:29** *Remove from me the way [derek] of lying: and grant me thy law [torah] graciously.*
> **119:30** *I have chosen the way [derek] of truth: thy judgments [mishpat] have I laid before me.*
> **119:31** *I have stuck unto thy testimonies [eduth]: O LORD [Jehovah], put me not to shame.*

> **119:32** *I will run the way [derek] of thy commandments [mitzvah], when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*

The stanza

"My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word" (v. 25). Here begins the prayer that runs through the rest of the Psalm. *Cleaveth unto the dust* is the posture of the dead (22:15; 44:25): he is laid low, almost in the grave. *Quicken* is "give me life," "keep me alive." It is the first of eleven such prayers (see the Introduction), and it rests on the Word: "according to thy word," God's *dabar*, His spoken promise. Three verses later, the same pattern: "My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word" (v. 28). *Melteth* is "weepeth," "drops away in tears."

Between the two cries stand his confession and his request. "I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me" (v. 26): he has told God everything about his own path, and God answered. Now he asks to be taught God's path: "teach me thy statutes . . . Make me to understand the way of thy precepts" (vv. 26, 27). The word *way* (*derek*) comes five times in the stanza. He asks God to remove from him "the way of lying" (v. 29), says "I have chosen the way of truth" (v. 30), and ends with "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart" (v. 32).

The stanza moves from a soul in the dust to a man running. The change comes from the Word. When God *enlarges the heart* (gives it room, sets it free, as in 1 Kings 4:29 and Isa. 60:5), the man who could not stand up will run. "I have stuck unto thy testimonies" (v. 31): *stuck* is "cleaved," the same word as in verse 25. His soul cleaved to the dust; now it cleaves to God's testimonies.

ה He (vv. 33–40): Prayer for Teaching

The words in this stanza: way [derek] (vv. 33, 37), statutes [choq] (v. 33), law [torah] (v. 34), path [nathiv] (v. 35), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 35), testimonies [eduth] (v. 36), word [imrah] (v. 38), judgments [mishpat] (v. 39), precepts [piqqud] (v. 40).

Structure

- X | t | 33. Eyes: "Make me to see."
- u | 34-. Mind: its comprehension.
- Y | -34. Heart.
- Z | 35. Feet: practical walking.
- *Y* | 36. Heart.
- *X* | *t* | 37–39. Eyes: "Turn them away."
- *u* | 40. Mind: its desires.

> **119:33** *Teach me, O LORD [Jehovah], the way [derek] of thy statutes [choq]; and I shall keep it unto the end.*

> **119:34** *Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law [torah]; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.*
>
> **119:35** *Make me to go in the path [nathiv] of thy commandments [mitzvah]; for therein do I delight.*
>
> **119:36** *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies [eduth], and not to covetousness.*
>
> **119:37** *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way [derek].*
>
> **119:38** *Stablish thy word [imrah] unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.*
>
> **119:39** *Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments [mishpat] are good.*
>
> **119:40** *Behold, I have longed after thy precepts [piqqud]: quicken me in thy righteousness.*

The stanza

Every verse of this stanza is a prayer, and every verse but one begins with a verb of asking: teach me, give me understanding, make me to go, incline my heart, turn away mine eyes, stablish thy word, turn away my reproach. The letter *He* begins many Hebrew causative verbs ("cause me to . . ."), and the stanza is a string of them: the Psalmist asks God to *cause* him to learn, see, walk and long.

He asks for the whole man to be taught: his eyes (vv. 33, 37), his mind (vv. 34, 40), his heart (vv. 34, 36), and his feet (v. 35). "Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end" (v. 33): *teach* here is to show, to point out, from the same root as *torah*. "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness" (v. 36): the heart bends one way or the other, and *covetousness*, gain, is the great rival of the Word (1 Tim. 6:9, 10). "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way" (v. 37): *vanity* is emptiness, worthlessness, the things that fill the eyes and leave the soul empty. The way to life is to look away from them.

"Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear" (v. 38). Here is *imrah*, the particular promise: "Make good thy promise to thy servant." And "Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness" (v. 40). He asks to be kept alive, not by his own righteousness, but by God's.

ו Vau (vv. 41–48): Prayer for Strengthening

The words in this stanza: word [imrah] (v. 41), word [dabar] (vv. 42, 43), judgments [mishpat] (v. 43), law [torah] (v. 44), precepts [piqqud] (v. 45), testimonies [eduth] (v. 46), commandments [mitzvah] (vv. 47, 48), statutes [choq] (v. 48).

Structure

- A | 41, 42-. Prayer. (Positive.)
- B | -42. Reason, and plea.
- *A* | 43-. Prayer. (Negative.)

- *B* | -43–48. Reasons, and pleas.

> **119:41** *Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD [Jehovah], even thy salvation, according to thy word [imrah].*
>
> **119:42** *So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word [dabar].*
>
> **119:43** *And take not the word [dabar] of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments [mishpat].*
>
> **119:44** *So shall I keep thy law [torah] continually for ever and ever.*
>
> **119:45** *And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts [piqqud].*
>
> **119:46** *I will speak of thy testimonies [eduth] also before kings, and will not be ashamed.*
>
> **119:47** *And I will delight myself in thy commandments [mitzvah], which I have loved.*
>
> **119:48** *My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments [mitzvah], which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes [choq].*

The stanza

Every verse of this stanza begins with *Vau*, "and." In Hebrew it is the commonest word there is; here it links each verse to the one before like the links of a chain: "And let thy mercies come . . . And I shall have wherewith to answer . . . And take not . . . And I shall keep . . . And I will walk . . . And I will speak . . . And I will delight . . . And I will lift up."

The stanza begins with God's *mercies*, His lovingkindnesses, and His *salvation*, "according to thy word" (v. 41): His promise. With that in hand, "I shall have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word" (v. 42). He does not answer his accuser from his own wisdom but from God's Word. "Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth" (v. 43): let him never be left without God's Word to speak.

Then come five promises. "I shall keep thy law continually" (v. 44). "I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts" (v. 45): *at liberty* is "in a broad place." Keeping God's precepts does not confine a man; it sets him free (James 1:25). "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed" (v. 46). Paul stood before Agrippa and spoke of the hope of Israel (Acts 26:1–29). "I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved" (v. 47). "My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments" (v. 48): the gesture of prayer and of welcome. Twice in two verses: "which I have loved."

ז Zain (vv. 49–56): Prayer for Comfort and Remembrance

The words in this stanza: word [dabar] (v. 49), word [imrah] (v. 50), law [torah] (vv. 51, 53, 55), judgments [mishpat] (v. 52), statutes [choq] (v. 54), precepts [piqqud] (v. 56).

Structure

- C^1 | 49. "Remember . . . Thou."
- D^1 | 50, 51. Statement as to consequences.
- C^2 | 52. "I remembered."
- D^2 | 53, 54. Statement as to consequences.
- C^3 | 55. "I have remembered."
- D^3 | 56. Statement as to consequences.

> **119:49** *Remember the word [dabar] unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*
>
> **119:50** *This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word [imrah] hath quickened me.*
>
> **119:51** *The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law [torah].*
>
> **119:52** *I remembered thy judgments [mishpat] of old, O LORD [Jehovah]; and have comforted myself.*
>
> **119:53** *Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law [torah].*
>
> **119:54** *Thy statutes [choq] have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*
>
> **119:55** *I have remembered thy name, O LORD [Jehovah], in the night, and have kept thy law [torah].*
>
> **119:56** *This I had, because I kept thy precepts [piqqud].*

The stanza

The key word is *remember*. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope" (v. 49). He asks God to remember His own promise; and he reminds God that it was God who gave him the hope. Then twice he says what *he* remembered: "I remembered thy judgments of old" (v. 52); "I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night" (v. 55).

At the heart of the stanza is the verse that sums up the whole Psalm: "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me" (v. 50). It was not that the affliction went away. It was that God's promise, His *imrah*, kept him alive in it. The proud mocked him greatly, "yet have I not declined from thy law" (v. 51).

"Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law" (v. 53). *Horror* is a burning indignation, like a scorching wind. And then: "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage" (v. 54). The fixed decrees of God, the *choq* cut in stone, became songs on the road. The *house of my pilgrimage* is the place where he lives as a stranger (v. 19): this life. "This I had, because I kept thy precepts" (v. 56): this comfort and these songs were his, because he kept the Word.

ח Cheth (vv. 57–64): Prayer and Profession

The words in this stanza: words [dabar] (v. 57), word [imrah] (v. 58), ways [derek] (v. 59), testimonies [eduth] (v. 59), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 60), law [torah] (v. 61), judgments [mishpat] (v. 62), precepts [piqqud] (v. 63), statutes [choq] (v. 64).

Structure

- E | 57–60. Jehovah my portion.
- F | 61. Statement concerning the work of the lawless.
- *E* | 62, 63. Jehovah my praise.
- *F* | 64. Statement concerning the favour of Jehovah.

> **119:57** *Thou art my portion, O LORD [Jehovah]: I have said that I would keep thy words [dabar].*
>
> **119:58** *I intreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word [imrah].*
>
> **119:59** *I thought on my ways [derek], and turned my feet unto thy testimonies [eduth].*
>
> **119:60** *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments [mitzvah].*
>
> **119:61** *The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten thy law [torah].*
>
> **119:62** *At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments [mishpat].*
>
> **119:63** *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts [piqqud].*
>
> **119:64** *The earth, O LORD [Jehovah], is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes [choq].*

The stanza

"Thou art my portion, O LORD" (v. 57). The Levites had no portion of land in Israel: "I am thy part and thine inheritance" (Num. 18:20). The Psalmist claims the same. *The Companion Bible* reads the verse: "Jehovah is my portion, I have said, that I might keep thy words." Because God is his portion, he will keep His words.

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments" (vv. 59, 60). This is repentance in two steps: he considered where his ways were leading, and turned. And he did not put it off.

"The bands of the wicked have robbed me" (v. 61). *Bands* are cords or troops: the wicked surrounded him and stripped him. "But I have not forgotten thy law." "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments" (v. 62), as Paul and Silas sang praises at midnight in the prison at Philippi (Acts 16:25). "I am a companion of all them that fear thee" (v. 63): he chooses his friends by their fear of God. And the stanza ends looking out on the whole world: "The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes" (v. 64). If the earth is full of His lovingkindness, there is enough for him to be taught.

ט Teth (vv. 65–72): Jehovah's Dealings, and the Good of Affliction

The words in this stanza: word [dabar] (v. 65), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 66), word [imrah] (v. 67), statutes [choq] (vv. 68, 71), precepts [piqqud] (v. 69), law [torah] (vv. 70, 72).

Structure

- G | 65. Thy dealings good.
- H | t | 66. Thy judgments good. Teach me.
- u | 67. Affliction good. Result.
- *H* | *t* | 68. Thou art good. Teach me.
- *u* | 69–71. Affliction good. Result.
- *G* | 72. Thy law good.

> **119:65** *Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD [Jehovah], according unto thy word [dabar].*
>
> **119:66** *Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments [mitzvah].*
>
> **119:67** *Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word [imrah].*
>
> **119:68** *Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes [choq].*
>
> **119:69** *The proud have forged a lie against me: but I will keep thy precepts [piqqud] with my whole heart.*
>
> **119:70** *Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law [torah].*
>
> **119:71** *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes [choq].*
>
> **119:72** *The law [torah] of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*

The stanza

The letter *Teth* begins the Hebrew word *tov*, "good," and the stanza is about the goodness of God, even in affliction. "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant" (v. 65). "Teach me good judgment and knowledge" (v. 66): *judgment* here is *ta'am*, "taste," discernment, not one of the words for the Word. "Thou art good, and doest good" (v. 68). "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" (v. 71). "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver" (v. 72).

The heart of the stanza is the good of affliction. "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (v. 67). "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (v. 71). Affliction did what nothing else could: it brought him back to the Word. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth . . . afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:6–11).

Against this, the proud: "The proud have forged a lie against me . . . Their heart is as fat as grease" (vv. 69, 70). A heart *fat as grease* is gross and unfeeling (Isa. 6:10; Acts 28:27). "But I delight in thy law." The proud are insensible; the afflicted man has a tender heart, and it delights in God's teaching.

י Jod (vv. 73–80): Prayer for Instruction and Deliverance

The words in this stanza: commandments [mitzvah] (v. 73), word [dabar] (v. 74), judgments [mishpat] (v. 75), word [imrah] (v. 76), law [torah] (v. 77), precepts [piqqud] (v. 78), testimonies [eduth] (v. 79), statutes [choq] (v. 80).

Structure

- י | 73. Prayer. "I."
- כ | 74. "They that revere Thee."
- ל | 75. Affliction. "I."
- מ | 76. Lovingkindness.
- *מ* | 77. Tender mercies.
- *ל* | 78. Affliction. "I."
- *כ* | 79. "They that fear Thee."
- *י* | 80. Prayer. "I."

> **119:73** *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments [mitzvah].*
>
> **119:74** *They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word [dabar].*
>
> **119:75** *I know, O LORD [Jehovah], that thy judgments [mishpat] are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*
>
> **119:76** *Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word [imrah] unto thy servant.*
>
> **119:77** *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law [torah] is my delight.*
>
> **119:78** *Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts [piqqud].*
>
> **119:79** *Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies [eduth].*
>
> **119:80** *Let my heart be sound in thy statutes [choq]; that I be not ashamed.*

The stanza

Jod is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The Lord Jesus named it: "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18). The *jot* is the *jod*.

"Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments" (v. 73). The God who made him can teach him. He is the work of God's hands (Job 10:8; Deut. 32:6); let God finish the work by giving him understanding.

"I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (v. 75). His affliction did not come from God's unfaithfulness but from His faithfulness. Then he asks for comfort: "Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live" (vv. 76, 77). Lovingkindness and tender mercies: the words of Exodus 34:6.

Twice he speaks of others who fear God (vv. 74, 79). "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word" (v. 74). His deliverance will encourage them. "Let those that fear thee turn unto me" (v. 79). And the stanza ends, "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed" (v. 80). *Sound* is "whole," "perfect," the word of verse 1, "the undefiled in the way."

כ Caph (vv. 81–88): Prayer in Distress

The words in this stanza: word [dabar] (v. 81), word [imrah] (v. 82), statutes [choq] (v. 83), judgment [mishpat] (v. 84), law [torah] (v. 85), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 86), precepts [piqqud] (v. 87), testimony [eduth] (v. 88).

Structure

- N^1 | 81–84. Distress: complaints and pleas.
- O | 81, 82-. Two complaints, with a plea between.
- P | -82. Question: "When wilt thou comfort me?"
- *O* | 83, 84-. Two complaints, with a plea between.
- *P* | -84. Question: "When wilt thou execute judgment?"
- N^2 | 85–88. Distress: causes, contrasts, and prayers.
- Q^1 | 85. Enemies. "They . . . me."
- R^1 | 86-. Statement. "Thy."
- Q^2 | -86-. Enemies. "They . . . me."
- R^2 | -86. Statement. "Thou."
- Q^3 | 87-. Enemies. "They . . . me."
- R^3 | -87, 88. Statement. "Thy."

> **119:81** *My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word [dabar].*
> **119:82** *Mine eyes fail for thy word [imrah], saying, When wilt thou comfort me?*
> **119:83** *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes [choq].*

> **119:84** *How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment [mishpat] on them that persecute me?*
> **119:85** *The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law [torah].*
> **119:86** *All thy commandments [mitzvah] are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.*
> **119:87** *They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts [piqqud].*
> **119:88** *Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony [eduth] of thy mouth.*

The stanza

This is the lowest point of the Psalm, and it closes the first half. "My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word. Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?" (vv. 81, 82). He has looked for God's promise until his eyes are worn out.

"For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes" (v. 83). A *bottle* is a wineskin. Hung in the smoke of a tent without a chimney, it becomes black, dry and shrivelled. That is what he has become: dried up, darkened and useless. Yet he does not forget.

"How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?" (v. 84). His days are few; let God act before they run out. "The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law" (v. 85). "They persecute me wrongfully; help thou me" (v. 86). "They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts" (v. 87). Three times the enemies; three times God's Word set against them: "All thy commandments are faithful" (v. 86). And the half ends with the prayer of the whole Psalm: "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth" (v. 88).

ל Lamed (vv. 89–96): Jehovah and His Word

The words in this stanza: word [dabar] (v. 89), ordinances [mishpat] (v. 91), law [torah] (v. 92), precepts [piqqud] (vv. 93, 94), testimonies [eduth] (v. 95), commandment [mitzvah] (v. 96).

Structure

- S | 89–91. Jehovah's Word settled and eternal.
- T | 92. Affliction cannot destroy my delight in it.
- U | 93. Statement and reason: "For."
- *U* | 94. Statement and reason: "For."
- *T* | 95. The wicked cannot destroy my meditation in it.
- *S* | 96. Jehovah's Word perfect and eternal.

Verses 89–91 are built in two pairs:

- v | 89-. Jehovah eternal. } The heavens.

- w | -89. His Word established.
- v | 90-. Jehovah's faithfulness eternal. } The earth.
- w | -90, 91. His Word established.

> **119:89** *For ever, O LORD [Jehovah], thy word [dabar] is settled in heaven.*
> **119:90** *Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.*
> **119:91** *They continue this day according to thine ordinances [mishpat]: for all are thy servants.*
> **119:92** *Unless thy law [torah] had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.*
> **119:93** *I will never forget thy precepts [piqqud]: for with them thou hast quickened me.*
> **119:94** *I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts [piqqud].*
> **119:95** *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies [eduth].*
> **119:96** *I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment [mitzvah] is exceeding broad.*

The stanza

The second half of the Psalm begins with the great turn: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (v. 89). *Settled* is "standeth fast," set up like a pillar. The Psalmist has been almost consumed upon earth (v. 87); now he looks up, and sees God's Word fixed in heaven, beyond the reach of all his enemies. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35); "the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:25).

"Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth" (v. 90). This verse and verse 122 are the only two in the Psalm with none of the words for the Word. But it continues verse 89: as His Word stands in heaven, His faithfulness is seen in the earth He established. "They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants" (v. 91). *Ordinances* is *mishpat*: heaven and earth stand today by God's rulings, and all creation serves Him.

Then the Psalmist sets himself under that Word. "Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me" (vv. 92, 93). "I am thine, save me" (v. 94). "The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies" (v. 95). And the stanza ends: "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad" (v. 96). Every finished thing in the world has its limit; he has seen the end of it. God's commandment has no limit.

מ Mem (vv. 97–104): Jehovah's Word the Source of Wisdom

The words in this stanza: law [torah] (v. 97), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 98), testimonies [eduth] (v. 99), precepts [piqqud] (vv. 100, 104), way [orach] (vv. 101, 104), word [dabar] (v. 101), judgments [mishpat] (v. 102), words [imrah] (v. 103).

Structure

- V | X | 97. The Word of Jehovah: precious.
- Y | 98–100. The source of understanding, and the reason.
- W | 101. The Psalmist's practice (positive), and motive.
- *W* | 102. The Psalmist's practice (negative), and reason.
- *V* | *X* | 103. The Word of Jehovah: precious.
- *Y* | 104. The source of understanding, and the consequence.

Verses 98–100 are three steps:

- x^1 | 98-. Wiser than mine enemies.
- y^1 | -98. Reason.
- x^2 | 99-. Wiser than my teachers.
- y^2 | -99. Reason.
- x^3 | 100-. Wiser than the aged.
- y^3 | -100. Reason.

> **119:97** *O how love I thy law [torah]! it is my meditation all the day.*
>
> **119:98** *Thou through thy commandments [mitzvah] hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.*
>
> **119:99** *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies [eduth] are my meditation.*
>
> **119:100** *I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts [piqqud].*
>
> **119:101** *I have refrained my feet from every evil way [orach], that I might keep thy word [dabar].*
>
> **119:102** *I have not departed from thy judgments [mishpat]: for thou hast taught me.*
>
> **119:103** *How sweet are thy words [imrah] unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*
>
> **119:104** *Through thy precepts [piqqud] I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way [orach].*

The stanza

"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (v. 97). This is the only verse of the Psalm that is an exclamation of love for the Word without a prayer or a reason attached. It is pure delight.

