

## THE PSALMS

The Psalms have been the hymnbook not only of the Hebrew people since the time of their compilation but also for Christians over the centuries. Still today there are Christian groups in our world who insist that only the Psalms be sung during worship. A number of Psalms are designated as "*mizmore le David*". These Psalms are generally didactic and reverent. As in any hymnal the purpose of the Psalms varies, dealing with a wide variety of feelings and concerns.

This is the most important collection of Hebrew religious poetry. In the Hebrew text it is called "*Tehillim*" meaning "Songs of Praise". Our English designation "Psalms" comes from the Latin version which took the Greek title "Ψαλμοι" meaning, "a poem song with the accompaniment of stringed instruments. Another title for this collection of songs of praise is "Psalter" which is used in Codex A (*Alexandrinus*) of the LXX (*Septuagint Version*).

As a collection of songs of praise the Psalms have evolved into five books, each having a doxology at the conclusion of the collection. The final book has an entire Psalm (150) as a doxology. Some scholars have felt the division of the book of Psalms was deliberate, intending to be imitative of the Pentateuch. Others feel it came through a natural collection process. These books are: Book 1:1-41; Book 2: 42-72; Book 3:73-89; Book 4:90-106; Book 5: 107-150. The authorship as noted in the headings of the Psalms, generally, is not confined to a single book. The notations of authorship give the following suggestions of authorship: Ascribed to David: 73; Asaph: 12; The Sons of Korah: 11; Solomon: 1; Moses: 1; Ethan: 1; Heman the Ezrahite: 1. 49 Psalms are called "Orphan Psalms" since no one is ascribed as the writer. The Orphan Psalms are: 1, 2, 10, 33, 43, 71, 91, 93-97, 99, 104-107, 111-119, 135-137, 146-150. Duplications can be found in the Psalms as follows: Psalm 14 -- 53; Psalm 40:13-17 -- 57:7-11 and 60:5-12 -- 105. Some Psalms have been considered by scholars to have a Messianic message. These are: Psalms 2, 8, 22, 72, 89, 110, 118 132.

It is believed that the titles or headings of the Psalms which are a part of the canonical Bible are editorial, having been added by those who studied and loved the Psalms. These were perhaps added in the 2nd or 3rd Centuries prior to the Common Era. Since the Hebrew text was written without vowels, as a space saving measure on the hand written leather manuscripts, the job fell to scholars called Masoretes to insert the vowel points in the manuscripts. This was done between the years 500 and 1000 of the Common Era. There are instances where scholars differ from the work done at that time and emendations are suggested from time to time. Some of these will be noted in the translation of the Psalms. It must be remembered that during the Babylonian Captivity (*in about the 6th century prior to the Common Era*) the Hebrew language was not used and Aramaic came to be the vogue. In this situation, as in all language, subtle changes took place and some words used in the Hebrew language had fallen into disuse. As a result, on occasion, the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. Scholars in the 21st Century are not as aggressive in jumping to conclusions about the meaning of a word as they were in the 17th Century. Hence assumptions with regard to meaning are noted with the comment: Hebrew Uncertain.

Noted in the titles or headings of some Psalms there are musical terms which should be considered.

*Aggeleth-shahar* Ps. 22. According to the Hind of the Dawn. [*With a slight emendation: With the Help of the Dawn*].

*Alamoth* Ps. 46. the literal translation is 'girls' or 'young girls'. Perhaps 'treble range'.

*Al-tash-hiith* Ps. 57, 59, 75. According to 'Do not destroy'. (*Possibly a melody title.*)

*Gittith* Ps. 8, 81, 84. Possibly a musical instrument or 'The Tune from Gath'.

*Higgaion* Ps. 9:16. Meditation. This might mean a time to murmur to oneself about what has just been sung.

*Jeduthun* Ps. 39. Possibly the name of the Chief Musician. Cf. Ps. 62, 77.