Then three steps of wisdom. Through God's commandments he is "wiser than mine enemies" (v. 98), wiser "than all my teachers" (v. 99), and understands "more than the ancients," the aged (v. 100). This is not pride. It is the confession that the Word of God gives a young man what his enemies' cunning, his teachers' learning and the old men's experience cannot. At twelve years old, the Lord Jesus sat among the teachers in the temple, "and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Luke 2:46, 47).

"I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me" (vv. 101, 102). *Thou* is emphatic: God Himself was his teacher. "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (v. 103; 19:10; Ezek. 3:3). "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (v. 104). Understanding leads to hatred of the false.

נ Nun (vv. 105–112): Jehovah's Word the Source of Light and Joy

The words in this stanza: word [dabar] (vv. 105, 107), path [nathiv] (v. 105), judgments [mishpat] (vv. 106, 108), law [torah] (v. 109), precepts [piqqud] (v. 110), testimonies [eduth] (v. 111), statutes [choq] (v. 112).

Structure

- A | a | 105. The Word my light.
- b | 106. Purpose to keep it.
- B | 107, 108. Affliction and prayer.
- *B* | 109, 110. Danger and protestations.
- *A* | *a* | 111. The Word my heritage and joy.
- *b* | 112. Purpose to keep it.

> **119:105** *Thy word [dabar] is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path [nathiv].*
> **119:106** *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments [mishpat].*
> **119:107** *I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD [Jehovah], according unto thy word [dabar].*
> **119:108** *Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD [Jehovah], and teach me thy judgments [mishpat].*
> **119:109** *My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law [torah].*
> **119:110** *The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts [piqqud].*
> **119:111** *Thy testimonies [eduth] have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.*
> **119:112** *I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes [choq] alway, even unto the end.*

The stanza

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (v. 105). This is perhaps the best-known verse of the Psalm. A *lamp* in Bible times was a small clay oil lamp held in the hand. It did not light up the whole countryside; it lit the next step, and the next. *Path* is *nathiv*, a narrow footpath. God's Word does not always show the whole road ahead; it shows the next step, and that is enough.

"I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments" (v. 106). Then the affliction again: "I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word" (v. 107). "Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth" (v. 108): his praise and his vows, freely given (Heb. 13:15).

"My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law" (v. 109). To carry one's life in one's hand is to be in constant danger of losing it (Judg. 12:3; 1 Sam. 19:5; 28:21). "The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts" (v. 110). And the stanza ends in joy: "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end" (vv. 111, 112). Others inherit land; he inherits the testimonies of God.

ס Samech (vv. 113–120): Jehovah's Law, and the Security It Gives

The words in this stanza: law [torah] (v. 113), word [dabar] (v. 114), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 115), word [imrah] (v. 116), statutes [choq] (vv. 117, 118), testimonies [eduth] (v. 119), judgments [mishpat] (v. 120).

Structure

- C | 113, 114. Protestations: "I."
- D | 115. Evildoers addressed, concerning God.
- E | 116. "Uphold me." From above and without.
- *E* | 117. "Hold me up." From beneath and within.
- *D* | 118, 119. Evildoers: God addressed concerning them.
- *C* | 120. Protestations: "I."

> **119:113** *I hate vain thoughts: but thy law [torah] do I love.*
>
> **119:114** *Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word [dabar].*
>
> **119:115** *Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments [mitzvah] of my God.*
>
> **119:116** *Uphold me according unto thy word [imrah], that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.*
>
> **119:117** *Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes [choq] continually.*
>
> **119:118** *Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes [choq]: for their deceit is falsehood.*
>
> **119:119** *Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies [eduth].*
>
> **119:120** *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments [mishpat].*

The stanza

Samech means "a support," and the stanza is about being upheld. "Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live" (v. 116). "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe" (v. 117).

"I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love" (v. 113). *Vain thoughts* is "men of divided mind," the double-minded (1 Kings 18:21; James 1:8). "Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word" (v. 114; 32:7; 91:1). "Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God" (v. 115). He separates himself from those who would draw him away.

"Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes . . . Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross" (vv. 118, 119). *Dross* is the scum skimmed off molten silver and thrown away (Isa. 1:22, 25; Ezek. 22:18). "Therefore I love thy testimonies." And then, unexpectedly: "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments" (v. 120). The man who loves God's Word also trembles before it. Love and holy fear belong together (Isa. 66:2).

ע Ain (vv. 121–128): The Servant's Confidence

The words in this stanza: judgment [mishpat] (v. 121), word [imrah] (v. 123), statutes [choq] (v. 124), testimonies [eduth] (v. 125), law [torah] (v. 126), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 127), precepts [piqqud] (v. 128), way [orach] (v. 128).

Structure

- F | 121, 122. What I have done, and prayer. (Negative.)
- G | 123. The Word: desire for it.
- H | 124, 125. Thy servant's prayer.
- *F* | 126. What Jehovah should do, and plea. (Positive.)
- *G* | 127, 128-. The Word: love for it.
- *H* | -128. Thy servant's resolve.

> **119:121** *I have done judgment [mishpat] and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.*
> **119:122** *Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.*
> **119:123** *Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word [imrah] of thy righteousness.*
> **119:124** *Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes [choq].*
> **119:125** *I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies [eduth].*
> **119:126** *It is time for thee, LORD [Jehovah], to work: for they have made void thy law [torah].*
> **119:127** *Therefore I love thy commandments [mitzvah] above gold; yea, above fine gold.*
> **119:128** *Therefore I esteem all thy precepts [piqqud] concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way [orach].*

The stanza

"I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors" (v. 121). "Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me" (v. 122). This is the second of the two verses in the Psalm with none of the words for the Word. But it is a striking prayer. A *surety* is one who stands in another's place and pledges himself for his debt (Gen. 43:9; 44:32; Prov. 6:1). The Psalmist asks God Himself to stand surety for him. In the fulness of time God gave "Jesus . . . a surety of a better testament" (Heb. 7:22).

"Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness" (v. 123). "Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy . . . I am thy servant; give me understanding" (vv. 124, 125). Three times "thy servant" in three verses.

"It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law" (v. 126). When men break and annul God's law, it is time for Him to act. "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold" (v. 127). The more others despise the Word, the more he loves it. "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way" (v. 128). *All . . . all*: the whole Word, about everything.

פ Pe (vv. 129–136): Guidance by the Word

The words in this stanza: testimonies [eduth] (v. 129), words [dabar] (v. 130), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 131), word [imrah] (v. 133), precepts [piqqud] (v. 134), statutes [choq] (v. 135), law [torah] (v. 136).

Structure

- J | 129–131. Statements concerning the Word.
- K | 132. Prayer concerning the righteous.
- *K* | 133–135. Prayer concerning the wicked.
- *J* | 136. Statement concerning the Word.

> **119:129** *Thy testimonies [eduth] are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.*
> **119:130** *The entrance of thy words [dabar] giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*
> **119:131** *I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments [mitzvah].*
> **119:132** *Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.*
> **119:133** *Order my steps in thy word [imrah]: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*
> **119:134** *Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts [piqqud].*
> **119:135** *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes [choq].*
> **119:136** *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law [torah].*

The stanza

Pe means "mouth," and the stanza is full of the mouth: "I opened my mouth, and panted" (v. 131); "the entrance of thy words" (v. 130), literally "the opening."

"Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them" (v. 129). *Wonderful* is the word used of God's miracles (vv. 18, 27): the Word itself is a wonder. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (v. 130). *Entrance* is "opening," the doorway: when God's Word is opened, light comes in as through an opened door. *The simple* are the open-minded, the teachable. "I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments" (v. 131), like a deer panting for water (42:1).

"Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name" (v. 132). *As thou usest to do* is *mishpat*, "according to thy rule": it is God's settled custom to be gracious to those who love Him. "Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me" (v. 133). *Order* is "establish," make firm. "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant" (v. 135): the priestly blessing again (Num. 6:25).

"Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law" (v. 136). He weeps not for his own troubles but for those who break God's law. Jeremiah wept so (Jer. 9:1; 13:17), and the Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41).

צ Tzaddi (vv. 137–144): Jehovah's Word and the Psalmist

The words in this stanza: judgments [mishpat] (v. 137), testimonies [eduth] (vv. 138, 144), words [dabar] (v. 139), word [imrah] (v. 140), precepts [piqqud] (v. 141), law [torah] (v. 142), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 143).

Structure

- L^1 | 137, 138. Thy Word: righteous.
- M^1 | 139. I: consumed.
- L^2 | 140-. Thy Word: pure.
- M^2 | -140, 141. I: despised.
- L^3 | 142. Thy Word: truth.
- M^3 | 143. I: consumed.
- L^4 | 144. Thy Word: righteous.

> **119:137** *Righteous art thou, O LORD [Jehovah], and upright are thy judgments [mishpat].*
>
> **119:138** *Thy testimonies [eduth] that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.*

> **119:139** *My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words [dabar].*
>
> **119:140** *Thy word [imrah] is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.*
>
> **119:141** *I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts [piqqud].*
>
> **119:142** *Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law [torah] is the truth.*
>
> **119:143** *Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments [mitzvah] are my delights.*
>
> **119:144** *The righteousness of thy testimonies [eduth] is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.*

The stanza

Tzaddi begins *tsaddiq*, "righteous," and the stanza is about righteousness. "Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments" (v. 137). "Thy testimonies . . . are righteous and very faithful" (v. 138). "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness" (v. 142). "The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting" (v. 144). Four times God's righteousness, and four times the Word is said to share it.

Between them, the Psalmist: consumed by zeal, "because mine enemies have forgotten thy words" (v. 139; compare 69:9); "small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts" (v. 141); in trouble and anguish, "yet thy commandments are my delights" (v. 143).

"Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it" (v. 140). *Very pure* is "refined," like metal tried in the fire (12:6; Prov. 30:5). It is *imrah*: every saying of God is pure. "Thy law is the truth" (v. 142). The Lord Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). And the stanza ends: "give me understanding, and I shall live" (v. 144). Understanding the Word is life.

ק Koph (vv. 145–152): Prayer for Faithfulness in Distress (I)

The words in this stanza: statutes [choq] (v. 145), testimonies [eduth] (vv. 146, 152), word [dabar] (v. 147), word [imrah] (v. 148), judgment [mishpat] (v. 149), law [torah] (v. 150), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 151).

Structure

- N | 145–149. The Psalmist's cry.
- O | 150, 151. Jehovah near the Psalmist; the foes near too.
- P | 152. The Word established for ever.

> **119:145** *I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD [Jehovah]: I will keep thy statutes [choq].*
>
> **119:146** *I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies [eduth].*
>
> **119:147** *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word [dabar].*

> **119:148** *Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word [imrah].*
>
> **119:149** *Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: O LORD [Jehovah], quicken me according to thy judgment [mishpat].*
>
> **119:150** *They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law [torah].*
>
> **119:151** *Thou art near, O LORD [Jehovah]; and all thy commandments [mitzvah] are truth.*
>
> **119:152** *Concerning thy testimonies [eduth], I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.*

The stanza

The Psalm draws to its close with two stanzas of crying (Koph and Resh), built alike. "I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O LORD . . . I cried unto thee; save me" (vv. 145, 146). "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word" (vv. 147, 148). *Prevented* is "went before": he was up before the dawn, and awake before each watch of the night was called.

"They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law. Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth" (vv. 150, 151). The enemies are near; God is nearer. And they are near to him but far from God's law.

"Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever" (v. 152). It was no new discovery: he had known it a long time. God's testimonies have foundations, like a building set on rock, and they stand for ever.

ר Resh (vv. 153–160): Prayer for Faithfulness in Distress (II)

The words in this stanza: law [torah] (v. 153), word [imrah] (vv. 154, 158), statutes [choq] (v. 155), judgments [mishpat] (vv. 156, 160), testimonies [eduth] (v. 157), precepts [piqqud] (v. 159), word [dabar] (v. 160).

Structure

- N | 153, 154. The Psalmist's cry.
- O | 155–159. Jehovah far from the wicked; foes many.
- P | 160. The Word established for ever.

> **119:153** *Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law [torah].*
>
> **119:154** *Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word [imrah].*
>
> **119:155** *Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes [choq].*
>
> **119:156** *Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD [Jehovah]: quicken me according to thy judgments [mishpat].*

> **119:157** *Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies [eduth].*
>
> **119:158** *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word [imrah].*
>
> **119:159** *Consider how I love thy precepts [piqqud]: quicken me, O LORD [Jehovah], according to thy lovingkindness.*
>
> **119:160** *Thy word [dabar] is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments [mishpat] endureth for ever.*

The stanza

Three times in this stanza he prays "quicken me": "according to thy word" (v. 154), "according to thy judgments" (v. 156), "according to thy lovingkindness" (v. 159). His life rests on God's promise, God's ruling, and God's love.

"Consider mine affliction, and deliver me . . . Plead my cause, and deliver me" (vv. 153, 154). *Plead my cause* is the word for a legal defence: be my advocate. *Deliver* in verse 154 is *ga'al*, "redeem as a kinsman." "Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes" (v. 155). "Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies" (v. 157). "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved" (v. 158): *was grieved* is "loathed it."

"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever" (v. 160). *From the beginning* is "the head," "the sum": "The sum of thy word is truth." Every part of God's Word is true, and taken all together it is truth.

ש Schin (vv. 161–168): Jehovah's Word Gives Peace and Comfort

The words in this stanza: word [dabar] (v. 161), word [imrah] (v. 162), law [torah] (vv. 163, 165), judgments [mishpat] (v. 164), commandments [mitzvah] (v. 166), testimonies [eduth] (vv. 167, 168), precepts [piqqud] (v. 168), ways [derek] (v. 168).

Structure

- Q^1 | 161. Contrastive statement.
- R^1 | 162. Praise. "Thy."
- Q^2 | 163. Contrastive statement.
- R^2 | 164. Praise. "Thy."
- Q^3 | 165. Contrastive statement.
- R^3 | 166–168. Prayer. "Thy."

> **119:161** *Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word [dabar].*
> **119:162** *I rejoice at thy word [imrah], as one that findeth great spoil.*
> **119:163** *I hate and abhor lying: but thy law [torah] do I love.*
> **119:164** *Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments [mishpat].*
> **119:165** *Great peace have they which love thy law [torah]: and nothing shall offend them.*
> **119:166** *LORD [Jehovah], I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments [mitzvah].*
> **119:167** *My soul hath kept thy testimonies [eduth]; and I love them exceedingly.*
> **119:168** *I have kept thy precepts [piqqud] and thy testimonies [eduth]: for all my ways [derek] are before thee.*

The stanza

"Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word" (v. 161). He fears God's Word more than he fears princes. "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil" (v. 162): like a soldier after the battle, finding treasure. Every promise of God is spoil.

"I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love. Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments" (vv. 163, 164). *Seven times* is not a count but a figure for completeness: continually.

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (v. 165). *Peace* is *shalom*: well-being, wholeness. *Offend* is "cause to stumble." Those who love God's Word will not be tripped up. "LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments. My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee" (vv. 166–168). The Psalm began with "Blessed are the undefiled in the way" (v. 1); near its end the Psalmist says that all his ways are open before God.

ת Tau (vv. 169–176): Petitions and Statements

The words in this stanza: word [dabar] (v. 169), word [imrah] (vv. 170, 172), statutes [choq] (v. 171), commandments [mitzvah] (vv. 172, 176), precepts [piqqud] (v. 173), law [torah] (v. 174), judgments [mishpat] (v. 175).

Structure

- S^1 | 169, 170. Prayer ("Let"), and plea.
- T^1 | 171, 172. Statements: "I." Praise.
- S^2 | 173. Prayer ("Let"), and plea ("For").
- T^2 | 174. Statements: "I."
- S^3 | 175-. Prayers ("Let").
- T^3 | -175, 176-. Statement: "I." Confession.

- S^4 | -176. Prayer and plea ("For").

> **119:169** *Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD [Jehovah]: give me understanding according to thy word [dabar].*
>
> **119:170** *Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word [imrah].*
>
> **119:171** *My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes [choq].*
>
> **119:172** *My tongue shall speak of thy word [imrah]: for all thy commandments [mitzvah] are righteousness.*
>
> **119:173** *Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts [piqqud].*
>
> **119:174** *I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD [Jehovah]; and thy law [torah] is my delight.*
>
> **119:175** *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments [mishpat] help me.*
>
> **119:176** *I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments [mitzvah].*

The stanza

The last stanza gathers the whole Psalm. Four times "Let": "Let my cry come near before thee . . . Let my supplication come before thee . . . Let thine hand help me . . . Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee" (vv. 169, 170, 173, 175). He asks for understanding and deliverance "according to thy word" (vv. 169, 170), and promises praise: "My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness" (vv. 171, 172). *Utter* is "pour forth," like a spring.

"I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight" (v. 174). And then the last verse: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments" (v. 176). After 175 verses of love for the Word, the Psalmist ends not with a boast but with a confession. He is a sheep that has wandered. He does not ask to find his own way back; he asks God to seek him. The Lord Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10; 15:4–7). The Psalm that began "Blessed are the undefiled in the way" ends with a man who has gone astray, and who is sure that the Shepherd will come for him, because he has not forgotten His Word.

Its close

Psalm 119 has no sub-scription. Psalm 120 begins with its own super-scription, "A Song of degrees."

Looking back

Psalm 119 is member A^2: quickening and sustaining by the revealed Word. It answers to Psalm 107 (A^1), where "He sent his word, and healed them." In Psalm 107 four kinds of men in trouble were delivered by the Word. In Psalm 119 one man, young, afflicted, mocked by the proud and pressed by princes, is kept alive by it from Aleph to Tau. Every word for the Word shows another side of it: God's teaching, His witness, His charges, His fixed decrees, His commands, His rulings, His speech, His promises, and His way. And every one of them, in the end, is a gift of life: "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me" (v. 50).

Psalms 120–134: The Songs of Degrees

A. What these Psalms are

Fifteen Psalms in a row bear the Title "A Song of degrees" (*shir hamma'aloth*, "a song of *the* steps"). They are short, and they are among the most loved in the Psalter: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" (121); "I was glad when they said unto me" (122); "Except the LORD build the house" (127); "Out of the depths" (130); "Behold, how good and how pleasant" (133).

What are "the degrees"? Two answers are given.

- **The usual answer** is that they are "Songs of Ascents," sung by pilgrims as they went up to Jerusalem for the three great feasts: "Whither the tribes go up" (122:4). Jerusalem stands high, and men always "went up" to it.
- **The answer of Dr. Thirtle**, which Bullinger followed in *The Chief Musician* and *The Companion Bible*, is that "the degrees" are the steps of the sundial of Ahaz. When Hezekiah was sick to death, God promised him fifteen more years of life, and gave him a sign: the shadow went back ten degrees on the dial (2 Kings 20:1–11; Isa. 38:1–8). Hezekiah then said: "Jehovah was ready to save me: therefore we will sing *my songs* to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of Jehovah" (Isa. 38:20). The word for "degrees" on the dial (*ma'aloth*, used five times in Isa. 38:8 and 2 Kings 20:9–11) is the word in the Titles, with the article: "*the* degrees."

On this view, Hezekiah gathered fifteen songs, one for each year added to his life. Ten have no writer named; these were his own. Five bear names: four of David (122, 124, 131, 133) and one of Solomon (127). The fifteen fall into five groups of three. In each group, the first Psalm speaks of *distress*, the second of *trust* in Jehovah, and the third of *blessing and peace in Zion*. Solomon's Psalm (127) stands at the exact centre, with seven on either side; and in each seven there are two of David and five of Hezekiah. The Name *Jehovah* occurs twenty-four times in each seven, and *Jah* once in each (122:4; 130:3). The background of many lines fits Hezekiah's reign: Rabshakeh's lies and blasphemy (120:2, 3; 123:3, 4), the Assyrian flood (124:4), the escape like a bird from a snare (124:7; Sennacherib boasted that he shut Hezekiah up "like a bird in a cage"), the threat to Zion (125; 129), the return from the sickness and from the danger (126), the childless king (127; 128), and the care for the house of God (132; 134).

Weight: both views are possible, and they do not exclude each other. The Hezekiah view explains the number fifteen, the article ("*the* degrees"), the careful order of the groups, and Isaiah 38:20; the pilgrim view explains 122:1–4 well, and is the older Jewish tradition. This study follows Bullinger and Thirtle, as the view that best accounts for the facts, and notes the pilgrim reading where it fits (Appendix J).

B. Its structure

- G^1 | 120–122. Group I: distress (120), trust (121), blessing and peace in Zion (122).

- G^2 | 123–125. Group II: distress (123), trust (124), blessing and peace in Zion (125).
- G^3 | 126–128. Group III: distress (126), trust (127), blessing and peace in Zion (128).
- G^4 | 129–131. Group IV: distress (129), trust (130), blessing and peace in Zion (131).
- G^5 | 132–134. Group V: distress (132), trust (133), blessing from the house of Jehovah (134).

Psalm 120 — "In My Distress I Cried unto the LORD [Jehovah]"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group I, first (distress). **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah (see above). **Occasion:** not named; see the Introduction.

Introduction

The Songs of Degrees open with distress. The singer is surrounded by liars and by men of war, like one living far away among barbarians, in "Mesech" and "the tents of Kedar" (v. 5). *The Companion Bible* applies the lying tongue to Rabshakeh, who stood at Jerusalem's wall and told the people not to trust Hezekiah or Jehovah (2 Kings 18:19–35).

Structure

- A | 1. Hezekiah and Jehovah.
- B | 2. His prayer to Jehovah.
- *B* | 3, 4. His apostrophe to the false tongue.
- *A* | 5–7. Hezekiah and his enemies.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

> **1** *In my distress I cried unto the LORD [Jehovah], and he heard me.*
> **2** *Deliver my soul, O LORD [Jehovah], from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.*
> **3** *What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?*
> **4** *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.*
> **5** *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*
> **6** *My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.*
> **7** *I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.*

Psalm 120 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **120:1** *In my distress I cried unto the LORD [Jehovah], and he heard me.*
> **120:2** *Deliver my soul, O LORD [Jehovah], from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.*
> **120:3** *What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?*
> **120:4** *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.*

In my distress I cried unto the LORD [Jehovah], and he heard me. *Heard* is "answered." **Deliver my soul, O LORD [Jehovah], from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?** What will God do to the liar? **Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.** *Juniper* is the broom tree, whose wood burns long and hot. The liar's punishment matches his sin: his words were arrows and fire (57:4; James 3:6); God's arrows and burning coals will answer them.

> **120:5** *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*
>
> **120:6** *My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.*
>
> **120:7** *I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.*

Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! *Mesech* (Meshech) was a people of the far north (Gen. 10:2; Ezek. 38:2); *Kedar* were desert Arabs of the south-east (Gen. 25:13; Isa. 21:16, 17). The names stand for wild, warlike peoples, as we might say "barbarians." **My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.** Literally, "I am peace." Hezekiah sent tribute to buy peace (2 Kings 18:14–16); Sennacherib came anyway.

Looking back

Psalm 120 is the first of Group I: distress. The first word of the Songs of Degrees is "distress"; the first answer is "he heard me."

Psalm 121 — "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes unto the Hills"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group I, second (trust). **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 121 is the Psalm of Jehovah the Keeper. The word *keep* (*shamar*, "guard," "watch over") occurs six times in eight verses (vv. 3, 4, 5, 7, 7, 8; "preserve" in vv. 7, 8 is the same word).

Structure

- C^1 | 1, 2. Jehovah's help proclaimed.
- a | 1-. Contemplation of creation.
- b | -1. Whence can help come? (Question.)
- *b* | 2-. Whence help comes. (Answer.)
- *a* | -2. Contemplation of the Creator.
- C^2 | 3–8. Jehovah's help promised.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

> **1** *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.*
> **2** *My help cometh from the LORD [Jehovah], which made heaven and earth.*
> **3** *He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.*
> **4** *Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*
> **5** *The LORD [Jehovah] is thy keeper: the LORD [Jehovah] is thy shade upon thy right hand.*
> **6** *The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.*
> **7** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.*
> **8** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.*

Psalm 121 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **121:1** *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.*
> **121:2** *My help cometh from the LORD [Jehovah], which made heaven and earth.*

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. The second line is a question: "From whence cometh my help?" Hills were the places of the idol shrines (Jer. 3:23), and the hills

around Jerusalem were full of the enemy's camps. Will help come from the hills? **My help cometh from the LORD [Jehovah], which made heaven and earth.** No: from the Maker of the hills. Hezekiah prayed to "Jehovah God of Israel . . . thou hast made heaven and earth" (2 Kings 19:15).

> **121:3** *He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.*
>
> **121:4** *Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*
>
> **121:5** *The LORD [Jehovah] is thy keeper: the LORD [Jehovah] is thy shade upon thy right hand.*
>
> **121:6** *The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.*
>
> **121:7** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.*
>
> **121:8** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.*

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. *Will not* is "may He not": the speaker turns to bless. **Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.** The God who watched Israel's night in Egypt (Ex. 12:42). The gods of the heathen were thought to sleep (1 Kings 18:27). **The LORD [Jehovah] is thy keeper: the LORD [Jehovah] is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.** Protection from every harm, by day and by night. **The LORD [Jehovah] shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD [Jehovah] shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.** All of life, its work and its rest (Deut. 28:6).

Looking back

Psalm 121 is the second of Group I: trust. Help comes not from the hills but from their Maker, the Keeper who never sleeps.

Psalm 122 — "I Was Glad When They Said unto Me"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group I, third (blessing and peace in Zion). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 122 is a Psalm of David about Jerusalem: the house of Jehovah, the thrones of David's house, and the peace of the city. Hezekiah, who opened the doors of the temple in the first month of his reign (2 Chron. 29:3), found it ready to his hand. It is the Psalm that best fits the pilgrim reading: "Whither the tribes go up" (v. 4).

Structure

- D | 1. The house of Jehovah.
- E | 2. Jerusalem spoken to.
- F | 3. Jerusalem spoken of.
- G | 4. Description.
- *G* | 5. Description.
- *F* | 6-. Jerusalem spoken of.
- *E* | -6–8. Jerusalem spoken to.
- *D* | 9. The house of Jehovah.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees of David.

> **1** *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **2** *Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.*
> **3** *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:*
> **4** *Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD [Jah], unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **5** *For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.*
> **6** *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*
> **7** *Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.*
> **8** *For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.*
> **9** *Because of the house of the LORD [Jehovah] our God I will seek thy good.*

Psalm 122 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **122:1** *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **122:2** *Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.*
>
> **122:3** *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:*
>
> **122:4** *Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD [Jah], unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **122:5** *For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.*

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD [Jehovah]. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. *Shall stand* is "have stood": we are here. **Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.** Built close and joined together, its houses and walls one whole; and a picture of a people joined in one. **Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD [Jah], unto the testimony of Israel.** All the tribes went up three times a year (Deut. 16:16). *The testimony* is the Ark of the testimony, or the command to go up. **to give thanks unto the name of the LORD [Jehovah]. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.** The king and his sons judged there (2 Sam. 8:18; 15:2).

> **122:6** *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*
>
> **122:7** *Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.*
>
> **122:8** *For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.*
>
> **122:9** *Because of the house of the LORD [Jehovah] our God I will seek thy good.*

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. The Hebrew plays on the name: *sha'alu shelom Yerushalayim yishlayu*. *Jerusalem* contains the word *shalom*, peace. **Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD [Jehovah] our God I will seek thy good.**

Looking back

Psalm 122 is the third of Group I: blessing and peace in Zion. From distress among the warlike (120), through trust (121), to peace within Jerusalem's walls.

Psalm 123 — "Unto Thee Lift I Up Mine Eyes"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group II, first (distress). **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Four verses: eyes lifted up to God, as a servant watches his master's hand, waiting for mercy, because "we are exceedingly filled with contempt." *The Companion Bible* connects the scorn with Rabshakeh's mockery (2 Kings 18:23–35; 19:3).

Structure

- H | 1. Prayer to Jehovah.
- J | 2-. "As the eyes . . . look." } Comparison.
- *J* | -2. "So our eyes look."
- *H* | 3, 4. Prayer to Jehovah.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

> **1** *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.*
>
> **2** *Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD [Jehovah] our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*
>
> **3** *Have mercy upon us, O LORD [Jehovah], have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.*
>
> **4** *Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.*

Psalm 123 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **123:1** *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.*
>
> **123:2** *Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD [Jehovah] our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*
>
> **123:3** *Have mercy upon us, O LORD [Jehovah], have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.*

> **123:4** *Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.*

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Hezekiah prayed, "O Jehovah God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims" (2 Kings 19:15). **Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD [Jehovah] our God, until that he have mercy upon us.** A servant watches for the smallest sign from the master's hand. **Have mercy upon us, O LORD [Jehovah], have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.** *At ease* is arrogantly secure; the same word is used of Sennacherib's "tumult" in 2 Kings 19:28.

Looking back

Psalm 123 is the first of Group II: distress, under scorn, with eyes on God's hand.

Psalm 124 — "If It Had Not Been the LORD [Jehovah] Who Was on Our Side"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group II, second (trust). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

A Psalm of David that Hezekiah found fitting: the nation would have been swallowed alive, drowned in a flood, caught like a bird, had Jehovah not been on its side.

Structure

- K | 1, 2. Jehovah our help.
- L | e | 3. Voracity of enemies.
- f | 4, 5. Comparison: waters.
- M | 6. Blessed be Jehovah.
- *L* | *e* | 6-. Voracity of enemies.
- *f* | 7. Comparison: fowlers.
- *K* | 8. Jehovah our help.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees of David.

> **1** *If it had not been the LORD [Jehovah] who was on our side, now may Israel say;*
> **2** *If it had not been the LORD [Jehovah] who was on our side, when men rose up against us:*
> **3** *Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:*
> **4** *Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:*
> **5** *Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.*
> **6** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah], who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.*
> **7** *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.*
> **8** *Our help is in the name of the LORD [Jehovah], who made heaven and earth.*

Psalm 124 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **124:1** *If it had not been the LORD [Jehovah] who was on our side, now may Israel say;*
> **124:2** *If it had not been the LORD [Jehovah] who was on our side, when men rose up against us:*

> **124:3** *Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:*
>
> **124:4** *Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:*
>
> **124:5** *Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.*

If it had not been the LORD [Jehovah] who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the LORD [Jehovah] who was on our side, when men rose up against us. The repetition is the figure *Epanadiplosis*. *Men* is *adam*. **Then they had swallowed us up quick.** *Quick* is "alive," as the earth swallowed Korah (Num. 16:30). **Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.** Isaiah pictured the Assyrian as a flood that would "overflow and go over" and reach "even to the neck" (Isa. 8:7, 8).

> **124:6** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah], who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.*
>
> **124:7** *Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.*
>
> **124:8** *Our help is in the name of the LORD [Jehovah], who made heaven and earth.*

Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah], who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Sennacherib wrote on his prism that he shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." The cage was broken. **Our help is in the name of the LORD [Jehovah], who made heaven and earth.** As 121:2.

Looking back

Psalm 124 is the second of Group II: trust. Without Jehovah, swallowed; with Him, escaped.

Psalm 125 — "As the Mountains Are Round About Jerusalem"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group II, third (blessing and peace in Zion). **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah. **Occasion:** not named.

Structure

- N | 1–3. Israel's security.
- O | 4-. Jehovah's goodness.
- P | -4. The upright.
- *P* | 5-. The evildoers.
- *O* | -5-. Jehovah's judgment.
- *N* | -5. Israel's security.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

> **1** *They that trust in the LORD [Jehovah] shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.*
> **2** *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD [Jehovah] is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.*
> **3** *For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.*
> **4** *Do good, O LORD [Jehovah], unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.*
> **5** *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD [Jehovah] shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.*

Psalm 125 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **125:1** *They that trust in the LORD [Jehovah] shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.*
> **125:2** *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD [Jehovah] is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.*
> **125:3** *For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.*

They that trust in the LORD [Jehovah] shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. *Trust* is "confide." **As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD [Jehovah] is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.** Jerusalem is ringed by higher hills: Olivet to the east, and others to the south and west. **For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.** *Rod* is the sceptre: the rule of the lawless one, the Assyrian (Isa. 10:5, 24; 30:31), shall not stay on the land allotted to God's people. **lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.** If oppression lasted too long, even the righteous might give way.

> **125:4** *Do good, O LORD [Jehovah], unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.*
>
> **125:5** *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD [Jehovah] shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.*

Do good, O LORD [Jehovah], unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD [Jehovah] shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel. The last words, "peace upon Israel," close Group II (and again 128:6).

Looking back

Psalm 125 is the third of Group II: Zion immovable, surrounded by Jehovah, and peace upon Israel.

Psalm 126 — "When the LORD [Jehovah] Turned Again the Captivity of Zion"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group III, first (distress). **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Turned again the captivity does not have to mean a return from exile. It means "restored the fortunes" (Job 42:10; see 85:1). When Jerusalem woke to find the Assyrian army dead (Isa. 37:36), it was like a dream. "Then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them" (v. 2): after the deliverance "many brought gifts unto Jehovah to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah . . . so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth" (2 Chron. 32:23). Then comes the prayer for the land, still waiting for full restoration: "Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south" (v. 4). In the sign Isaiah gave Hezekiah, the people would eat what grew of itself for two years, and sow and reap in the third (Isa. 37:30): sowing in tears, and reaping in joy.

Structure

- Q | 1-. Distress.
- R | -1. Its ending: as dreams.
- S | 2, 3. Joy.
- *Q* | 4-. Distress.
- *R* | -4. Its ending: as streams.
- *S* | 5, 6. Joy.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

> **1** *When the LORD [Jehovah] turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.*
>
> **2** *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD [Jehovah] hath done great things for them.*
>
> **3** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.*
>
> **4** *Turn again our captivity, O LORD [Jehovah], as the streams in the south.*
>
> **5** *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*
>
> **6** *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

Psalm 126 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **126:1** *When the LORD [Jehovah] turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.*
>
> **126:2** *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD [Jehovah] hath done great things for them.*
>
> **126:3** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.*

When the LORD [Jehovah] turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD [Jehovah] hath done great things for them. The LORD [Jehovah] hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. The nations said it; Israel says it back: the figure *Anadiplosis*.

> **126:4** *Turn again our captivity, O LORD [Jehovah], as the streams in the south.*
>
> **126:5** *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.*
>
> **126:6** *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

Turn again our captivity, O LORD [Jehovah], as the streams in the south. The *south* is the Negev, dry for most of the year; after the winter rains its stream-beds suddenly run full. Let restoration come like that. **They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed.** *Precious* is "a trail of seed," the handful he scatters. Seed was scarce after the invasion; to sow it was to give up food that might have been eaten. **shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.**

Looking back

Psalm 126 is the first of Group III: distress, now remembered as a dream, and the prayer for full restoration.

Psalm 127 — "Except the LORD [Jehovah] Build the House"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group III, second (trust); the central Psalm of the fifteen. **Writer:** Solomon ("for Solomon": by, or concerning, Solomon). **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 127 stands at the exact centre of the Songs of Degrees, with seven on either side. It is the only Psalm of Solomon in Book V (the other is 72). Its subject is trust: all human building and guarding is in vain without Jehovah, and children are His gift.

The Companion Bible sees why Hezekiah chose it. When he was sick to death, Hezekiah had no son: Manasseh, his heir, was born three years after his recovery, for he was twelve when he began to reign fifteen years later (2 Kings 20:1–6; 21:1). The promise to David's house hung on him (2 Sam. 7:12). A Psalm about Jehovah building the house (the household as well as the building) and giving sons was the heart of his trust.

The *beloved* of verse 2 is *yedid*: the name God gave Solomon at his birth was *Jedidiah*, "beloved of Jah" (2 Sam. 12:25).

Structure

- T | g | 1-. Human builders: vain.
- h | -1. Human defenders of the city: vain.
- U | 2-. Human labours: vain.
- *U* | -2. Divine gifts.
- *T* | *g* | 3. Divine provision of builders: sons.
- *h* | 4, 5. Divine provision of defenders: sons.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees for Solomon.

> **1** *Except the LORD [Jehovah] build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD [Jehovah] keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*
>
> **2** *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*
>
> **3** *Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD [Jehovah]: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*
>
> **4** *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*

> **5** *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*

Psalm 127 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **127:1** *Except the LORD [Jehovah] build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD [Jehovah] keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*
>
> **127:2** *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

Except the LORD [Jehovah] build the house, they labour in vain that build it. *House* is both building and family (2 Sam. 7:11, 27). **except the LORD [Jehovah] keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.** Bread earned by painful toil (Gen. 3:17). **for so he giveth his beloved sleep.** *In sleep*: God gives to His beloved even while they sleep. He gave Adam a wife in his sleep (Gen. 2:21), and Solomon wisdom in a dream (1 Kings 3:5–12).

> **127:3** *Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD [Jehovah]: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*
>
> **127:4** *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*
>
> **127:5** *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD [Jehovah]: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Sons born to a man while he is young grow up while he is still strong, and stand beside him. **Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.** The city gate was the place of courts and councils. A man with sons is not left alone before his accusers.

Looking back

Psalm 127 is the second of Group III and the centre of the fifteen: trust in Jehovah as the builder of the house, the keeper of the city, and the giver of sons.

Psalm 128 — "Blessed Is Every One That Feareth the LORD [Jehovah]"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group III, third (blessing and peace in Zion). **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah. **Occasion:** not named.

Structure

- V | 1. Blessedness of those who revere Jehovah. (Third person.)
- W | i | 2. Thou. } Second person.
- k | 3-. Thy house and thy wife.
- l | -3. Thy sons. Peace.
- *V* | 4. Blessedness of those who revere Jehovah. (Third person.)
- *W* | *i* | 5-. Thou. } Second person.
- *k* | -5. Thy city and thy life.
- *l* | 6. Thy sons. Peace.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

> **1** *Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD [Jehovah]; that walketh in his ways.*
> **2** *For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.*
> **3** *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.*
> **4** *Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **5** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.*
> **6** *Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.*

Psalm 128 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **128:1** *Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD [Jehovah]; that walketh in his ways.*
> **128:2** *For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.*
> **128:3** *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.*

> **128:4** *Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **128:5** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.*
>
> **128:6** *Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.*

Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD [Jehovah]; that walketh in his ways. *Blessed* is "O the happinesses of" (1:1). **For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands.** Not taken by an enemy (Deut. 28:33; Isa. 62:8, 9). **happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.** The vine and the olive, the two great trees of the land. **Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD [Jehovah].** *Man* is *geber*, a strong man. **The LORD [Jehovah] shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.** Hezekiah, promised fifteen years and then given a son, could sing it.

Looking back

Psalm 128 is the third of Group III: the blessing of the man who fears Jehovah, his home, his children, and peace on Israel.

Psalm 129 — "Many a Time Have They Afflicted Me from My Youth"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group IV, first (distress). **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah. **Occasion:** not named.

Structure

- X | 1, 2-. Distress, caused by enemies.
- Y | -2. Failure of enemies: stated.
- X | 3. Distress, caused by enemies.
- Y | 4–8. Failure of enemies: prayed for.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

> **1** *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:*
> **2** *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.*
> **3** *The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.*
> **4** *The LORD [Jehovah] is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.*
> **5** *Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.*
> **6** *Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:*
> **7** *Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.*
> **8** *Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD [Jehovah] be upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*

Psalm 129 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **129:1** *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:*
> **129:2** *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.*
> **129:3** *The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.*
> **129:4** *The LORD [Jehovah] is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.*

Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say. Israel speaks as one man. Its youth was Egypt (Hos. 11:1). **Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me. The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.** The marks of the whip, long as furrows in a field (Isa. 51:23; 50:6). **The LORD [Jehovah] is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.** The cords that bound the plough to the ox, or bound the prisoner.

> **129:5** *Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.*
>
> **129:6** *Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:*
>
> **129:7** *Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.*
>
> **129:8** *Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD [Jehovah] be upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD [Jehovah].*

Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion. Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up. Grass on a flat clay roof springs up and dies at once, with no depth of soil. The same picture is used of the Assyrian's victims in Isaiah 37:27, and here it is turned on the Assyrians. **Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom. Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD [Jehovah] be upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD [Jehovah].** The greeting at harvest (Ruth 2:4). No one will bless a crop like that.

Looking back

Psalm 129 is the first of Group IV: Israel ploughed and scourged, never overcome; and its enemies like grass on a roof.