*Jonth-elem-rechokim* Ps. 56. The Dove of the Far Off Terebinths.

*Mahalath* Ps. 53. According to Mahalath. (*Either a proper name of an instrument or with slight emendation: 'According to sickness.'*)

*Mahalath-Leannoth* Ps. 88. According to Mahalath to the Humble or Afflicted. (*Possibly Leannoth is a proper name.*)

*Maskil* Ps. 32, 42, 44, 45, 52-55, 74, 79, 88, 89, 142. Teaching Psalms. The word *Maskil* comes from the root word for 'wise' or 'prudent'.

*Miktam* Ps. 45-60. Scholars in the past called it 'A Golden Psalm' since the root word means 'golden' but recently scholars have considered it to be 'A Silent Prayer' using the root word for 'covering' which is a good possibility.

*Muth-labben* Ps. 9. Literally: 'Upon death for a son' or 'Secrets of the son'. No doubt a tune name.

*Neginoth* Ps. 4, 6, 54, 55, 56, 67, 76. For strings.

*Nehiloth* Ps. 5 For flutes.

*Selah* Ps. 3. This word appears 71 times. The LXX calls it an interlude or change of musical accompaniment. As a Hebrew word its meaning is not certain. The JB translates it as 'Pause'. The Amplified Bible translates 'pause and calmly think of that!' TANAKH has a foot note saying 'A liturgical direction of uncertain meaning'. *Selah* was apparently a later addition to the text.

*Sheminith* Ps. 6, 12. Literally 'eighth'. No doubt: tenor or bass.

*Shiggaion* Ps. 7, 40. Literally 'wild' or 'ecstatic emotions are evidenced'.

*Shoshannim* Ps. 69, 145. According to the Lilies (*No doubt the name of a melody.*)

*Shoshannim-eduth* Ps. 80. According to the Lilies. A testimony.

*Soshaneduth* Ps. 60. According to Shushan Eduth.

Ps. 55, among others has a further inscription: 'For the Chief Musician' or 'For the Choir Master'.

Ps. 17 has a simple inscription: 'A Prayer'. Ps. 145 has the inscription 'A Song of Praise'.

Events in David's life are found in Ps. 3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 60, 63, 142.

There are clusters of Psalms with the same or a similar inscription: Psalms of the Sons of Korah: 42-49; Psalms of Asaph: 50, 73-83; Michtam 46-60; Songs of Degree: 120-134.

Musical instruments used in formal worship were: Stringed instruments: harp and psalter. Wind instruments were: pipe, horn and trumpet. Instruments to be beaten were the timbrel and cymbal. I Chronicles 23:5 speaks of David having an orchestra of 4,000.

As we look at these Psalms we need to bear in mind that they express the feelings of people who are engaged in worship as well as expression of faith and concern in individual lives. These days we think of some of the Psalms as not being 'politically correct'. A careful reading of these Psalms, however, finds the understanding of the Psalmist to be quite different from the thought that seems to prevail with a casual reading of these Psalms. They have been called the 'Imprecatory Psalms': 58, 59, 69, 109, 137, 149. Other Psalms were concerned with a reminder of the history of the people of Israel: Ps. 78, 105, 106, 114. Beyond these we find a wide gamut of needs and feelings expressed by the writers. Desires for security, justice, vindication, forgiveness, relief from

suffering of physical affliction, help in times of mental anguish and unrest, personal guilt, injustice, being falsely accused, a sense of aloneness and much more are expressed in these words which have supplied God's people with a renewed assurance of God's presence and loving concern. They continue to be the source of guidance and strength today, even as they have provided help over many centuries. The intrinsic spiritual depth and beauty of the Psalms reflects the living spirit of religion that was alive in those who first wrote and used these words. The religious experience that is ours today is greatly strengthened as we again turn to these ancient passages.

**PSALMS**  
**BOOK ONE**  
*Psalms 1 - 41*

**PSALM 1**

<THE TWO WAYS OF LIFE>

- 1 Oh, the happiness of any person  
    who does not walk following the council (*or, advice*) of the wicked,  
    who does not stand after the manner of sinners,  
    or sit in the seat of (*or, listens to*) those who mock!
- 2 But has delight in the law of the Lord  
    and carefully meditates on that law day and night.
- 3 That person will be like a tree that has been planted  
    by streams of water  
    that yields its fruit in the proper season,  
    whose leaf does not wither  
    and prospers in whatever is done.
- 4 That is not the way of the wicked (*or, ungodly*)  
    who are like chaff blown by the wind.
- 5 When the time of judgment comes  
    the wicked will not stand,  
    nor will sinners be among the assembly  
    of those who are righteous!
- 6 The Lord knows the way of those who are righteous  
    but those who are wicked (*or, ungodly*) will perish!

**PSALM 2**

<GOD'S PROMISE TO HIS ANOINTED>

- 1 How dare the nations plan rebellion<sup>1</sup>  
    and the people vainly plot?
- 2 The kings of the earth take their stand  
    and the rulers consult as they make their plans  
    against the Lord and His Anointed One, saying,

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1 LXX "rage."

3 "Let us break their authority<sup>2</sup>  
 and remove their control."<sup>3</sup>  
 4 The one who is enthroned in the heavens laughs.  
 The Lord<sup>4</sup> ridicules their feeble plans.  
 5 Then he warns them in his wrath.  
 and terrifies them with his fury<sup>5</sup>  
 6 "I, myself, have installed my king on Zion<sup>6</sup> my holy hill."  
  
 7 I will proclaim the pronouncements of the Lord!  
 He said to me, "You are my son.  
 Today I have become your father."<sup>7</sup>  
 8 Ask me and I will cause the nations to be your inheritance.  
 You will possess the distant places of the earth.  
 9 You will break them with an iron scepter.  
 and will shatter them like a clay pot."  
  
 10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise.  
 You who are rulers of the world be warned.  
 11,12 Serve the Lord with awe  
 [and rejoice with trembling.  
 Pay homage, kiss his feet, kiss the son with trembling.]<sup>8</sup>  
 That he might not become angry<sup>9</sup>  
 and you become destroyed by his wrath.  
  
 Oh the happiness of all who take refuge in him!

### **PSALM 3**

*<A Psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom>*

1 My foes are many!  
 Many are rising against me.<sup>10</sup>  
 2 Many are saying about me<sup>11</sup>  
 "God will not help him."  
Selah.<sup>12</sup>
 3 You, however, O Lord, are my shield, protect me.  
 You are my glory! The One who lifts my head high (*or, gives me courage*).

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2 Lit. "fetters."

3 Literally: "cords."

4 Hebrew: "Adonai."

5 Literally: "burning anger."

6 Mount Moriah, formerly a Jebusite city, later David's city, Jerusalem, the Temple area. Cf. LXX.

7 Or: your king.

8 Hebrew unclear.

9 This Hebrew word for "angry" is only used of God in the Psalms.

10 LXX "his God" in place of "me."

11 Literally: "are talking about my soul."

12 Cf. introduction for the word Selah; A liturgical direction.

4 I call out to the Lord,  
and he answers me from his holy (*or, sacred*) hill.  
Selah.

5 I lie down and sleep  
and when I awake gain, the Lord is sustaining me.  
6 I am not fearful of tens of thousands of foes.<sup>13</sup>  
who have surrounded me.  
7 Arise, O Lord! Deliver me, oh my God,  
for you will humiliate my enemies.<sup>14</sup>  
You will leave them powerless.<sup>15</sup>

8 For it is the Lord who brings deliverance (*or, victory*).  
May your blessings be given to your people!  
Selah.

#### **PSALM 4**

<CONFIDENT PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ENEMIES>

<To the Choirmaster: With stringed instruments. Neginoth>

<A Psalm of David>

1 Answer me when I call, my righteous God.  
You have freed me<sup>16</sup> when I was in distress.  
Be gracious to me! Hear my prayers!