Psalm 130 — "Out of the Depths Have I Cried unto Thee"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group IV, second (trust). **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 130 is the sixth of the seven Psalms the church long called "penitential" (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143). From the depths of sin and trouble the Psalmist cries, and finds that "there is forgiveness with thee." Hezekiah said in his song: "thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isa. 38:17). The *Jah* of verse 3 is the one *Jah* in the second seven Songs of Degrees.

Structure

- A | 1–3. Waiting on Jehovah.
- B | 4. Reason: "For."
- *A* | 5–7-. Waiting for Jehovah.
- *B* | -7, 8. Reason: "For."

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

> **1** *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah].*
> **2** *Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.*
> **3** *If thou, LORD [Jah], shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*
> **4** *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*
> **5** *I wait for the LORD [Jehovah], my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.*
> **6** *My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*
> **7** *Let Israel hope in the LORD [Jehovah]: for with the LORD [Jehovah] there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.*
> **8** *And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*

Psalm 130 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **130:1** *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah].*

> **130:2** *Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.*
>
> **130:3** *If thou, LORD [Jah], shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*
>
> **130:4** *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah]. The depths of the sea, a figure for overwhelming trouble (69:2, 14). **Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.** *Lord* is one of the places the scribes record as altered from *Jehovah* (also vv. 3, 6). **If thou, LORD [Jah], shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?** *Mark* is "keep watch on," keep a record of. No one could stand in judgment. **But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.** *Forgiveness* is "the forgiveness": the forgiveness that God alone gives. Forgiveness does not make men careless of God; it makes them fear Him with reverence.

> **130:5** *I wait for the LORD [Jehovah], my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.*
>
> **130:6** *My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*
>
> **130:7** *Let Israel hope in the LORD [Jehovah]: for with the LORD [Jehovah] there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.*
>
> **130:8** *And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*

I wait for the LORD [Jehovah], my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. The Word again (119:81). **My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.** The watchmen on the walls, or the priests waiting for the dawn to offer the morning sacrifice. The repetition is the figure *Epizeuxis*. **Let Israel hope in the LORD [Jehovah]: for with the LORD [Jehovah] there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.** *Redemption* is *peduth*, deliverance by power. **And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.** *He* is emphatic: He Himself.

Looking back

Psalm 130 is the second of Group IV: trust, from the depths of guilt, in the God with whom is forgiveness and plenteous redemption.

Psalm 131 — "My Soul Is Even as a Weaned Child"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group IV, third (blessing and peace in Zion). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Three verses: one of the shortest Psalms, and one of the most tender. David says that he has not reached for things too high for him, but has quieted his soul like a weaned child with its mother: no longer crying for what it wants, but content to be near her.

Structure

- C | 1-. Jehovah. My comfort and peace.
- D | -1, 2-. I have comforted myself in Thee.
- *D* | -2. I have comforted myself in Thee.
- *C* | 3. Jehovah. Israel's comfort and peace.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees of David.

> **1** *LORD [Jehovah], my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*
>
> **2** *Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.*
>
> **3** *Let Israel hope in the LORD [Jehovah] from henceforth and for ever.*

Psalm 131 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **131:1** *LORD [Jehovah], my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*
>
> **131:2** *Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.*
>
> **131:3** *Let Israel hope in the LORD [Jehovah] from henceforth and for ever.*

LORD [Jehovah], my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. *Exercise myself* is "walk": he has not gone about among matters beyond him. David did not seize the throne; he waited for God to give it (1 Sam. 24:6; 26:11). **Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother.** *Behaved* is "soothed." **my**

soul is even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the LORD [Jehovah] from henceforth and for ever.
The quiet heart of one man becomes the hope of the nation.

Looking back

Psalm 131 is the third of Group IV: peace, the quieted soul of a man content in God.

Psalm 132 — "LORD [Jehovah], Remember David"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group V, first (distress); the longest of the fifteen. **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 132 is the "theme" Psalm of the last group. It recalls David's oath to find a place for the Ark (vv. 1–9) and Jehovah's oath to David to set his son on his throne (vv. 10–18). The two oaths answer each other. Solomon used verses 8–10 at the dedication of the temple (2 Chron. 6:41, 42). Hezekiah, who had no son when he was sick, and whose great work was the cleansing of the temple, had every reason to plead "LORD, remember David" (2 Kings 19:34; 20:6, "for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake").

Peter quoted verse 11 on the day of Pentecost: David knew "that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:30).

Structure

- F | 1, 2. David sware unto Jehovah.
- G | 3–5. What David sware.
- H | 6, 7. The dwelling-place for the Ark: search.
- J | 8. Prayer for the Ark's rest.
- K | 9-. Prayer for the priests.
- L | -9. Prayer for the saints.
- M | 10. Prayer for Messiah.
- *F* | 11-. Jehovah sware unto David.
- *G* | -11, 12. What Jehovah sware.
- *H* | 13. The dwelling-place for the Ark: designation.
- *J* | 14, 15. Answer to prayer for rest (v. 8).
- *K* | 16-. Answer to prayer for the priests (v. 9).
- *L* | -16. Answer to prayer for the saints (v. 9).
- *M* | 17, 18. Answer to prayer for Messiah (v. 10).

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

1 *LORD [Jehovah], remember David, and all his afflictions:*
2 *How he sware unto the LORD [Jehovah], and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;*
3 *Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;*
4 *I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,*
5 *Until I find out a place for the LORD [Jehovah], an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.*
6 *Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.*
7 *We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.*
8 *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah], into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.*
9 *Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.*
10 *For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.*
11 *The LORD [Jehovah] hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.*
12 *If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.*
13 *For the LORD [Jehovah] hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.*
14 *This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.*
15 *I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.*
16 *I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.*
17 *There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.*
18 *His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.*

Psalm 132 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

132:1 *LORD [Jehovah], remember David, and all his afflictions:*
132:2 *How he sware unto the LORD [Jehovah], and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;*
132:3 *Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;*
132:4 *I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,*
132:5 *Until I find out a place for the LORD [Jehovah], an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.*

LORD [Jehovah], remember David, and all his afflictions. All his anxious care (1 Chron. 22:14). **How he sware unto the LORD [Jehovah], and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob.** *The Mighty One of Jacob*, a title first used by Jacob himself (Gen. 49:24). **Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, Until I find out a place for the LORD [Jehovah], an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.** David's resolve (2 Sam. 7:1, 2).

132:6 *Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.*
132:7 *We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.*
132:8 *Arise, O LORD [Jehovah], into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.*

> **132:9** *Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.*
>
> **132:10** *For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.*

Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah. David's home district, Bethlehem-Ephratah (Ruth 4:11; Mic. 5:2), where he first heard of the Ark. **we found it in the fields of the wood.** *The wood* is *Jaar*: Kirjath-jearim, "city of woods," where the Ark stayed for twenty years (1 Sam. 7:1, 2; 1 Chron. 13:5, 6). **We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. Arise, O LORD [Jehovah], into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.** Moses' words when the Ark set out (Num. 10:35), and Solomon's at the dedication (2 Chron. 6:41). **Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.** Do not reject the anointed king.

> **132:11** *The LORD [Jehovah] hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.*
>
> **132:12** *If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.*

The LORD [Jehovah] hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. See the Introduction. **If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.** The condition concerned the line of kings; the promise of the One Son was unconditional (89:30–37).

> **132:13** *For the LORD [Jehovah] hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.*
>
> **132:14** *This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.*
>
> **132:15** *I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.*
>
> **132:16** *I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.*
>
> **132:17** *There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.*
>
> **132:18** *His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.*

For the LORD [Jehovah] hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. God answers David's search (v. 5) with His own choice. **I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation.** More than the righteousness prayed for (v. 9). **and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.** More than "shout for joy." Every answer goes beyond the prayer. **There will I make the horn of David to bud.** *Bud* is "to sprout": the *Branch* of David (Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; Luke 1:69). **I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.** A son to keep his line burning (1 Kings 11:36; 15:4). **His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.**

Looking back

Psalm 132 is the first of Group V: distress in David's afflictions and in the danger to his line, and Jehovah's oath that answers it beyond every prayer.

Psalm 133 — "Behold, How Good and How Pleasant"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group V, second (trust). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Three verses on the blessing of brothers dwelling together "in unity," literally "also together," "as one." When David was made king over all Israel, all the tribes came "with one heart" (1 Chron. 12:38). In Hezekiah's day, after centuries of division, he invited all Israel, north and south, to keep the Passover in Jerusalem, and "the hand of God was to give them one heart" (2 Chron. 30:1–12). The great Passover that followed was the first since Solomon's day (2 Chron. 30:26).

Structure

- N | 1. The blessing enjoyed: unity.
- O | m | 2-. Comparison: the anointing oil.
- n | -2. Descent of the oil.
- *O* | *m* | 3-. Comparison: Hermon's dew.
- *n* | -3-. Descent of the dew.
- *N* | -3. The blessing enjoyed: life.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees of David.

> **1** *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*
>
> **2** *It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;*
>
> **3** *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD [Jehovah] commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*

Psalm 133 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **133:1** *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*
>
> **133:2** *It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;*
>
> **133:3** *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD [Jehovah] commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the

skirts of his garments. The holy anointing oil poured on Aaron's head (Ex. 29:7; 30:22–30; Lev. 8:12). *Skirts* is "the opening," the collar of the robe. The oil ran down from the head over the beard to the robe, where the names of all twelve tribes were set on the breastplate and the shoulders (Ex. 28:9–21): one oil, flowing over all the tribes together. **As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.** Hermon in the far north is famous for heavy dew. The picture is of the same blessing falling on the north and on Zion in the south: the tribes made one. **for there the LORD [Jehovah] commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.** *There*: in Zion, where brothers meet.

Looking back

Psalm 133 is the second of Group V: trust, and the blessing of unity flowing from Zion.

Psalm 134 — "Bless Ye the LORD [Jehovah], All Ye Servants of the LORD [Jehovah]"

Place: Book V; Songs of Degrees, Group V, third (blessing from the house of Jehovah); the last of the fifteen. **Writer:** not named; Hezekiah. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

The last Song of Degrees is a call to the Levites who kept watch in the temple by night (1 Chron. 9:33) to bless Jehovah, and their blessing in return. Hezekiah restored the courses of the priests and Levites (2 Chron. 31:2). The fifteen songs, which began with distress among the warlike (120), end with blessing from Zion.

Structure

- P | 1-. Blessing given to Jehovah.
- Q | -1. The servants: their watch.
- *Q* | 2. The servants: their service.
- *P* | 3. Blessing given by Jehovah.

The Psalm

A Song of degrees.

> **1** *Behold, bless ye the LORD [Jehovah], all ye servants of the LORD [Jehovah], which by night stand in the house of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **2** *Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **3** *The LORD [Jehovah] that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.*

Psalm 134 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **134:1** *Behold, bless ye the LORD [Jehovah], all ye servants of the LORD [Jehovah], which by night stand in the house of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **134:2** *Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **134:3** *The LORD [Jehovah] that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.*

Behold, bless ye the LORD [Jehovah], all ye servants of the LORD [Jehovah], which by night stand in the house of the LORD [Jehovah]. *Stand* is to stand on duty: they had no seats in the tabernacle or temple, for their work was never finished (compare Heb. 10:11, 12). **Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD [Jehovah]. The LORD [Jehovah] that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.** The answer from the priests: Jehovah blesses those who bless Him.

Looking back

Psalm 134 closes the Songs of Degrees. Fifteen songs, perhaps one for each year added to Hezekiah's life, move five times from distress through trust to blessing, and end in the house of Jehovah by night, with blessing given and received.

Looking Back on the Songs of Degrees

- **Five groups, one pattern.** In each group of three: distress, trust in Jehovah, and blessing and peace in Zion.
- **The centre.** Solomon's Psalm (127): except Jehovah build the house, all labour is vain; and children are His heritage.
- **The setting.** Read as Hezekiah's songs, they follow the Assyrian crisis and the king's sickness and recovery: lying tongues and scorn (120, 123), a flood and a snare (124), Zion immovable (125), the dream of deliverance (126), the son that was promised (127, 128), the plowers (129), forgiveness out of the depths (130), the quiet heart (131), the oath to David (132), the tribes made one (133), and the watch in the temple (134).
- **The lesson.** However the Title is read, these are the songs of a people going up to God: from distress to blessing, by trust.

Psalms 135–145: Praise, Deliverance, and the True David

A. What this group is about

After the Songs of Degrees come two Psalms of praise (135, 136); a Psalm of captives (137); praise (138); deliverance from the evil of one's own heart (139); five prayers of David in danger, each turning to praise (140–144); and then "David's Psalm of praise" (145), the last Psalm with a writer's name, in which the true David leads His people's praise.

B. Its structure

- H^1 | 135, 136. Praise: two Psalms linked by one structure.
- G^1 | 137. Deliverance of captives.
- H^2 | 138. Praise.
- G^2 | 139. Deliverance from an evil heart.
- H^3 | 140–144. Prayer and praise.
- E | 145. The true David leading the praises of His people.

Psalm 135 — "Praise Ye the Name of the LORD [Jehovah]"

Place: Book V; Psalms 135–145; member H^1, first (praise). **Writer:** not named; *The Companion Bible* suggests Hezekiah, continuing the Songs of Degrees. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 135 takes up the call of Psalm 134 to "the servants of the LORD" who "stand in the house of the LORD" (134:1; 135:1, 2), and gives the reasons for praise: Jehovah chose Israel (v. 4), He is above all gods (v. 5), He rules creation (vv. 6, 7), He brought Israel out of Egypt and gave them Canaan (vv. 8–12). The idols of the nations are nothing (vv. 15–18, from Psalm 115). It begins and ends with Hallelujah.

Psalms 135 and 136 are a pair, with one structure running through both: praise, creation, deliverance from Egypt, the journey, the gift of the land, God's goodness to His people, and praise.

Structure

- R | 1-. Hallelujah.
- S | -1–3. Exhortation to praise: servants.
- T | V | 4. Jehovah's choice of Israel.
- W | 5–12. Superiority over idols.
- U | 13-. Jehovah addressed: His Name.
- *U* | -13. Jehovah addressed: His memorial.
- *T* | *V* | 14. Jehovah's vindication of Israel.
- *W* | 15–18. Superiority over idols.
- *S* | 19–21-. Exhortation to praise: Israel.
- *R* | -21. Hallelujah.

The Psalm

Psalm 135 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the name of the LORD [Jehovah]; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD [Jehovah].*
> **2** *Ye that stand in the house of the LORD [Jehovah], in the courts of the house of our God,*
> **3** *Praise the LORD [Jah]; for the LORD [Jehovah] is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.*
> **4** *For the LORD [Jah] hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.*

> **5** *For I know that the LORD [Jehovah] is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.*
>
> **6** *Whatsoever the LORD [Jehovah] pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*
>
> **7** *He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.*
>
> **8** *Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.*
>
> **9** *Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.*
>
> **10** *Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;*
>
> **11** *Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan:*
>
> **12** *And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.*
>
> **13** *Thy name, O LORD [Jehovah], endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD [Jehovah], throughout all generations.*
>
> **14** *For the LORD [Jehovah] will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.*
>
> **15** *The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.*
>
> **16** *They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;*
>
> **17** *They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths.*
>
> **18** *They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.*
>
> **19** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O house of Israel: bless the LORD [Jehovah], O house of Aaron:*
>
> **20** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O house of Levi: ye that fear the LORD [Jehovah], bless the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **21** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 135 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **135:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the name of the LORD [Jehovah]; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **135:2** *Ye that stand in the house of the LORD [Jehovah], in the courts of the house of our God,*
>
> **135:3** *Praise the LORD [Jah]; for the LORD [Jehovah] is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.*
>
> **135:4** *For the LORD [Jah] hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the name of the LORD [Jehovah]; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD [Jehovah]. Ye that stand in the house of the LORD [Jehovah], in the courts of the house of our God. The priests and Levites, and the people in the courts. **Praise the LORD [Jah]; for the LORD [Jehovah] is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant. For the LORD [Jah] hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.** *Peculiar treasure* is *segullah*, a king's own private treasure (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; Mal. 3:17).

> **135:5** *For I know that the LORD [Jehovah] is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.*
>
> **135:6** *Whatsoever the LORD [Jehovah] pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*
>
> **135:7** *He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.*
>
> **135:8** *Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.*
>
> **135:9** *Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.*
>
> **135:10** *Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;*
>
> **135:11** *Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan:*
>
> **135:12** *And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.*

For I know that the LORD [Jehovah] is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. *Our Lord* is *Adonenu*. **Whatsoever the LORD [Jehovah] pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries** (Jer. 10:13). **Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast . . . Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings; Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan** (Num. 21:21–35). **And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.**

> **135:13** *Thy name, O LORD [Jehovah], endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD [Jehovah], throughout all generations.*
>
> **135:14** *For the LORD [Jehovah] will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.*

Thy name, O LORD [Jehovah], endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD [Jehovah], throughout all generations. From Exodus 3:15: "this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." **For the LORD [Jehovah] will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.** From the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:36). *Judge* is "vindicate"; *repent himself* is "have compassion."

> **135:15** *The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.*
>
> **135:16** *They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;*
>
> **135:17** *They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths.*
>
> **135:18** *They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.*
>
> **135:19** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O house of Israel: bless the LORD [Jehovah], O house of Aaron:*
>
> **135:20** *Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O house of Levi: ye that fear the LORD [Jehovah], bless the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **135:21** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not . . . neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them. From 115:4–8, shortened. **Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O house of**

Israel: bless the LORD [Jehovah], O house of Aaron: Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O house of Levi. The house of Levi is added to the three of 115:9–11. **ye that fear the LORD [Jehovah], bless the LORD [Jehovah]. Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].**

Looking back

Psalm 135 is the first half of member H[1]: praise to Jehovah who chose Israel, who is above all gods, and who gave His people their land.

Psalm 136 — "For His Mercy Endureth for Ever"

Place: Book V; Psalms 135–145; member H[1], second (praise). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 136 is the great antiphonal Psalm: every one of its twenty-six verses ends with the same response, "for his mercy endureth for ever." *Mercy* is *chesed*, lovingkindness. A leader sang the first line; the choir or people answered. It was sung at the dedication of the temple (2 Chron. 7:3, 6) and by Jehoshaphat's singers as they went out before the army (2 Chron. 20:21). It tells the same history as Psalm 135, from creation to the land, and every act of God is traced to His lovingkindness.

Structure

- A | 1–3. Exhortation to praise.
- B | 4–9. General dealings: creation.
- C | 10–15. Smote the Egyptians; brought Israel out; overthrew them at the sea.
- D | 16. Guidance of His people through the desert.
- *C* | 17–24. Smote kings; brought Israel into Canaan; rescued them.
- *B* | 25. General dealings: grace.
- *A* | 26. Exhortation to praise.

The Psalm

Psalm 136 has no Title.

1 *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
2 *O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
3 *O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
4 *To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
5 *To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
6 *To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
7 *To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
8 *The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
9 *The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
10 *To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
11 *And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
12 *With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
13 *To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever:*

14 *And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
15 *But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
16 *To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
17 *To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
18 *And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
19 *Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
20 *And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
21 *And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
22 *Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
23 *Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
24 *And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
25 *Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
26 *O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Psalm 136 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

136:1 *O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
136:2 *O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
136:3 *O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
136:4 *To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
136:5 *To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
136:6 *To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
136:7 *To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
136:8 *The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
136:9 *The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

O give thanks unto the LORD [Jehovah]; for he is good . . . O give thanks unto the God of gods . . . O give thanks to the Lord of lords. *God of gods* is "Elohim of the elohim"; *Lord of lords* is "Adonai of the adonim" (Deut. 10:17). Three titles, three thanksgivings. **To him who alone doeth great wonders. To him that by wisdom made the heavens. To him that stretched out the earth above the waters. To him that made great lights: The sun to rule by day: The moon and stars to rule by night.** The order of Genesis 1:1, 6–10, 14–18. Creation itself is an act of lovingkindness.

136:10 *To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
136:11 *And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
136:12 *With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
136:13 *To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
136:14 *And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
136:15 *But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

> **136:16** *To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: And brought out Israel from among them: With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm (Deut. 4:34). **To him which divided the Red sea into parts.** *Into parts*: into pieces, as one cuts a sacrifice. **And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea.** *Overthrew* is "shook off," as a man shakes locusts from his garment. **To him which led his people through the wilderness.**

> **136:17** *To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
> **136:18** *And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
> **136:19** *Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
> **136:20** *And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
> **136:21** *And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
> **136:22** *Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
> **136:23** *Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:*
> **136:24** *And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
> **136:25** *Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.*
> **136:26** *O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

To him which smote great kings: And slew famous kings: Sihon king of the Amorites: And Og the king of Bashan: And gave their land for an heritage: Even an heritage unto Israel his servant. As 135:10–12. **Who remembered us in our low estate.** In every humbling since. **And hath redeemed us from our enemies.** *Redeemed* is "rescued," torn away. **Who giveth food to all flesh.** God's care reaches every creature. **O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.** *God* is *El*. This title, "the God of heaven," is used often after the exile (Ezra 1:2; Neh. 1:4; Dan. 2:18).

Looking back

Psalm 136 is the second half of member H^1. Twenty-six times, "for his mercy endureth for ever": in creation, in redemption from Egypt, in the wilderness, in the gift of the land, in low estate, and in every meal given to every creature.

Psalm 137 — "By the Rivers of Babylon"

Place: Book V; Psalms 135–145; member G^1 (deliverance of captives). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** see the Introduction.

Introduction

Psalm 137 is a song of captives. By the rivers of Babylon they sat and wept, hung up their harps, and would not sing the songs of Zion for their captors. They vow never to forget Jerusalem. And they pray for judgment on Edom, which cheered the destruction, and on Babylon.

When was it written? Most readers take it as written after the return from exile, looking back, for the verbs of verses 1–3 are past ("there we sat down . . . we wept"). *The Companion Bible* argues that it may be earlier: captives from Judah and Israel were taken by the Assyrians to Babylonia long before Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 17:6, 24; Sennacherib boasted of 200,150 captives from Judah), and Isaiah, Hezekiah's contemporary, prophesied Babylon's fall in very similar words (Isa. 13:16; 47:1–15). **Weight:** the usual view, after the Babylonian exile, fits the words best: "the daughter of Babylon" and Edom's cry "Rase it, rase it" (Obad. 10–14; Lam. 4:21, 22) belong to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

The last verse. "Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (v. 9) is the hardest verse in the Psalms. It is not a command to anyone. It is the cry of captives who had seen their own children killed, asking that Babylon be repaid "as thou hast served us" (v. 8). It repeats, almost word for word, what God had already declared through Isaiah would happen to Babylon (Isa. 13:16, 18). It belongs to the administration of law and judgment, not to the administration of grace, in which we are told "Recompense to no man evil for evil . . . Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:17–19). Chapter 3 of Part One explains how this study reads such prayers.

Structure

- N^1 | 1-. Babylon. Weeping.
- O^1 | -1. Zion. Remembrance.
- N^2 | 2–4. Babylon. Weeping.
- O^2 | 5, 6. Jerusalem. Remembrance: "I."
- N^3 | 7-. Edom. Remembrance.
- O^3 | -7. Jerusalem. Destruction.
- N^4 | 8, 9. Babylon. Destruction.

The Psalm

Psalm 137 has no Title.

> **1** *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*
>
> **2** *We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.*
>
> **3** *For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.*
>
> **4** *How shall we sing the LORD [Jehovah]'s song in a strange land?*
>
> **5** *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.*
>
> **6** *If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*
>
> **7** *Remember, O LORD [Jehovah], the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.*
>
> **8** *O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.*
>
> **9** *Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*

Psalm 137 has no sub-scription. Psalm 138 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **137:1** *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*
>
> **137:2** *We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.*
>
> **137:3** *For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.*
>
> **137:4** *How shall we sing the LORD [Jehovah]'s song in a strange land?*

By the rivers of Babylon. The Euphrates and its canals. **there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.** *Willows* are poplars, which grow along the canals. **For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.** The mockery of the captors. **How shall we sing the LORD [Jehovah]'s song in a strange land?** The songs of Zion were songs of Jehovah, for His house. They would not sing them for the entertainment of His enemies.

> **137:5** *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.*
>
> **137:6** *If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my hand forget its skill on the harp. **If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.** Let me never sing again if I put anything above Jerusalem.

> **137:7** *Remember, O LORD [Jehovah], the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.*
>
> **137:8** *O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.*
>
> **137:9** *Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*

Remember, O LORD [Jehovah], the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. *Rase* is "lay it bare." Edom, the descendants of Esau, cheered on the destroyers (Obad. 10–14; Ezek. 25:12). **O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.** See the Introduction. Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians (Isa. 13:17; Jer. 51:11; Dan. 5:30, 31).

Looking back

Psalm 137 is member G^1: the deliverance of captives. It answers the Songs of Degrees with their opposite: not going up to Zion, but sitting far from it, unable to sing. It shows what the loss of God's house meant to those who loved it.

Psalm 138 — "I Will Praise Thee with My Whole Heart"

Place: Book V; Psalms 135–145; member H^2 (praise). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 138 begins a closing group of eight Psalms of David (138–145). It is a song of thanks for answered prayer, and it looks forward to the day when "all the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth" (v. 4). Its central line, "thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (v. 2), fits Book V's theme of the Word.

Structure

- P^1 | 1–4. To Jehovah: praise. (Second person.)
- Q^1 | 5, 6. Of Jehovah. (Third person.)
- P^2 | 7. To Jehovah. (Second person.)
- Q^2 | 8-. Of Jehovah. (Third person.)
- P^3 | -8. To Jehovah. (Second person.)

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.*
>
> **2** *I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*
>
> **3** *In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.*
>
> **4** *All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah], when they hear the words of thy mouth.*
>
> **5** *Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD [Jehovah]: for great is the glory of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **6** *Though the LORD [Jehovah] be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*
>
> **7** *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.*
>
> **8** *The LORD [Jehovah] will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 139.

Verse by verse

> **138:1** *I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.*
>
> **138:2** *I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*
>
> **138:3** *In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.*

I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. *The gods* is *elohim*: before kings and judges, or in defiance of the idols. **I will worship toward thy holy temple.** *Temple* is *heykal*, palace: the tent of the Ark in David's day. **and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.** God has made His *word* (*imrah*, His promise) greater than every other way He has made Himself known: He has kept His promise beyond all that His name had led David to expect. **In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.**

> **138:4** *All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah], when they hear the words of thy mouth.*
>
> **138:5** *Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD [Jehovah]: for great is the glory of the LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **138:6** *Though the LORD [Jehovah] be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*
>
> **138:7** *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.*
>
> **138:8** *The LORD [Jehovah] will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.*

All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah], when they hear the words of thy mouth. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD [Jehovah]: for great is the glory of the LORD [Jehovah]. Though the LORD [Jehovah] be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off. As 113:5–7. **Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me.** *Revive* is "quicken," the word of Psalm 119. **thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me. The LORD [Jehovah] will perfect that which concerneth me.** He will finish what He began (Phil. 1:6). **thy mercy, O LORD [Jehovah], endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.**

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 139 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 138.

Looking back

Psalm 138 is member H^2: praise for answered prayer, and for the Word magnified above all.

Psalm 139 — "O LORD [Jehovah], Thou Hast Searched Me, and Known Me"

Place: Book V; Psalms 135–145; member G^2 (deliverance from an evil heart). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 139 is the great Psalm of God's knowledge and presence. God knows every move, every thought, every word before it is spoken (vv. 1–6). There is nowhere to flee from His presence: not heaven, not the grave, not the far sea, not darkness (vv. 7–12). He formed the Psalmist in the womb, and every one of his days was written in God's book before it came (vv. 13–18). Then the Psalmist turns against God's enemies (vv. 19–22), and ends with the prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart . . . see if there be any wicked way in me" (vv. 23, 24). The danger he most needs deliverance from is the evil in his own heart.

Some say the Psalm is late, because of a few Aramaic-looking words. Those words occur also in early books, and the Title gives it to David. **Weight:** there is no good reason to set the Title aside.

Structure

- R | 1. Divine searching.
- S^1 | T^1 | 2–5. Omniscience.
- U^1 | 6. Admiration.
- S^2 | T^2 | 7–16. Omnipresence.
- U^2 | 17, 18. Admiration.
- S^3 | T^3 | 19-. Omnipotence.
- U^3 | -19–22. Detestation.
- *R* | 23, 24. Divine searching.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *O LORD [Jehovah], thou hast searched me, and known me.*
> **2** *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*
> **3** *Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.*
> **4** *For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD [Jehovah], thou knowest it altogether.*
> **5** *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.*

6 *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

7 *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

8 *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*

9 *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*

10 *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

11 *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*

12 *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

13 *For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.*

14 *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

15 *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.*

16 *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

17 *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!*

18 *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*

19 *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.*

20 *For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.*

21 *Do not I hate them, O LORD [Jehovah], that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?*

22 *I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

23 *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:*

24 *And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

To the chief Musician.

In the King James Version this line stands at the head of Psalm 140.

Verse by verse

139:1 *O LORD [Jehovah], thou hast searched me, and known me.*

139:2 *Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.*

139:3 *Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.*

139:4 *For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD [Jehovah], thou knowest it altogether.*

139:5 *Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.*

139:6 *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

O LORD [Jehovah], thou hast searched me, and known me. *Searched* is to dig deep, explore. **Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising.** All his movements. **thou understandest my thought afar**

off. Before he has thought it. **Thou compassest my path and my lying down.** *Compassest* is "winnowest," sift: God sifts every step. **and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD [Jehovah], thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.**

> **139:7** *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*
>
> **139:8** *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*
>
> **139:9** *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*
>
> **139:10** *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*
>
> **139:11** *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*
>
> **139:12** *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? God's *spirit* here is God Himself, present everywhere by His power. **If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.** *Hell* is *Sheol*, the grave. Even the dead in the grave are not out of God's reach (Amos 9:2; Job 26:6). **If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea.** Flying as fast as the dawn spreads across the sky, from east to the far west. **Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.**

> **139:13** *For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.*
>
> **139:14** *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*
>
> **139:15** *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.*
>
> **139:16** *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. *Possessed* is "formed"; *covered* is "woven" (Job 10:11). **I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.** *Fearfully* is "awesomely." **marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee.** *Substance* is "frame," "bones." **when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.** *Curiously wrought* is "embroidered," woven in colours. *The lowest parts of the earth* is a figure for the hidden darkness of the womb, as man was first formed from the earth (Gen. 2:7). **Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect.** *Unperfect* is one Hebrew word, *golem*, "unformed substance," the embryo. **and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.** Better: "in thy book were all written, the days that were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Every day of his life was planned before he had lived one. God's knowledge of a person begins before birth (Jer. 1:5).

> **139:17** *How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!*
>
> **139:18** *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. He falls asleep counting them, and wakes still in God's presence.

> **139:19** *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.*
>
> **139:20** *For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.*
>
> **139:21** *Do not I hate them, O LORD [Jehovah], that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?*
>
> **139:22** *I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God. *God* is *Eloah*. **depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD [Jehovah], that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.** He takes God's side completely. These verses belong to the Psalm; they are not an addition. But he does not end on others' wickedness.

> **139:23** *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:*
>
> **139:24** *And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me. *Wicked way* is "way of pain" or "way of an idol": any path that leads to grief. Having spoken of the wicked, he asks God to search his own heart. **and lead me in the way everlasting.** The Psalm began "thou hast searched me" (v. 1); it ends "search me."

Its close: "To the chief Musician"

This line stands at the head of Psalm 140 in the King James Version; it is the sub-scription of Psalm 139.

Looking back

Psalm 139 is member G^2: deliverance from an evil heart. The God who knows everything, is everywhere, and made every part of the Psalmist is the only One who can search his heart and lead him in the everlasting way.

Psalms 140–144: Prayer and Praise

A. What this group is about

Five prayers of David. In each, enemies threaten with lying tongues, snares, or violence, and in each the Psalmist trusts God and ends in praise or confidence. *The Companion Bible* treats them as one member, H^3 (prayer and praise), answering the praise of 135–136 and 138.

Psalm 140 — "Deliver Me, O LORD [Jehovah], from the Evil Man"

Place: Book V; Psalms 140–144, first (prayer and praise). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

The enemies of Psalm 140 are men of the tongue: they sharpen their tongues like serpents, with "adders' poison" under their lips (v. 3; Paul quotes this in Rom. 3:13). The Psalm alternates prayer and description of the evil man, marked by three *Selahs*, and ends in confidence: "I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted" (v. 12).

Structure

- V^1 | 1. Prayer: preservation from enemies.
- W^1 | 2, 3. The evil man: his purposes. Selah.
- V^2 | 4-. Prayer: preservation from enemies.
- W^2 | -4, 5. The evil man: his purposes. Selah.
- V^3 | 6, 7. Prayer: preservation from enemies.
- W^3 | 8. The evil man: his desires. Selah.
- V^4 | 9–11. Prayer: destruction of enemies.
- Epilogue | 12, 13. Trust and praise.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Deliver me, O LORD [Jehovah], from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man;*
> **2** *Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war.*
> **3** *They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.*
> **4** *Keep me, O LORD [Jehovah], from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.*
> **5** *The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah.*
> **6** *I said unto the LORD [Jehovah], Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD [Jehovah].*
> **7** *O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.*

> **8** *Grant not, O LORD [Jehovah], the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah.*
>
> **9** *As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.*
>
> **10** *Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.*
>
> **11** *Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.*
>
> **12** *I know that the LORD [Jehovah] will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.*
>
> **13** *Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*

Psalm 140 has no sub-scription. Psalm 141 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **140:1** *Deliver me, O LORD [Jehovah], from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man;*
>
> **140:2** *Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war.*
>
> **140:3** *They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.*
>
> **140:4** *Keep me, O LORD [Jehovah], from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.*
>
> **140:5** *The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah.*

Deliver me, O LORD [Jehovah], from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man; Which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah. See the Introduction. The *Selah* connects the evil man with the prayer to be kept from him. **Keep me, O LORD [Jehovah], from the hands of the wicked . . . who have purposed to overthrow my goings. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah.** Snare, cords, net, traps: every means a hunter uses.

> **140:6** *I said unto the LORD [Jehovah], Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD [Jehovah].*
>
> **140:7** *O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.*
>
> **140:8** *Grant not, O LORD [Jehovah], the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah.*

I said unto the LORD [Jehovah], Thou art my God . . . O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle. As a helmet. **Grant not, O LORD [Jehovah], the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves. Selah.**

> **140:9** *As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.*

> **140:10** *Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.*
>
> **140:11** *Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.*
>
> **140:12** *I know that the LORD [Jehovah] will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.*
>
> **140:13** *Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*

As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them. Their own words fall on their heads (7:16). **Let burning coals fall upon them . . . into deep pits, that they rise not up again. Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth.** *An evil speaker* is "a man of tongue," a slanderer. **evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him. I know that the LORD [Jehovah] will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.**

Looking back

Psalm 140 is the first of the five prayers: from the men of poisoned tongue, to dwelling in God's presence.

Psalm 141 — "Let My Prayer Be Set Forth Before Thee as Incense"

Place: Book V; Psalms 140–144, second. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 141 is an evening prayer: "the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (v. 2). The Psalmist asks God to guard his own mouth and heart, so that he does not join the wicked or share their pleasures (vv. 3, 4), and he welcomes even a righteous man's rebuke (v. 5). Verses 5–7 are among the most difficult in the Psalter.

Structure

- X | Z | 1, 2. "I cry to Thee." Help me.
- A | 3–5-. Prayer for preventing grace.
- B | -5–7. "Yet I . . ." Punishment of the wicked.
- *X* | *Z* | 8. "I look to Thee." Help me.
- *A* | 9. Prayer for preventing grace.
- *B* | 10. Punishment of the wicked.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *LORD [Jehovah], I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.*
>
> **2** *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*
>
> **3** *Set a watch, O LORD [Jehovah], before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*
>
> **4** *Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.*
>
> **5** *Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*
>
> **6** *When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.*
>
> **7** *Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.*
>
> **8** *But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.*

> **9** *Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.*
>
> **10** *Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.*

Psalm 141 has no sub-scription. Psalm 142 begins with its own super-scription, "Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave."

Verse by verse

> **141:1** *LORD [Jehovah], I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.*
>
> **141:2** *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*
>
> **141:3** *Set a watch, O LORD [Jehovah], before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.*
>
> **141:4** *Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.*

LORD [Jehovah], I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. *Set forth* is "established." The incense was burned morning and evening on the golden altar (Ex. 30:7, 8), and the evening offering was made at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1). "The prayers of saints" are incense (Rev. 5:8; 8:3, 4). **Set a watch, O LORD [Jehovah], before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.** A guard at the door. **Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.** Let him not share the feasts of the wicked, nor their pleasures.

> **141:5** *Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.*
>
> **141:6** *When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.*
>
> **141:7** *Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.*

Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head. *Shall not break* is "let my head not refuse it." A rebuke from a righteous man is like oil poured on the head of a guest: a kindness he will not refuse (Prov. 9:8; 27:6). **for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.** Even when the wicked fall into trouble, he will still be praying. **When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.** When their leaders are thrown down the cliffs (2 Chron. 25:12), the people will listen to him, and find his words gentle. **Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.** Better, "as when one ploughs and breaks up the earth": bones scattered like clods. Some ancient versions read "their bones." The verses are obscure, and the reading here gives the most likely sense.

> **141:8** *But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.*

> **141:9** *Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.*
>
> **141:10** *Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.*

But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD [Jehovah] the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute. *Leave not my soul destitute* is "pour not out my life." **Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.**

Looking back

Psalm 141 is the second of the five prayers: an evening prayer for a guarded mouth and heart.

Psalm 142 — "I Cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] with My Voice"

Place: Book V; Psalms 140–144, third. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** "when he was in the cave" (Title): Adullam (1 Sam. 22:1) or En-gedi (1 Sam. 24:3).

Introduction

Psalm 142 is the last of the thirteen *Maschil* Psalms and the last of the thirteen Psalms whose Titles name an event in David's life (Psalms 3, 7, 18, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142). Alone in the cave, with no one on his right hand to stand for him, David cries to Jehovah: "Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living" (v. 5).

Structure

- C | 1, 2. "I cried unto Jehovah."
- D | 3-. Trouble. Comfort in it.
- E | -3. Enemies.
- F | 4. Friends: desertion of.
- *C* | 5. "I cried unto Jehovah."
- *D* | 6-. Trouble. Deliverance from it.
- *E* | -6. Enemies.
- *F* | 7. Friends: surrounded by.

The Psalm

Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave.

> **1** *I cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD [Jehovah] did I make my supplication.*
>
> **2** *I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.*
>
> **3** *When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.*
>
> **4** *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.*
>
> **5** *I cried unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah]: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.*
>
> **6** *Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.*

> **7** *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.*

Psalm 142 has no sub-scription. Psalm 143 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **142:1** *I cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD [Jehovah] did I make my supplication.*
>
> **142:2** *I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.*
>
> **142:3** *When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.*
>
> **142:4** *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.*

I cried unto the LORD [Jehovah] with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD [Jehovah] did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. When he did not know the way, God did. **In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me.** The right hand was the place of a defender in court (109:31). **refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.**

> **142:5** *I cried unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah]: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.*
>
> **142:6** *Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.*
>
> **142:7** *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.*

I cried unto thee, O LORD [Jehovah]: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. When men failed him, God was his refuge, as His portion (16:5; 73:26; 119:57). **Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison.** The cave was his prison. **that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.** He began alone; he ends surrounded by the righteous. At Adullam, "every one that was in distress . . . gathered themselves unto him" (1 Sam. 22:2).

Looking back

Psalm 142 is the third of the five prayers: alone in the cave, God his only refuge; and at the end, not alone.

Psalm 143 — "Enter Not into Judgment with Thy Servant"

Place: Book V; Psalms 140–144, fourth. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 143 is the last of the seven "penitential" Psalms. Verse 2 is the heart of it: "enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Paul quoted it to show that no one is justified by the works of the law (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16). The Psalmist pleads not his righteousness but God's: "in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness" (v. 1); "for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble" (v. 11). The last *Selah* in the Psalter is in verse 6.