2 You powerful people, how long is my honor  
to be turned into shame?  
How long will you love delusions  
and seek after lies?

Selah.

3 Be aware that the Lord has set apart, for himself,  
those who are godly.  
The Lord will hear when I call to him!<sup>17</sup>

4 Tremble (*i.e. be in awe*)<sup>18</sup> but do not sin.  
Commune with your inner feelings<sup>19</sup>  
when you are in your beds (*or, couches*) and be silent.<sup>20</sup>

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13 Literally: "people." Cf. v. 1.

14 Literally: "smite my enemies on the cheek."

15 Literally: "break the teeth of the wicked."

16 The concept being one of growth because of the experience of distress.

17 A possible emendation: "Know that the Lord has shown me his marvelous love." Cf. NEB.

18 Hebrew uncertain. LXX says "be angry."

19 Literally: "hearts."

20 Some scholars assume the thoughts are resentful.

Selah.

5 Offer the proper sacrifices  
and be confident in the Lord.

6 Many are saying, "Oh, that we might see some good!  
Lift up the light of your countenance O Lord." <sup>21</sup>

7 You have already filled my heart with more joy  
than those who are harvesting their grain and wine in abundance.

8 I will lie down and sleep in peace.  
For you, O Lord, make me dwell in safety! <sup>22</sup>

### *PSALM 5*

<*TRUST IN GOD FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ENEMIES*>

<*To the Choirmaster: For flutes. (Nehiloth)*>

1 Be attentive to my words, O Lord.

Attend to my sighing (*or groaning*).

2 Hear the sound of my cry,  
my King and my God, for I pray to you.

3 O Lord, in the morning you will hear my voice.  
In the morning I will offer my prayers before you <sup>23</sup>  
and will await a response.

4 You are not a God who takes delight in wickedness.  
Evil cannot be your quest.

5 The arrogant may not remain <sup>24</sup> in your sight,  
for you hate evildoers.

6 You destroy those who tell lies.  
The Lord abhors those who are blood thirsty  
and are filled with deceit.

7 As the result of your great and steadfast loving faithfulness  
I will be able to enter your house.

I will bow in reverence (*or, awe*) toward your holy temple.

8 Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness.  
Because of my enemies who watch continuously  
make your <sup>25</sup> way straight before me.

9 There is no truth in their mouth <sup>26</sup>

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21 Emendation: "The light of his countenance has departed from me."

22 Some manuscripts say "keep me alone and secure."

23 Variant reading: "cause a sacrifice to be made."

24 Variant reading: "stand."

25 LXX "my."

26 I.e. "they are arrogant."

their hearts are [filled with treachery.] <sup>27</sup>  
Their throat is an open grave.  
Their tongue speaks deceitfully (*or, glibly*).  
10 Condemn and punish them, O God.  
Let their intrigues be their downfall.  
Banish them because of their many crimes,  
and for their rebellion against you.

11 Let all those rejoice who find their refuge in you.  
Let all who are under your protection sing for joy.  
Let all those who love your name rejoice in you!  
12 For you bless the righteous, O Lord.  
You surround them with your favor,  
like the shield of a warrior.

### PSALM 6

<PRAYER FOR RECOVERY FROM GRAVE ILLNESS <sup>28</sup>>

*To the Choirmaster: With stringed instruments: according to the Sheminith.* <sup>29</sup>

*A Psalm of David*

1 O Lord, do not rebuke me in anger.  
do not discipline me in your wrath.  
2 Have pity on me, O Lord, for I am totally exhausted.  
Heal me, O Lord, for my bones tremble with agony. <sup>30</sup>  
3 My entire being <sup>31</sup> is in great distress.  
O Lord, how long? How long? (*or, Do not wait too long.*)  
4 Turn back, O Lord and rescue me.  
Save me because of your unfailing love.  
5 For in death there is no remembrance of you.  
Who can give praise from the grave? <sup>32</sup>  
6 I am worn out by my depression (*or, moaning*).  
Every night I soak my bed with tears!  
With my weeping I drench my couch.  
7 My eyes are becoming weak <sup>33</sup> because of grief.  
They fail because of my enemies. <sup>34</sup>

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27 LXX "emptiness."