Structure

- G | J | 1, 2. Prayer.
- K | 3, 4. Enemy: action.
- H | 5. Conduct: past. Remembrance.
- *H* | 6. Conduct: present. Desire.
- *G* | *J* | 7–11. Prayer.
- *K* | 12. Enemies: excision.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Hear my prayer, O LORD [Jehovah], give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.*
>
> **2** *And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*
>
> **3** *For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.*
>
> **4** *Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.*
>
> **5** *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.*
>
> **6** *I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.*
>
> **7** *Hear me speedily, O LORD [Jehovah]: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.*
>
> **8** *Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*
>
> **9** *Deliver me, O LORD [Jehovah], from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.*

> **10** *Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.*
>
> **11** *Quicken me, O LORD [Jehovah], for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.*
>
> **12** *And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.*

Psalm 143 has no sub-scription. Psalm 144 begins with its own super-scription, "A Psalm of David."

Verse by verse

> **143:1** *Hear my prayer, O LORD [Jehovah], give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.*
>
> **143:2** *And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*
>
> **143:3** *For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.*
>
> **143:4** *Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.*

Hear my prayer, O LORD [Jehovah], give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. See the Introduction. **For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.** As in a grave (88:5, 6). **Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.**

> **143:5** *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.*
>
> **143:6** *I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.*

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. As 77:5, 11, 12. **I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.** Like dry ground cracked open for rain (63:1). The last *Selah* of the Psalter connects his thirst with his prayer.

> **143:7** *Hear me speedily, O LORD [Jehovah]: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.*
>
> **143:8** *Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*
>
> **143:9** *Deliver me, O LORD [Jehovah], from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.*
>
> **143:10** *Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.*
>
> **143:11** *Quicken me, O LORD [Jehovah], for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.*
>
> **143:12** *And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.*

Hear me speedily, O LORD [Jehovah]: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I

trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. As 25:1, 4. **Deliver me, O LORD [Jehovah], from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me. Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.** *Land of uprightness* is "level ground," where the way is plain (26:12; 27:11). **Quicken me, O LORD [Jehovah], for thy name's sake.** The prayer of Psalm 119. **for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.**

Looking back

Psalm 143 is the fourth of the five prayers: no man justified in God's sight, and therefore an appeal to God's faithfulness and righteousness, not one's own.

Psalm 144 — "Blessed Be the LORD [Jehovah] My Strength"

Place: Book V; Psalms 140–144, fifth. **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named; the Greek version adds "concerning Goliath."

Introduction

Psalm 144 draws heavily on Psalm 18 (vv. 1, 2, 5–7) and Psalm 8 (v. 3). It is the praise of a warrior king who has been taught to fight by God, and who prays for deliverance from "strange children," foreigners whose words are lies and whose oaths are false (vv. 7, 8, 11). The Greek title, "concerning Goliath," fits the "hurtful sword" of verse 10 (1 Sam. 17:45–51). It ends with a picture of a people at peace: sons like plants, daughters like carved pillars, full barns, no breach in the walls (vv. 12–15).

Structure

- L^1 | 1–7. David's words: praise and prayer.
- M^1 | 8. Words of foreigners: vain and false.
- L^2 | 9–11. David's words: praise and prayer.
- M^2 | 12–15-. Words of foreigners: vain and false.
- L^3 | -15. David's words: right and true.

Whose words are verses 12–15? *The Companion Bible* reads verses 12–15a as the boast of the foreigners: "[They say], Our sons are as plants . . . Happy is that people, that is in such a case." David answers with the last line: "[Nay,] happy is that people, whose God is the LORD." The Hebrew of verse 12 begins with a word (*'asher*, "who") that can introduce what the foreigners say. **Weight:** this reading explains the structure (M^1, M^2) and the sudden "Yea" of the last line; the usual reading, that verses 12–15 are David's own prayer for his people's prosperity, is also possible, since such blessings were promised to Israel under the Law (Deut. 28:3–8). Either way, the last line is the point: true happiness is not in prosperity but in having Jehovah for God.

The Psalm

A Psalm of David.

> **1** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:*
>
> **2** *My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.*
>
> **3** *LORD [Jehovah], what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!*

> **4** *Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.*
>
> **5** *Bow thy heavens, O LORD [Jehovah], and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.*
>
> **6** *Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.*
>
> **7** *Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;*
>
> **8** *Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*
>
> **9** *I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.*
>
> **10** *It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*
>
> **11** *Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood:*
>
> **12** *That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace:*
>
> **13** *That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:*
>
> **14** *That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.*
>
> **15** *Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD [Jehovah].*

Psalm 144 has no sub-scription. Psalm 145 begins with its own super-scription, "David's Psalm of praise."

Verse by verse

> **144:1** *Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:*
>
> **144:2** *My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.*
>
> **144:3** *LORD [Jehovah], what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!*
>
> **144:4** *Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.*

Blessed be the LORD [Jehovah] my strength. *Strength* is "rock." **which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight** (18:34). **My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust.** Seven titles (18:2). **who subdueth my people under me.** Some manuscripts read "peoples." **LORD [Jehovah], what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!** As 8:4, but here of man's weakness. **Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.** *Vanity* is a breath.

> **144:5** *Bow thy heavens, O LORD [Jehovah], and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.*
>
> **144:6** *Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.*
>
> **144:7** *Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;*
>
> **144:8** *Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*

Bow thy heavens, O LORD [Jehovah], and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them. As 18:9, 14. **Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children; Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.** They raise the right hand to swear, and lie.

> **144:9** *I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.*
>
> **144:10** *It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*
>
> **144:11** *Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood:*

I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee. It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword. The sword of Goliath, or of any enemy. **Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children . . .** The refrain of verses 7, 8.

> **144:12** *That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace:*
>
> **144:13** *That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:*
>
> **144:14** *That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.*
>
> **144:15** *Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD [Jehovah].*

That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace: That our garners may be full . . . That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets. See the Introduction. *No breaking in* is no breach in the wall; *nor going out* is no going into captivity. **Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD [Jehovah].**

Looking back

Psalm 144 is the last of the five prayers, H^3. The warrior king who knows that man is a breath, asks God to come down, sings a new song, and ends with the true happiness: to have Jehovah for God.

Psalm 145 — "David's Psalm of Praise"

Place: Book V; member E (the true David leading the praises of His people). **Writer:** David. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 145 is the only Psalm whose Title is "Praise" (*tehillah*), the word from which the whole book takes its Hebrew name, *Tehillim*, "Praises." It is the last Psalm of David in the Psalter, and an acrostic: each verse begins with the next letter of the alphabet. In the Hebrew text as we have it, the letter *Nun* is missing (it would fall between vv. 13 and 14). A Hebrew manuscript from the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Greek, Syriac and Latin versions, have the missing line: "Faithful is the LORD in all his words, and holy in all his works." **Weight:** strong; the line completes the acrostic and is well attested.

The Psalm moves outward in praise: David praises (vv. 1, 2), then David and others (vv. 4–7), then all God's works and saints (vv. 10–12), and at the end "all flesh" (v. 21). It is the true David leading the praises of His people, as Hebrews puts it: "in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12; Psalm 22:22).

Structure

- N^1 | 1, 2. Praise promised. For Jehovah. (David.)
- O^1 | 3. Praise offered.
- N^2 | 4–7. Praise promised. For His work. (David and others.)
- O^2 | 8, 9. Praise offered.
- N^3 | 10–12. Praise promised. For His kingdom. (The works.)
- O^3 | 13–20. Praise offered.
- N^4 | 21. Praise promised. (David and all others.)

The Psalm

David's Psalm of praise.

> **1** *I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.*
> **2** *Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.*
> **3** *Great is the LORD [Jehovah], and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.*
> **4** *One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.*
> **5** *I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.*
> **6** *And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.*

7 *They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.*

8 *The LORD [Jehovah] is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*

9 *The LORD [Jehovah] is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

10 *All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah]; and thy saints shall bless thee.*

11 *They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;*

12 *To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.*

13 *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*

14 *The LORD [Jehovah] upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.*

15 *The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.*

16 *Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*

17 *The LORD [Jehovah] is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

18 *The LORD [Jehovah] is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.*

19 *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*

20 *The LORD [Jehovah] preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*

21 *My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD [Jehovah]: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.*

Psalm 145 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

145:1 *I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.*

145:2 *Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.*

145:3 *Great is the LORD [Jehovah], and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.*

I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. David, the king, calls God "the King." **Great is the LORD [Jehovah], and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.**

145:4 *One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.*

145:5 *I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.*

145:6 *And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.*

145:7 *They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.*

145:8 *The LORD [Jehovah] is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*

145:9 *The LORD [Jehovah] is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. Literally "the words of thy wonders." **And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness.** *Abundantly utter* is "pour forth," bubble over. **and**

shall sing of thy righteousness. The LORD [Jehovah] is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Name proclaimed to Moses (Ex. 34:6). **The LORD [Jehovah] is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.**

> **145:10** *All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah]; and thy saints shall bless thee.*
> **145:11** *They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;*
> **145:12** *To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.*
> **145:13** *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*

All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD [Jehovah]; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. Nebuchadnezzar confessed the same (Dan. 4:3, 34). The missing *Nun* line follows here (see the Introduction).

> **145:14** *The LORD [Jehovah] upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.*
> **145:15** *The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.*
> **145:16** *Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*
> **145:17** *The LORD [Jehovah] is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*
> **145:18** *The LORD [Jehovah] is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.*
> **145:19** *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*
> **145:20** *The LORD [Jehovah] preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.*
> **145:21** *My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD [Jehovah]: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.*

The LORD [Jehovah] upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. As 104:27, 28. **The LORD [Jehovah] is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The LORD [Jehovah] is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The LORD [Jehovah] preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy. My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD [Jehovah]: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.** *Praise* is *tehillah*, the word of the Title. From "I will extol" to "all flesh."

Looking back

Psalm 145 is member E: the true David leading the praises of His people. It answers to Psalms 108–110 (the true David's deliverance and exaltation). The last Psalm of David is pure praise, and it ends with all flesh blessing God's holy name. The five Hallelujah Psalms follow.

Psalms 146–150: The Five Hallelujah Psalms

A. What these Psalms are

The Psalter ends with five Psalms, each beginning and ending with *Hallelu-Jah*, "Praise ye the LORD [Jah]." They are the last word of the book: pure praise, with no petition and no lament.

Bullinger observed that they echo the five books of Moses in order, as the five Books of the Psalter do:

- **146, the Genesis Psalm:** God the Creator, "which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is" (v. 6); man's breath going forth and returning to his earth (v. 4; Gen. 2:7; 3:19); the God of Jacob (v. 5).
- **147, the Exodus Psalm:** Jehovah building up Jerusalem and gathering the outcasts of Israel (v. 2); calling the stars by their names (v. 4; compare "these are the names," Ex. 1:1); His word, statutes and judgments given to Jacob, as to no other nation (vv. 19, 20).
- **148, the Leviticus Psalm:** "a people near unto him" (v. 14; Lev. 10:3).
- **149, the Numbers Psalm:** Israel as an army with the two-edged sword, executing "the judgment written" on the nations (vv. 6–9; Num. 24:17–24).
- **150, the Deuteronomy Psalm:** "Praise him according to his excellent greatness" (v. 2; Deut. 3:24; 32:3).

Weight: the echoes are real but slight in places (148 especially). They are offered as Bullinger's observation, in keeping with the five-Book pattern of the whole Psalter.

Psalm 146 — "Put Not Your Trust in Princes"

Place: Book V; the Hallelujah Psalms, first (Genesis). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Structure

- P | 1, 2. Hallelujah.
- Q | c | 3-. Wrong trust: man.
- d | -3. Powerless.
- e | 4. Mortal.
- *Q* | *c* | 5. Right trust: Jehovah.
- *d* | 6–9. Powerful.
- *e* | 10-. Eternal.
- *P* | -10. Hallelujah.

The Psalm

Psalm 146 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul.*
>
> **2** *While I live will I praise the LORD [Jehovah]: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.*
>
> **3** *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.*
>
> **4** *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.*
>
> **5** *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD [Jehovah] his God:*
>
> **6** *Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:*
>
> **7** *Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD [Jehovah] looseth the prisoners:*
>
> **8** *The LORD [Jehovah] openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD [Jehovah] raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD [Jehovah] loveth the righteous:*
>
> **9** *The LORD [Jehovah] preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*
>
> **10** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 146 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **146:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul.*

> **146:2** *While I live will I praise the LORD [Jehovah]: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.*
>
> **146:3** *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.*
>
> **146:4** *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul. While I live will I praise the LORD [Jehovah]: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. As long as he lives; for the dead do not praise (115:17). **Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.** *Son of man* is "son of *adam*." *Help* is "salvation." **His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.** *Breath* is *ruach*. *His earth* is *adamah*, the ground from which Adam was taken (Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Eccles. 12:7). *Thoughts* is "plans": all his schemes come to nothing the day he dies. The dead do not think or plan (Eccles. 9:5, 10).

> **146:5** *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD [Jehovah] his God:*
>
> **146:6** *Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:*
>
> **146:7** *Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD [Jehovah] looseth the prisoners:*
>
> **146:8** *The LORD [Jehovah] openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD [Jehovah] raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD [Jehovah] loveth the righteous:*
>
> **146:9** *The LORD [Jehovah] preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*
>
> **146:10** *The LORD [Jehovah] shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD [Jehovah] his God. The last of the twenty-five "Happy/Blessed" (*ashrey*) sayings of the Psalter. **Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever: Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD [Jehovah] looseth the prisoners: The LORD [Jehovah] openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD [Jehovah] raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD [Jehovah] loveth the righteous: The LORD [Jehovah] preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow.** Five times "Jehovah" begins a line. The Lord Jesus did these very things: opened blind eyes, raised up the bowed woman, preached deliverance to the captives (Luke 4:18; 13:11–13; John 9). **but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down. The LORD [Jehovah] shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].**

Looking back

Psalm 146 is the first Hallelujah Psalm: trust not in man, who returns to the ground, but in the Creator who reigns for ever.

Psalm 147 — "Praise Ye the LORD [Jah]: for It Is Good"

Place: Book V; the Hallelujah Psalms, second (Exodus). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 147 praises Jehovah three times over (vv. 1, 7, 12), each time for His care for Israel and His power over nature. The Greek and Latin versions divide it into two Psalms at verse 12, which is why their numbering differs from the Hebrew here (Appendix I).

Structure

- R | 1-. Hallelujah.
- S^1 | f^1 | -1–3. Praise: kindness to Israel.
- g^1 | 4, 5. General operations: nature.
- h^1 | 6. Contrast: what Jehovah does.
- S^2 | f^2 | 7. Praise.
- g^2 | 8, 9. General operations: nature.
- h^2 | 10, 11. Contrast: what Jehovah delights in.
- S^3 | f^3 | 12–14. Praise: kindness to Israel.
- g^3 | 15–18. General operations: nature.
- h^3 | 19, 20-. Contrast: what Jehovah has shown.
- *R* | -20. Hallelujah.

The Psalm

Psalm 147 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.*
> **2** *The LORD [Jehovah] doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.*
> **3** *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*
> **4** *He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.*
> **5** *Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.*
> **6** *The LORD [Jehovah] lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.*
> **7** *Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:*

> **8** *Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.*
>
> **9** *He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*
>
> **10** *He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.*
>
> **11** *The LORD [Jehovah] taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*
>
> **12** *Praise the LORD [Jehovah], O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.*
>
> **13** *For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.*
>
> **14** *He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.*
>
> **15** *He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly.*
>
> **16** *He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.*
>
> **17** *He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?*
>
> **18** *He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.*
>
> **19** *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.*
>
> **20** *He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 147 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **147:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.*
>
> **147:2** *The LORD [Jehovah] doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.*
>
> **147:3** *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*
>
> **147:4** *He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.*
>
> **147:5** *Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.*
>
> **147:6** *The LORD [Jehovah] lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely. The LORD [Jehovah] doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. *Doth build* is "is the builder of." **He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds** (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18). **He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names** (Isa. 40:26). The God who names every star cares for every broken heart. **Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.** *Infinite* is "without number." **The LORD [Jehovah] lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.**

> **147:7** *Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:*
>
> **147:8** *Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.*
>
> **147:9** *He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*
>
> **147:10** *He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.*
>
> **147:11** *The LORD [Jehovah] taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*

Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry (Job 38:41; Luke 12:24). **He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.** Not in cavalry or in the runner's strength. **The LORD [Jehovah] taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.**

> **147:12** *Praise the LORD [Jehovah], O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.*
> **147:13** *For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.*
> **147:14** *He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.*
> **147:15** *He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly.*
> **147:16** *He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.*
> **147:17** *He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?*
> **147:18** *He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.*
> **147:19** *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.*
> **147:20** *He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Praise the LORD [Jehovah], O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth. *Commandment* is *imrah*, His saying. **his word runneth very swiftly.** *Word* is *dabar*. God's Word as a runner, carrying His orders (2 Thess. 3:1). **He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.** One word brings the frost; another word brings the thaw.

He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. The same Word that rules the weather was given to Israel. **He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them** (Deut. 4:7, 8; Rom. 3:1, 2). **Praise ye the LORD [Jah].**

Looking back

Psalm 147 is the second Hallelujah Psalm. The Word that runs swiftly over the earth, bringing snow and thaw, is the Word given to Israel alone.

Psalm 148 — "Praise Ye the LORD [Jehovah] from the Heavens"

Place: Book V; the Hallelujah Psalms, third (Leviticus). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 148 calls the whole creation to praise: first everything in the heavens (vv. 1–6), then everything on earth, from sea creatures to kings and children (vv. 7–14). It follows the order of creation in Genesis 1, and it ends with Israel, "a people near unto him" (v. 14).

Structure

- T | 1-. Hallelujah.
- U | i | -1–4. Praise from the heavens. (Second person.)
- k | 5-. Injunction: "Let them praise."
- l | -5, 6. Reasons: "For."
- *U* | *i* | 7–12. Praise from the earth. (Second person.)
- *k* | 13-. Injunction: "Let them praise."
- *l* | -13, 14-. Reasons: "For."
- *T* | -14. Hallelujah.

The Psalm

Psalm 148 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the LORD [Jehovah] from the heavens: praise him in the heights.*
> **2** *Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.*
> **3** *Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.*
> **4** *Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.*
> **5** *Let them praise the name of the LORD [Jehovah]: for he commanded, and they were created.*
> **6** *He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.*
> **7** *Praise the LORD [Jehovah] from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:*
> **8** *Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:*
> **9** *Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:*
> **10** *Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:*
> **11** *Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:*

> **12** *Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:*
>
> **13** *Let them praise the name of the LORD [Jehovah]: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.*
>
> **14** *He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 148 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **148:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the LORD [Jehovah] from the heavens: praise him in the heights.*
>
> **148:2** *Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.*
>
> **148:3** *Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.*
>
> **148:4** *Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.*
>
> **148:5** *Let them praise the name of the LORD [Jehovah]: for he commanded, and they were created.*
>
> **148:6** *He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the LORD [Jehovah] from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens (Gen. 1:7). **Let them praise the name of the LORD [Jehovah]: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.** *Decree* is *choq*, the fixed statute of Psalm 119.

> **148:7** *Praise the LORD [Jehovah] from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:*
>
> **148:8** *Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word:*
>
> **148:9** *Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:*
>
> **148:10** *Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:*
>
> **148:11** *Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:*
>
> **148:12** *Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:*
>
> **148:13** *Let them praise the name of the LORD [Jehovah]: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.*
>
> **148:14** *He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Praise the LORD [Jehovah] from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps. *Dragons* are the great sea creatures (Gen. 1:21). **Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word.** The storm does what God's Word commands (147:18). **Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children.** From the sea to the mountains, from the beasts to kings, from children to the old. **Let them praise the name of the LORD [Jehovah]: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth**

the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. *Near unto him*: the priestly people, brought near (Lev. 10:3; Ex. 19:6).

Looking back

Psalm 148 is the third Hallelujah Psalm: all creation, in heaven and on earth, called to praise; and at its centre, the people near to God.

Psalm 149 — "Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a New Song"

Place: Book V; the Hallelujah Psalms, fourth (Numbers). **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 149 calls Israel to sing a new song to its Maker and King, and then to execute "the judgment written" on the nations, with "the high praises of God . . . in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand" (vv. 6, 9). The judgment written is the judgment prophesied in the Law and the Prophets (Deut. 32:41–43; Isa. 41:15, 16; Mic. 4:13; Zech. 14). It belongs to Israel in the coming day of the Lord, not to the church of this administration, whose weapons "are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:4) and whose sword is the Word (Eph. 6:17). Misreading this Psalm has been used to justify wars of religion; the Psalm itself limits the judgment to what is "written," and to God's own time.