28 A Psalm of Lament or a Penitential Psalm. These Psalms are 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

29 Hebrew uncertain. A Sheminith is perhaps an eight stringed instrument. The Hebrew word means "eighth" cf. Psalm 12:1, Chronicles 15:11. Scholars feel it was an instrument with a low tone which would now be described as a bass instrument.

30 Literally: "are shaken." Variants read, "are dried up" or "rot away."

31 Literally: "soul."

32 Literally: "Sheol," the "abode of the dead."

33 Variant reading: "grow old" or "become dim."

34 Variant reading: "my distress."

8 Be gone, all you who are evildoers!  
The Lord has heard the sounds of my wailing (*or, weeping*).  
9 The Lord has heard my plea for mercy.  
The Lord accepts my prayer.  
10 All my enemies will be ashamed and smitten with terror.  
They will suddenly be repulsed and be put to shame.

### PSALM 7

<A Shiggaion <sup>35</sup> of David which he sang to the Lord concerning Cush, a Benjaminite.>

1 O Lord, my God, I have sought to take my refuge with you.  
Save me from all my pursuers and keep me safe.  
2 lest they tear me apart, as does a lion,  
and drag me away with no one to rescue me.

3 O Lord, my God, if I have done this  
there is guilt on my hands.  
4 [If I have done evil to my friend], <sup>36</sup>  
if I have robbed my enemy without cause, <sup>37</sup>  
5 let my enemy pursue me and overtake me.  
Let him trample my life to the ground  
and cause me to sleep in the dust.

Selah.

6 [O Lord, arise in your anger.  
Rise up against the wrath of my enemies.  
O <sup>38</sup> my God, be attentive on my behalf,  
that justice might be upheld.  
7 Let the people be assembled before you.  
Rule over them from your lofty throne  
(*or, Rule over them from above.*)  
8 Let the Lord judge the people. <sup>39</sup>  
Judge me, O Lord, in accordance with my righteousness  
and in accordance with my integrity.  
9 O let the evil of those who deal violently come to an end. <sup>40</sup>  
Cause the righteous to be secure (*or, established*),  
for you, O righteous God are the one

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35 Hebrew Uncertain. Possibly a Psalm written in irregular poetic form. Cush was perhaps the name of Ethiopia.

36 Hebrew Uncertain. Emendation: "If I have repaid evil with evil."

37 Hebrew Uncertain. Emendation: "to rescue my friend" or, "I have done violence to someone who without cause was my enemy." There is a feeling by some scholars that two consonants were transposed in the manuscripts.

38 "O" is omitted by LXX.

39 Some scholars consider this line to be a gloss.

40 The thought of the Psalmist is perhaps, "Stop people from performing the wickedness of evil humanity."

who examines the thoughts and desires.<sup>41</sup>

- 10 My defense<sup>42</sup> is with God  
who saves those who are obedient.
- 11 God is a righteous judge,  
a God who has indignation every day.  
toward anyone who does not repent.]<sup>43</sup>
- 12 God will hone his sword  
and will ready<sup>44</sup> his bow string.
- 13 He has his deadly weapons prepared,  
as are his fiery darts (*or, arrows*).
- 14 However, the wicked person who conceives of evil  
is pregnant with mischief  
and gives birth to lies.
- 15 The person who digs a hole and enlarges it  
falls into his own trap (*or, pitfall*).
- 16 His mischief will recoil on himself!  
His brutality will come down on his own head.
- 17 I will give thanks to the Lord  
because of his righteousness.  
I will sing praises to the name of the Lord, the Most High.<sup>45</sup>

### *PSALM 8*

*<DIVINE MAJESTY AND HUMAN DIGNITY>*

*<To the Choirmaster: According to the Gittith<sup>46</sup> >*

*<A Psalm of David>*

- 1 O Lord, our Lord, your name is majestic in all the earth!  
For you are the one whose glories are sung<sup>47</sup> about  
in praise of the heavens.
- 2 It is from the lips of children and infants  
that you have established (*or, founded*) a stronghold,<sup>48</sup>  
because of your enemies,

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41 Literally: "kidneys." In the time of the Psalmist the kidneys were thought to be the seat of the integrity of conscience.

42 Literally: "my shield."

43 Several minor variants occur in verses 6 - 11 but are of no great consequence.

44 Literally: "bend and string his bow."

45 The divine title "the Most High" is used 21 times in the Psalms.

46 "Gittith" is perhaps an instrument or tune which took its name from Gath. The Hebrew word is the feminine form of Gath.  
cf. Ps. 8, 81, 84. Since Gath means 'wine press' some scholars deem that it was a Psalm used in connection with the  
vintage (the Feast of Tabernacles) or with the Ark's journey from the Gittites house to Jerusalem cf. II Samuel 6:11.

47 MT "recounted."

48 Literally: "strength, might or power."

to silence these enemies and those who  
are filled with vengeance.

3 When I look at your heavens<sup>49</sup> which you have made<sup>50</sup>  
through the work of your fingers,  
the moon and stars which you have formed,  
4 what are human beings that you should think of them  
or mere human beings<sup>51</sup> that you should care for them?  
5 Yet, you have caused them to be a bit lower than God.<sup>52</sup>  
You have crowned them with glory and honor.

6 You have made them to have dominion over all you have created<sup>53</sup>  
and caused everything to be subject to them<sup>54</sup>  
(*or, put human beings in charge.*)

7 All sheep and oxen and all the animals of the field,  
8 the birds of the air, fish of the sea  
and everything that swims in the paths of the sea.

9 O Lord, our Lord, your name is majestic in the entire earth!

***PSALMS 9 AND 10***<sup>55</sup>

*<GOD'S POWER AND JUSTICE, THE SOURCE  
OF DELIVERANCE FROM ENEMIES>  
<To the Choirmaster: According to Muth-labben.<sup>56</sup>>  
<A Psalm of David.>*

α 1 Wholeheartedly will I give thanks to you, O Lord.  
I will recount aloud all of your wonderful deeds.  
2 I will rejoice and I will praise you.  
I will sing praises to your name, O most high!

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49 Because of their way of life the Hebrew people had many opportunities to study the heavens.

50 Literally: "prepared" with the thought of building or establishing implied. LXX "created."

51 Literally: "the son of man."

52 The word that was written in Hebrew: "God" seemed too exalted so instead of reading the written word, the word for "angelic beings" was read. In Hebrew it is known as "the qere and the ketiv" and was used in several places in the Old Testament though it's most outstanding examples was in this Psalm. LXX chose the "qere" "angelic beings." NJV "less than divine." NIV "a little lower than heavenly beings."

53 Literally: "all the works of your hands."

54 Literally: "under his feet."

55 These Psalms began as one acrostic Psalm, using the Hebrew alphabet from Alpha to Tau in 22 strophes but in its present form some strophes are missing. Psalm 10:12-18 continue with some acrostic letters, perhaps from the original Psalm 9. Acrostic Psalms are 9-10, 25, 34, 111, 112, 119 and 145. The LXX considers these Psalms to be one, thus causing the numbering of the Psalms in the LXX to be at variance with our traditional numbering. These Psalms were perhaps separated by the Peshitta or the Targums. An attempt is made to note the Hebrew letters in the margin. These are not always in proper alphabetical order.