Structure

- V | 1-. Hallelujah.
- W | -1. Saints to praise.
- X | 2. Israel to rejoice in Jehovah.
- Y | 3. The praise, and how.
- *X* | 4. Jehovah taketh pleasure in Israel.
- *W* | 5–9-. Saints to praise.
- *V* | -9. Hallelujah.

The Psalm

Psalm 149 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.*
> **2** *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*
> **3** *Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.*
> **4** *For the LORD [Jehovah] taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.*
> **5** *Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.*
> **6** *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;*
> **7** *To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;*
> **8** *To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;*

> **9** *To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 149 has no sub-scription.

Verse by verse

> **149:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.*
>
> **149:2** *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.*
>
> **149:3** *Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.*
>
> **149:4** *For the LORD [Jehovah] taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Sing unto the LORD [Jehovah] a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. *Saints* is *chasidim*. **Let Israel rejoice in him that made him.** God made Israel a nation (95:6; Isa. 43:1). **let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD [Jehovah] taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.**

> **149:5** *Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.*
>
> **149:6** *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;*
>
> **149:7** *To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;*
>
> **149:8** *To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;*
>
> **149:9** *To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. At rest, at night. **Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].** See the Introduction.

Looking back

Psalm 149 is the fourth Hallelujah Psalm: Israel's new song to its King, and its part in the judgment written for the day of the Lord.

Psalm 150 — "Let Every Thing That Hath Breath Praise the LORD [Jah]"

Place: Book V; the Hallelujah Psalms, fifth (Deuteronomy); the doxology of Book V and of the whole Psalter. **Writer:** not named. **Occasion:** not named.

Introduction

Psalm 150 is both the last Psalm and the doxology of Book V. Books I–IV each ended with a doxology verse (41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48); Book V ends with a whole Psalm. It answers four questions: *where* to praise God (in His sanctuary and in the firmament, v. 1), *why* (for His mighty acts and excellent greatness, v. 2), *how* (with every instrument, vv. 3–5), and *who* (every thing that hath breath, v. 6). Thirteen times "praise."

Structure

- A | 1-. Hallelujah.
- B | -1-. The sanctuary.
- C | -1. Praise of Jehovah's power.
- *C* | 2. Praise of Jehovah's might.
- *B* | 3–6-. Instruments of the sanctuary.
- *A* | -6. Hallelujah.

The Psalm

Psalm 150 has no Title.

> **1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.*
> **2** *Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.*
> **3** *Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.*
> **4** *Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.*
> **5** *Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.*
> **6** *Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Psalm 150 ends Book V and the Psalter.

Verse by verse

> **150:1** *Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.*
> **150:2** *Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.*

Praise ye the LORD [Jah]. Praise God in his sanctuary. *God* is *El*. *His sanctuary*: the earthly and the heavenly, the one patterned on the other (Heb. 8:5; 9:23). **praise him in the firmament of his power.** The expanse of heaven (Gen. 1:6). **Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.** "O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness" (Deut. 3:24).

> **150:3** *Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.*
> **150:4** *Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.*
> **150:5** *Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.*
> **150:6** *Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD [Jah]. Praise ye the LORD [Jah].*

Praise him with the sound of the trumpet. The *shophar*, the ram's horn. **praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.** *Organs* is the pipe or flute (Gen. 4:21). **Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.** Every kind of instrument: wind, string and percussion. **Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD [Jah].** *Breath* is *neshamah*, the breath of life God breathed into man (Gen. 2:7). The Psalm, and the book, end with every breathing thing praising the One who gave it breath. **Praise ye the LORD [Jah].** *Hallelu-Jah*.

Its close

Psalm 150 closes Book V and the Psalter. The book whose Hebrew name is *Tehillim*, "Praises," ends with praise.

Looking back

Psalm 150 is the fifth Hallelujah Psalm, the doxology of Book V and of all five Books. The Psalter began with one man, blessed because he delights in the law of Jehovah (1:1, 2). It ends with every thing that has breath praising Him.

Looking Back on Psalms 119–150

- **The Word (119).** From Aleph to Tau, the Word that gives life.
- **The Songs of Degrees (120–134).** Five times from distress, through trust, to blessing in Zion.
- **Praise, captivity, and praise (135–138).** The God who chose Israel and whose lovingkindness endures for ever; captives by Babylon's rivers; and the Word magnified above all His Name.
- **The searched heart and the five prayers (139–144).** God knows, is everywhere, and searches; and David prays through danger to praise.
- **David's praise (145).** The true David leads His people's praise, and all flesh joins.
- **The five Hallelujahs (146–150).** From trust in the Creator to every thing that hath breath.

Looking Back on Book V

Book V, which Bullinger compared with Deuteronomy, is about God and His Word.

- **The healing Word (107).** He sent His Word, and healed them.
- **The true David (108–110; 145).** Delivered, humbled, exalted to God's right hand, a priest for ever, and leading His people's praise.
- **The quickening Word (119).** The Word that gives life to the afflicted.
- **Deliverance and praise (111–118; 120–144).** From Egypt, from Assyria, from Babylon, and from one's own heart; and the praise that answers each.
- **The five Hallelujahs (146–150).** The end of the book, and of everything: praise.

Book V begins "O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good" (107:1) and ends "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD" (150:6). The thanks of the redeemed becomes the praise of every breathing creature.

Part Three — Closing the Psalms

Part Two has presented all one hundred and fifty Psalms, one by one, in their Books, divisions and groups. Part Three closes the study: first with a Conclusion, on what the Psalter as a whole says; then with *What We Have Learned*, a reference chapter gathering the findings of the study by subject.

Conclusion — From "Blessed Is the Man" to "Every Thing That Hath Breath"

A. One book, five Books

The Psalter is not a heap of songs. It is one book in five Books, and each Book has a subject:

- **Book I (1–41): Man.** Man blessed, man in rebellion, man's enemy, and the Man through whom blessing returns. It begins "Blessed is the man" and ends "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel."
- **Book II (42–72): Israel.** Its ruin, its Redeemer, and its redemption. It begins with a soul thirsting for God far from His house, and ends with the King reigning from sea to sea and "the whole earth . . . filled with his glory."
- **Book III (73–89): the Sanctuary.** Man outside it and inside it; its enemies; Jehovah's presence in it; and the covenant with David, apparently broken. It begins "Truly God is good to Israel" and ends "Blessed be the LORD for evermore."
- **Book IV (90–106): the Earth and the Nations.** The rest lost in the wilderness, desired, anticipated, celebrated, and the reason it was lost. It begins with Moses and ends with "Amen. Hallelujah."
- **Book V (107–150): God and His Word.** The Word that heals and the Word that quickens; the true David exalted; and five Hallelujahs. It begins "O give thanks" and ends "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD."

Bullinger compared the five Books with the five books of Moses. The comparison is looser in Books I and II, and strong in Books III, IV and V (Chapter 4). Whatever weight is given to it, the order of the subjects is plain: from man, to the nation, to the sanctuary, to the whole earth, to God Himself.

B. The one Man

From the first Psalm to the last, one figure stands behind the others: the Man who is blessed (1), the Son set as King on Zion (2), the Son of man crowned with glory (8), the Holy One not left in the grave (16), the Shepherd who dies, the Shepherd who leads, and the King of glory who comes in (22–24), the King whose throne is for ever (45), the One hated without a cause and given vinegar to drink (69), the King who reigns from sea to sea (72), the man of God's right hand (80), the humbled One whose years have no end (102), the Lord whom Jehovah seats at His right hand, a priest for ever (110), the stone the builders refused (118), and the true David leading His people's praise (145). The Lord Jesus said, "all things must be fulfilled, which were written . . . in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44).

The Psalms present Him as what the New Testament says He is: the Son of God and the Son of man, anointed by God, raised from the dead by God, and exalted by God to His right hand (Acts 2:32–36). They show two persons where they speak of Him: "The LORD said unto my Lord" (110:1); "God, thy God, hath anointed thee" (45:7). They never confuse the One God with the Man He exalts.

C. The one Word

The Psalter opens with a man who delights in "the law of the LORD" (1:2), and its fifth Book is built around the Word: "He sent his word, and healed them" (107:20); "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet" (119:105); "thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (138:2); "his word runneth very swiftly" (147:15). Every Book has its witness to the Word (19:7–11; 33:4–9; 56:4, 10; 89:34; 105:8). The man of Psalm 1 and the young man of Psalm 119 are the same kind of man: kept alive by what God has said.

D. Praise

The Hebrew name of the book is *Tehillim*, "Praises." Every Book ends with praise, and the last Book ends with nothing else. The Psalms are full of trouble: enemies, sickness, sin, exile, and the long cry "How long?" But they never end in the trouble. Even Psalm 88, which has no word of hope after its first line, is a prayer to "the God of my salvation." The Psalter teaches the reader to pray in every circumstance, and to end in praise.

E. Reading the Psalms today

The Psalms were written to Israel, under the Law, and much in them belongs to that administration: the sacrifices, the land, the cries for judgment on enemies (Chapter 3). They were also "written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). The believer today reads them knowing that what they foretold of Messiah has begun to be fulfilled: He has suffered, been raised, and been exalted to God's right hand, and has given the gift of holy spirit. The rest of what they foretell, the King reigning over the whole earth and every thing that has breath praising God, is yet to come.

What We Have Learned

This chapter gathers the main findings of the study by subject, with the places where each is treated.

A. The book

- **Five Books, each with a doxology** (41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48; Psalm 150). Chapter 4; each Book's introduction.
- **The Books and the books of Moses.** The match is strong in Books III–V and looser in I–II. Chapter 4; the Book introductions.
- **The divisions and groups.** Each Book falls into divisions whose Psalms answer one another; the structures are those of *The Companion Bible*, tested against the text, with a few corrections noted (Psalms 28, 62, 79). Chapter 7; each division's introduction.

B. The Titles

- **Super-scriptions and sub-scriptions.** "To the chief Musician," with the words that go with it, belongs at the end of the Psalm before. Fifty-five Psalms have such a sub-scription. Chapter 5; Appendix A.
- **The special words.** Neginoth (smitings), Sheminith (the eighth), Gittith (winepresses), Shoshannim (lilies, the spring festival), Alamoth (maidens), Mahalath (dancings), Al-taschith (destroy not), Jonath-elem-rechokim (the dove of the distant terebinths), Jeduthun, Michtam (engraven), Maschil (instruction). Chapter 6; Appendix C; the "Its close" sections.
- **The Songs of Degrees.** Fifteen songs in five groups of three, read with Thirtle and Bullinger as Hezekiah's songs for the fifteen years added to his life. Psalms 120–134, introduction; Appendix J.

C. The words of the Psalms

- **Selah** connects (Chapter 6; Appendix B).
- **The Names of God**, printed after the King James Version's LORD and GOD in green brackets: Jehovah, Jah, Adonai Jehovah (Chapter 9; Appendix H).
- **The words for the Word in Psalm 119**: law, testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments, word (two Hebrew words), and way. Psalm 119, "The Words for the Word."
- **Figures of speech** are named where they occur (Chapter 8).

D. Messiah in the Psalms

- **The Psalms the New Testament applies to Christ** (Chapter 10; Appendices E and F): 2, 8, 16, 22, 24, 34, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 89, 102, 109, 110, 118, and others.

- **His sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension** are all foretold (16:10, 11; 22; 68:18; 69:21; 110:1; 118:22).
- **One God, and the Man He exalts.** "Thy throne, O God" (45:6), "Ye are gods" (82:6), the words of 102:25–27, and "my Lord" (110:1) are read in their own words and in the New Testament's use of them. Appendix J.

E. The dead and the hope

- **The dead do not praise God**; they are in Sheol, the grave, the land of silence and forgetfulness (6:5; 88:10–12; 115:17; 146:4).
- **The hope is resurrection**: "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (16:10); "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave" (49:15); "afterward receive me to glory" (73:24); "thou . . . shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth" (71:20).

F. Reading the hard places

- **The imprecations** (35, 58, 69, 109, 137 and others) belong to the administration of law and judgment, and are not the language of grace (Chapter 3; Romans 12:14, 17–19).
- **The occasions** of many Psalms are not named in their Titles. Where the study proposes one (Hezekiah and Sennacherib for 44, 46–48 and 76; Absalom for 55 and 63; the Babylonian destruction for 74 and 79), the case and its weight are given in the Psalm's introduction.

Appendix A — The Psalm-Titles in Their Restored Places

Every Psalm is listed with its super-scription (the words that belong at its head) and its sub-scription (the words that belong at its end, "To the chief Musician . . ."), as they are printed in this study (Chapter 5). A dash means there is none. Fifty-five Psalms have a sub-scription; in the King James Version each of these lines stands at the head of the Psalm that follows.

- **Psalm 1.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 2.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 3.** A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician on Neginoth.
- **Psalm 4.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth.
- **Psalm 5.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith.
- **Psalm 6.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 7.** Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD [Jehovah], concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Gittith.
- **Psalm 8.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben.
- **Psalm 9.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 10.** — *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 11.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Sheminith.
- **Psalm 12.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 13.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 14.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 15.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 16.** Michtam of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 17.** A Prayer of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 18.** A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD [Jehovah], who spake unto the LORD [Jehovah] the words of this song in the day that the LORD [Jehovah] delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said, *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 19.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 20.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 21.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar.

- **Psalm 22.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 23.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 24.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 25.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 26.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 27.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 28.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 29.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 30.** A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 31.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 32.** A Psalm of David, Maschil. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 33.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 34.** A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 35.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 36.** A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD [Jehovah]. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 37.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 38.** A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician, even to Jeduthun.
- **Psalm 39.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 40.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 41.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 42.** Maschil, for the sons of Korah. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 43.** — *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 44.** For the sons of Korah, Maschil. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim.
- **Psalm 45.** For the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of loves. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, upon Alamoth.
- **Psalm 46.** A Song. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 47.** A Psalm for the sons of Korah. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 48.** A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 49.** A Psalm for the sons of Korah. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 50.** A Psalm of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.

- **Psalm 51.** A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 52.** Maschil, A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Mahalath.
- **Psalm 53.** Maschil, A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician on Neginoth.
- **Psalm 54.** Maschil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us? *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician on Neginoth.
- **Psalm 55.** Maschil, A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim.
- **Psalm 56.** Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician, Al-taschith.
- **Psalm 57.** Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician, Al-taschith.
- **Psalm 58.** Michtam of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician, Al-taschith.
- **Psalm 59.** Michtam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth.
- **Psalm 60.** Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Neginah.
- **Psalm 61.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun.
- **Psalm 62.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 63.** A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 64.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 65.** A Psalm and Song of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 66.** A Song or Psalm. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician on Neginoth.
- **Psalm 67.** A Psalm or Song. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 68.** A Psalm or Song of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim.
- **Psalm 69.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 70.** A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 71.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 72.** A Psalm for Solomon. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 73.** A Psalm of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 74.** Maschil of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician, Al-taschith.

- **Psalm 75.** A Psalm or Song of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician on Neginoth.
- **Psalm 76.** A Psalm or Song of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun.
- **Psalm 77.** A Psalm of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 78.** Maschil of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 79.** A Psalm of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth.
- **Psalm 80.** A Psalm of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Gittith.
- **Psalm 81.** A Psalm of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 82.** A Psalm of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 83.** A Song or Psalm of Asaph. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician upon Gittith.
- **Psalm 84.** A Psalm for the sons of Korah. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 85.** A Psalm for the sons of Korah. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 86.** A Prayer of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 87.** A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah. *Sub-scription:* A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth.
- **Psalm 88.** Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 89.** Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 90.** A Prayer of Moses the man of God. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 91.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 92.** A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 93.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 94.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 95.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 96.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 97.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 98.** A Psalm. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 99.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 100.** A Psalm of praise. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 101.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 102.** A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD [Jehovah]. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 103.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 104.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 105.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 106.** — *Sub-scription:* —

- **Psalm 107.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 108.** A Song or Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 109.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 110.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 111.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 112.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 113.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 114.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 115.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 116.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 117.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 118.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 119.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 120.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 121.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 122.** A Song of degrees of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 123.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 124.** A Song of degrees of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 125.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 126.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 127.** A Song of degrees for Solomon. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 128.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 129.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 130.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 131.** A Song of degrees of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 132.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 133.** A Song of degrees of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 134.** A Song of degrees. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 135.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 136.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 137.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 138.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.
- **Psalm 139.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* To the chief Musician.

- **Psalm 140.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 141.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 142.** Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 143.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 144.** A Psalm of David. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 145.** David's Psalm of praise. *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 146.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 147.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 148.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 149.** — *Sub-scription:* —
- **Psalm 150.** — *Sub-scription:* —

Appendix B — Selah

Selah occurs seventy-one times in thirty-nine Psalms, and three times in Habakkuk 3 (vv. 3, 9, 13). It connects what goes before with what follows (Chapter 6, A). Every occurrence in the Psalms:

3:2, 4, 8; 4:2, 4; 7:5; 9:16, 20; 20:3; 21:2; 24:6, 10; 32:4, 5, 7; 39:5, 11; 44:8; 46:3, 7, 11; 47:4; 48:8; 49:13, 15; 50:6; 52:3, 5; 54:3; 55:7, 19; 57:3, 6; 59:5, 13; 60:4; 61:4; 62:4, 8; 66:4, 7, 15; 67:1, 4; 68:7, 19, 32; 75:3; 76:3, 9; 77:3, 9, 15; 81:7; 82:2; 83:8; 84:4, 8; 85:2; 87:3, 6; 88:7, 10; 89:4, 37, 45, 48; 140:3, 5, 8; 143:6.

Eight Psalms have it three or more times (3, 32, 46, 66, 68, 77, 89, 140). The last Selah in the Psalter is 143:6.

Appendix C — The Special Words of the Titles

Drawn from *The Chief Musician* and *The Companion Bible*. Each word belongs to the super-scription or the sub-scription as shown (Chapter 5; Appendix A).

- **Psalm** (*mizmor*). A song set to music. In super-scriptions.
- **Song** (*shir*). A song for singing. In super-scriptions.
- **Prayer** (*tephillah*). Psalms 17, 86, 90, 102, 142.
- **Praise** (*tehillah*). Psalm 145 alone.
- **Maschil.** "Instruction": thirteen Psalms that teach (32, 42, 44, 45, 52–55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142).
- **Michtam.** "Engraven": six Psalms of David (16, 56–60), concerning death and deliverance from it.
- **Shiggaion.** A loud cry, in danger or joy (Psalm 7; compare Hab. 3:1).
- **To the chief Musician.** The Psalm handed over for the worship of the house of God. Always a sub-scription.
- **Neginoth, Neginah.** "Smitings": concerning God's smiting of the enemy. Sub-scription of Psalms 3, 5, 53, 54, 60, 66, 75.
- **Nehiloth.** "Inheritances." Sub-scription of Psalm 4.
- **Sheminith.** "The eighth": the eighth division of the singers (1 Chron. 15:21), the men's voices. Sub-scription of Psalms 5 and 11.
- **Gittith.** "Winepresses": the autumn Feast of Tabernacles. Sub-scription of Psalms 7, 80, 83.
- **Muth-labben.** "The death of the champion": Goliath. Sub-scription of Psalm 8.
- **Aijeleth Shahar.** "The hind of the morning": the dawn. Sub-scription of Psalm 21.
- **Shoshannim.** "Lilies": the spring festival, the Passover. Sub-scription of Psalms 44, 68.
- **Shushan-eduth, Shoshannim-eduth.** "The lily (lilies) of testimony": the Feast of Weeks (or the second Passover). Sub-scription of Psalms 59, 79.
- **Alamoth.** "Maidens": the women's choir. Sub-scription of Psalm 45.
- **Mahalath.** "The great dancings": the women's dances after Goliath fell. Sub-scription of Psalm 52.
- **Mahalath Leannoth.** "The great dancings with shoutings": the bringing up of the Ark. Sub-scription of Psalm 87.
- **Al-taschith.** "Destroy not": the cry at a crisis. Sub-scription of Psalms 56, 57, 58, 74.
- **Jonath-elem-rechokim.** "The dove of the distant terebinths": David in flight. Sub-scription of Psalm 55.

- **Jeduthun.** One of David's three chief musicians; his name means "praise." Sub-scription of Psalms 38, 61, 76.
- **To bring to remembrance.** Psalms 38 and 70.
- **To teach.** Psalm 60.
- **A Song of degrees.** Psalms 120–134 (see their introduction).
- **Selah.** In the text, not the Titles (Appendix B).
- **Higgaion.** "Meditation" (9:16; 19:14; 92:3).

Appendix D — Writers and Occasions

A. Writers named in the Titles

- **David:** 73 Psalms: 3–9, 11–32, 34–41, 51–65, 68–70, 86, 101, 103, 108–110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138–145. The New Testament names him as the writer of Psalms 2 and 95 also (Acts 4:25; Heb. 4:7).
- **The sons of Korah:** 42, 44–49, 84, 85, 87, 88.
- **Asaph:** 50, 73–83.
- **Solomon:** 72 ("for Solomon"), 127.
- **Heman the Ezrahite:** 88. **Ethan the Ezrahite:** 89. **Moses:** 90.
- **No writer named:** the rest. *The Companion Bible* gives ten of the Songs of Degrees to Hezekiah.

B. Occasions named in the Titles (all of David)

- 3 — when he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. 15–18).
- 7 — concerning Cush the Benjamite.
- 18 — when Jehovah delivered him from his enemies and from Saul (2 Sam. 22).
- 34 — when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech (1 Sam. 21:10–15).
- 51 — when Nathan came to him after Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11–12).
- 52 — when Doeg the Edomite told Saul (1 Sam. 22:9–19).
- 54 — when the Ziphites told Saul (1 Sam. 23:19; 26:1).
- 56 — when the Philistines took him in Gath (1 Sam. 21:10–15).
- 57 — when he fled from Saul in the cave (1 Sam. 22:1; 24:3).
- 59 — when Saul sent to watch the house (1 Sam. 19:11–17).
- 60 — when he strove with Aram and Edom (2 Sam. 8; 1 Chron. 18).
- 63 — when he was in the wilderness of Judah.
- 142 — when he was in the cave.

C. Occasions proposed in this study

Where no occasion is named, the study proposes one only where the text points to it, with its weight: Hezekiah and the Assyrian (44, 46–48, 76, the Songs of Degrees, 116); Absalom's rebellion (42–43, 55, 61–63); the Ark brought to Zion (24, 68, 87, 96, 105, 106); the Babylonian destruction and exile (74, 79, 137); the reign of Rehoboam or Jehoiachin (89); the wilderness generation (90).

Appendix E — The Psalms in the New Testament

The chief quotations, by Psalm. (Allusions are noted in the commentary.)

- **2:1, 2** — Acts 4:25, 26. **2:7** — Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5. **2:9** — Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15.
- **4:4** — Eph. 4:26. **5:9** — Rom. 3:13. **8:2** — Matt. 21:16. **8:4–6** — Heb. 2:6–8; 1 Cor. 15:27.
- **10:7** — Rom. 3:14. **14:1–3 (53:1–3)** — Rom. 3:10–12. **16:8–11** — Acts 2:25–28, 31; 13:35.
- **18:49** — Rom. 15:9. **19:4** — Rom. 10:18. **22:1** — Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34. **22:18** — John 19:24. **22:22** — Heb. 2:12.
- **24:1** — 1 Cor. 10:26. **32:1, 2** — Rom. 4:7, 8. **34:8** — 1 Pet. 2:3. **34:12–16** — 1 Pet. 3:10–12. **34:20** — John 19:36.
- **35:19; 69:4** — John 15:25. **36:1** — Rom. 3:18. **40:6–8** — Heb. 10:5–7. **41:9** — John 13:18.
- **44:22** — Rom. 8:36. **45:6, 7** — Heb. 1:8, 9. **51:4** — Rom. 3:4. **68:18** — Eph. 4:8.
- **69:9** — John 2:17; Rom. 15:3. **69:22, 23** — Rom. 11:9, 10. **69:25** — Acts 1:20.
- **78:2** — Matt. 13:35. **78:24** — John 6:31. **82:6** — John 10:34. **89:20** — Acts 13:22.
- **91:11, 12** — Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:10, 11. **94:11** — 1 Cor. 3:20. **95:7–11** — Heb. 3:7–11, 15; 4:3, 5, 7.
- **97:7** — compare Heb. 1:6. **102:25–27** — Heb. 1:10–12. **104:4** — Heb. 1:7.
- **109:8** — Acts 1:20. **110:1** — Matt. 22:44; Acts 2:34, 35; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 1:13; 10:12, 13. **110:4** — Heb. 5:6; 7:17, 21.
- **112:9** — 2 Cor. 9:9. **116:10** — 2 Cor. 4:13. **117:1** — Rom. 15:11.
- **118:6** — Heb. 13:6. **118:22, 23** — Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7. **118:26** — Matt. 21:9; 23:39.
- **132:11** — Acts 2:30. **140:3** — Rom. 3:13. **143:2** — Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16. **146:6** — Acts 4:24; 14:15.

Appendix F — Messiah in the Psalms

The Psalms the New Testament applies to Jesus Christ, and how. Each is treated in its place.

- **His Sonship and kingdom:** 2 (the Son begotten in resurrection, Acts 13:33), 45 (the anointed King, Heb. 1:8, 9), 72 (the King's reign), 110 (seated at God's right hand).
- **His humanity and dominion:** 8 (the Son of man crowned, Heb. 2:6–9).
- **His obedience:** 40 ("Lo, I come . . . to do thy will," Heb. 10:5–9).
- **His betrayal:** 41:9 (John 13:18); 55:12–14; 109:8 (Acts 1:20).
- **His sufferings and death:** 22 (the cross); 69 (hated without a cause, the vinegar); 34:20 (no bone broken); 31:5 ("Into thine hand I commit my spirit," Luke 23:46).
- **His resurrection:** 16:8–11 (Acts 2:25–31); 118:17, 22.
- **His ascension and exaltation:** 68:18 (Eph. 4:8); 110:1 (Acts 2:34–36); 24 (the King of glory entering).
- **His priesthood:** 110:4 (Heb. 5–7).
- **His coming again:** 96:13; 98:9; 102:16; 118:26 (Matt. 23:39).
- **The world to come:** 8 (Heb. 2:5–9); 102:25–27 (Heb. 1:10–12).

Appendix G — The Acrostic Psalms

Psalms in which successive lines or verses begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet (Chapter 7, D):

- **9 and 10** — together one broken acrostic.
- **25** — each verse; *Vau* (and *Koph*) missing; an extra *Pe* verse at the end (v. 22).
- **34** — each verse; *Vau* missing; an extra *Pe* verse at the end (v. 22).
- **37** — each two verses.
- **111 and 112** — each half-line, twenty-two in each Psalm.
- **119** — eight verses for each letter, twenty-two stanzas, 176 verses.
- **145** — each verse; the *Nun* verse missing in the Hebrew text as we have it, present in the Dead Sea Scroll and the ancient versions.

Appendix H — The Divine Names in Each Book

Counts from the Hebrew text (the Westminster Leningrad Codex, as tagged by the Open Scriptures Hebrew Bible), counting every occurrence of each word in the Psalms, Titles included. *Elohim* includes the few places where the word means "gods" or "judges" (82:1, 6). *Jah* includes the Hallelujahs. Older counts, such as Bullinger's, differ somewhat because they were made by different rules; the pattern is the same.

- **Book I (1–41):** Jehovah 278, Jah 0, Elohim 48, El 18, Eloah 2, Elyon 4, Adonai 13, Shaddai 0.
- **Book II (42–72):** Jehovah 32, Jah 2, Elohim 198, El 16, Eloah 1, Elyon 4, Adonai 17, Shaddai 1.
- **Book III (73–89):** Jehovah 44, Jah 2, Elohim 63, El 24, Eloah 0, Elyon 9, Adonai 15, Shaddai 0.
- **Book IV (90–106):** Jehovah 105, Jah 7, Elohim 24, El 9, Eloah 0, Elyon 4, Adonai 2, Shaddai 1.
- **Book V (107–150):** Jehovah 236, Jah 32, Elohim 29, El 10, Eloah 4, Elyon 1, Adonai 8, Shaddai 0.

The pattern: Jehovah dominates Books I, IV and V; Elohim dominates Book II and the first division of Book III (73–83); Jehovah returns in 84–89. *Jah* is concentrated in Books IV and V, chiefly in the Hallelujah Psalms.

Appendix I — The Numbering of the Psalms

Verses. In the Hebrew Bible, the Title of a Psalm is counted as verse 1 (or as verses 1 and 2, when it is long, as in Psalms 51, 52, 54 and 60). So in a Psalm with a Title, the Hebrew verse numbers run one (or two) higher than the English. This study uses the English numbers throughout.

Psalms. The Greek version (the Septuagint), and the Latin Vulgate after it, number the Psalms differently from the Hebrew between 9 and 147:

- Hebrew 1–8 = Greek 1–8.
- Hebrew 9 and 10 = Greek 9 (one Psalm).
- Hebrew 11–113 = Greek 10–112 (one less).
- Hebrew 114 and 115 = Greek 113 (one Psalm).
- Hebrew 116 = Greek 114 and 115 (two Psalms, divided after v. 9).
- Hebrew 117–146 = Greek 116–145 (one less).
- Hebrew 147 = Greek 146 and 147 (two Psalms, divided after v. 11).
- Hebrew 148–150 = Greek 148–150.

The Greek also has a Psalm 151, about David and Goliath, which is not in the Hebrew Bible. Older Roman Catholic books follow the Greek numbers; the King James Version and this study follow the Hebrew.

Appendix J — Questions That Are Disputed

Where a verse or a Psalm has been read in more than one way, the commentary gives this study's answer plainly. Here each case is set out with the reasons on each side and the weight of the answer given.

1. Psalm 2:7 — "This day have I begotten thee"

Answer: the Son was begotten on a day, and Paul names the day: the resurrection (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4). **Other reading:** an "eternal generation" of the Son outside time. **Weight:** strong. The verse says "this day," and the New Testament applies it to the resurrection and to His appointment as High Priest (Heb. 5:5). A Son begotten has a beginning, and God is His God and Father.

2. Psalm 45:6 — "Thy throne, O God"

Answer: the King is addressed by the title *elohim*, as God's representative on God's throne; verse 7 shows that He has a God over Him who anointed Him. **Other reading:** the verse proves that the Son is God. **Weight:** strong. Scripture uses *elohim* of judges (Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9; Psalm 82:6) and of Moses (Ex. 7:1); Solomon sat "on the throne of Jehovah" (1 Chron. 29:23); and Hebrews 1:9 itself quotes "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee." The reading "Thy throne is God," or "God is thy throne," is also possible grammatically, and gives the same sense.

3. Psalm 82:6 and John 10:34–36 — "Ye are gods"

Answer: the Lord argued that if Scripture calls the judges "gods," it is no blasphemy for the One God sanctified and sent to call Himself the Son of God. He claimed to be God's Son, not God. **Weight:** strong; the Lord's own words in John 10:36 say what He claimed.

4. Psalm 102:25–27 and Hebrews 1:10–12

Answer: Hebrews quotes the Greek of Psalm 102, in which God answers the afflicted one (v. 23) and addresses him as Lord, the one who lays the foundation of an earth and heavens to come. Hebrews 2:5 says its subject is "the world to come." **Other reading:** the verses prove that the Son created the present heavens and earth. **Weight:** good. It rests on the text Hebrews actually quotes and on Hebrews' own statement of its subject; in the Hebrew text, the verses praise the Creator, and the Son is not named.

5. Psalm 110:1 — "The LORD said unto my Lord"

Answer: two persons: Jehovah, and David's lord (*adoni*), the Messiah, whom Jehovah seats at His right hand. **Weight:** strong. *Adoni* is used of men and never of God; and the whole verse depends on there being two.

6. The five Books and the books of Moses

Answer: a real match, strong in Books III–V and looser in I–II. **Other reading:** the five Books are only a convenient division, imitating the five books of the Law. **Weight:** moderate; the match is presented as Bullinger's observation, tested Book by Book.

7. The place of the Titles (Thirtle's key)

Answer: "To the chief Musician," with the words that go with it, is the sub-scription of the Psalm before. **Other reading:** the Titles belong where the Versions print them. **Weight:** strong. Habakkuk 3 shows the pattern; in many places (Alamoth, 45/46; Mahalath Leannoth, 87/88; Jeduthun, 38/39, 61/62, 76/77; Jonath-elem-rechokim, 55/56) the words fit the Psalm before and not the one after; and it removes the double authors of 39, 62, 77 and 88.

8. The Songs of Degrees

Answer: Hezekiah's fifteen songs, for the fifteen years added to his life, the "degrees" being the steps of the dial of Ahaz. **Other reading:** pilgrim songs of "ascent" to Jerusalem. **Weight:** moderate; the Hezekiah view best explains the number, the article, the order and Isaiah 38:20; the pilgrim view fits 122 and is older in tradition. The two can both be true of the songs' later use.

9. The occasions of Psalms 44, 46–48 and 76

Answer: the Assyrian crisis in Hezekiah's day. **Other reading:** the Maccabean period, or other wars. **Weight:** strong as a fit for 46–48 and 76 (the Greek title of 76 says "concerning the Assyrian"); good for 44.

10. Psalms 74 and 79

Answer: the Babylonian burning of the temple. **Other reading:** Shishak's plundering (*The Companion Bible* for 79), or the Maccabean period. **Weight:** strong; only the Babylonian destruction burned the sanctuary and laid Jerusalem in heaps.

11. Psalm 90:10 — "Threescore years and ten"

Answer: the span of the generation sentenced to die in the wilderness, not a fixed limit for all mankind. **Weight:** good; it fits the setting and the "wrath" of the Psalm, and Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb all lived far longer.

12. Psalm 109 — the curses

Answer: whoever speaks them within the Psalm (David against his enemy, or his enemies against him, as *The Companion Bible* reads verses 6–19), the spirit of God spoke through David of Judas (Acts 1:20). Such prayers belong to the administration of law, not of grace. **Weight:** the second reading explains the change from plural to singular; both readings agree on the application to Judas.

13. Psalm 119 — the writer

Answer: not named; Hezekiah is possible. **Weight:** possible, not proven.

14. Psalm 137:9 and the imprecations

Answer: the cry of the oppressed for the judgment God had already announced (Isa. 13:16), belonging to the administration of law and judgment; in the administration of grace, vengeance is left to God (Rom. 12:17–19). **Weight:** strong.

15. Psalm 145 — the missing *Nun*

Answer: the line "Faithful is the LORD in all his words, and holy in all his works" belongs to the Psalm. **Weight:** strong; it completes the acrostic and is found in a Dead Sea Scroll and the ancient versions.

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The Scriptures outside the Psalms cited in this study, with the places where they are cited. ("Ps." means the commentary on that Psalm; "Pss." a division or group.)

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- 2:33 — Ps. 68
- 2:34, 35 — Chapter 10
- 2:34–36 — Ps. 110; Appendix F

- 2:36 — Ps. 21
- 3:1 — Ps. 141
- 3:21 — Ps. 104
- 4:10, 11 — Ps. 118
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- 4:24–27 — Ps. 2
- 4:25 — Chapter 2; Appendix D
- 4:27 — Ps. 2
- 7:38 — Ps. 91
- 7:42 — Ps. 81
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- 8:27–39 — Ps. 68
- 10:38 — Ps. 2; Ps. 45
- 13:22 — Ps. 89
- 13:33 — Chapter 10; Ps. 2; Appendix J
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- 13:35–37 — Chapter 10; Ps. 16
- 13:36, 37 — Ps. 16
- 15:14 — Ps. 2
- 16:25 — Ps. 119
- 17:25 — Ps. 50
- 17:31 — Ps. 9; Ps. 41; Ps. 82; Ps. 96
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- 26:1–29 — Ps. 119
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- 1:3 — Ps. 18
- 1:4 — Ps. 2; Appendix J
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- 1:24, 26, 28 — Ps. 81
- 2:6 — Ps. 28; Ps. 62
- 2:21, 22 — Ps. 50
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- 3:4 — Ps. 51
- 3:9–12 — Ps. 14
- 3:10, 13 — Ps. 5
- 3:10–12 — Ps. 14; Ps. 53
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- 3:18 — Ps. 36
- 3:19 — Ps. 14
- 3:20 — Ps. 143
- 3:21–26 — Ps. 32
- 3:24 — Ps. 35
- 4:6–8 — Ps. 32
- 4:25 — Ps. 32
- 5:12 — Ps. 51
- 6:9 — Ps. 21; Ps. 72; Ps. 102
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- 15:9–11 — Chapter 3; Ps. 117
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- 2:8 — Ps. 24
- 3:20 — Ps. 94
- 8:4 — Ps. 96
- 10:4 — Ps. 95
- 10:20 — Ps. 106
- 10:26 — Ps. 24
- 14:15 — Ps. 47
- 14:26 — Chapter 11
- 15:25–28 — Ps. 110
- 15:27 — Chapter 10; Ps. 8
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- 3:14–16 — Ps. 119
- 4:13, 14 — Ps. 116
- 5:21 — Ps. 22
- 6:2 — Ps. 69
- 9:9 — Ps. 112
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- 2:16 — Ps. 143
- 3:8, 16 — Ps. 72
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- 1:13 — Ps. 51
- 1:20–22 — Ps. 8; Ps. 110
- 2:20 — Ps. 118
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- 4:26 — Ps. 4
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- 1:6 — Ps. 138
- 2:7 — Ps. 86
- 2:8, 9 — Ps. 18
- 2:9 — Ps. 21; Ps. 47; Ps. 69
- 3:13 — Ps. 27
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- 3:4 — Ps. 73
- 3:16 — Chapter 3; Chapter 11; Ps. 119

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- 4:13 — Ps. 13
- 4:16 — Ps. 23

2 Thessalonians

- 1:7, 8 — Ps. 21
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1 Timothy

- 2:5 — Chapter 9; Book I; Pss. 16–41
- 2:8 — Ps. 63
- 6:7 — Ps. 49
- 6:9, 10 — Ps. 119

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- 2:19 — Ps. 1
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- 1:3 — Ps. 24

- 1:4–9 — Ps. 45
- 1:5 — Chapter 10; Ps. 2
- 1:7, 8 — Ps. 104
- 1:8, 9 — Chapter 10; Ps. 45
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- 1:13 — Chapter 10; Ps. 110
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- 2:6–9 — Chapter 10; Pss. 1–8; Ps. 8
- 2:7, 9 — Ps. 8
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- 3:11, 18, 19 — Ps. 95
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- 5:5 — Chapter 10; Ps. 2; Appendix J
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- 6:13, 17, 18 — Ps. 89
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- 8:5 — Ps. 11; Ps. 150
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- 10:5 — Ps. 40
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- 13:8 — Ps. 102
- 13:15 — Ps. 50; Ps. 119
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James

- 1:8 — Ps. 119
- 1:10, 11 — Ps. 90
- 1:25 — Ps. 119
- 3:6 — Ps. 120

1 Peter

- 1:7 — Ps. 66
- 1:11 — Ps. 22
- 1:25 — Ps. 119
- 2:3 — Ps. 34
- 2:7 — Chapter 10; Ps. 118
- 2:22 — Ps. 15; Ps. 18; Ps. 41; Ps. 69
- 2:24 — Ps. 22
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- 3:10–12 — Ps. 34
- 3:22 — Ps. 24

- 4:19 — Ps. 31
- 5:4 — Pss. 16–41; Ps. 22; Ps. 24
- 5:5 — Ps. 18
- 5:7 — Ps. 55

2 Peter

- 3:5 — Ps. 24; Ps. 33
- 3:8 — Ps. 90
- 3:10–13 — Ps. 102
- 3:13 — Ps. 102

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- 1:5 — Ps. 104
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- 2:17 — Ps. 15
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- 1:5 — Ps. 89
- 1:18 — Ps. 21
- 2:23 — Ps. 7
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- 3:5 — Ps. 69
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- 6:10 — Chapter 3; Ps. 79
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- 14:19, 20 — Ps. 83
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- 19:15 — Ps. 2
- 20:2, 3 — Ps. 8
- 21:1 — Ps. 102
- 22:1 — Ps. 46
- 22:4 — Ps. 11

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