56 "Muth-labben" is literally, "upon death of a son." The LXX took it to mean "the secrets of a son." Through a slight emendation it would be "sung with treble voices of boys." It may have been a tune name or a reference to death though no consensus is held by scholars. MFT "for a soprano boy's choir."

- β 3 At the time when my enemies retreat,  
they stumble<sup>57</sup> and perish in your presence,  
4 for you have upheld my rights and my cause.  
You have been seated on the throne,  
giving righteous judgment.
- γ 5 You have rebuked the nations  
and you have destroyed the wicked ones.  
You have blotted out their name for all time!  
6 The enemies have been totally destroyed,  
their cities have been demolished  
and the memory of them has vanished.
- η 7 The Lord is enthroned<sup>58</sup> forever.  
He has established his throne for judgment.  
8 He judges the world with righteousness.  
He passes sentence on the people with equity
- ω 9 The Lord is a stronghold for those who are oppressed.  
A stronghold in times of difficulty.<sup>59</sup>  
10 Those who know your name can put their trust in you  
for you, O Lord, will never abundant those who seek you.
- ζ 11 Sing praises to the Lord, O you who reside in Zion.<sup>60</sup>  
Proclaim his wonderful deeds to the nations.  
12 He remembers you and punishes those who are wrong.  
He does not forget the cry of those who are afflicted.<sup>61</sup>
- ξ 13 Deal graciously with me, O Lord!  
See how I suffer<sup>62</sup> from my enemies.  
O, you who rescues me from the very gates of death,  
14 So that I might recall and declare your praises  
and do so in the gates of the daughter of Zion,  
(*or, stand before the people of Jerusalem*)  
and be enabled to rejoice in your salvation.
- φ 15 The nations<sup>63</sup> have sunk into a pit  
which they, themselves, have dug.

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57 Literally: "stagger, totter."

58 Hebrew uncertain. "thunder" or "thunders."

59 Literally: "drought" or if the words in the MT are divided differently "distress" or "difficulty."

60 To whom does the Psalmist refer to as one "who resides in Zion?" The Lord or the ones who sing praises?

61 Hebrew uncertain. Possible emendation: "He is an avenger of blood, being mindful of the innocent."

62 Literally: "those who hate me." A possible emendation is used above.

63 Emended: "proud" or "arrogant."

Their feet have become ensnared in their own net.  
 16 The Lord has revealed Himself  
 He has executed judgment.  
 The wicked are ensnared<sup>64</sup> by the work of their own devices.  
 Higgagon<sup>65</sup> Selah.

Ψ 17 Those who are wicked return to (*or, depart from*) Sheol,<sup>66</sup>  
 all those who reject god.  
 18 Those who are in need will not always be forgotten.  
 The hope of the downtrodden will never perish!

Κ 19 Arise, O Lord, Do not let people prevail.  
 Cause the nations to be judged in your presence.  
 20 Strike them with terror, O Lord!  
 Let the nations know that they are simply human.

λ 10 1 Why are you standing as one who is aloof, O Lord?  
 Why do you hide yourself in troubled times?<sup>67</sup>  
 2 The wicked ones, in their arrogance, persecute<sup>68</sup> the poor  
 and catch them in the schemes they have devised.

μ 3 The wicked ones boast of their evil desires.  
 The ones who are bent on profits from others  
 curse and renounce the Lord.<sup>69</sup>

ν 4 In their haughty pride the wicked ones  
 do not concern<sup>70</sup> themselves with the Lord.  
 Their only thought is, 'There is no God.'

5 Their manner of living is always prosperous.  
 Their haughtiness causes them to reject your laws.<sup>71</sup>  
 6 As for those who oppose them, they despise them!<sup>72</sup>  
 They say to themselves, 'We will not fail.'<sup>73</sup>  
 Across the generations we will never be in trouble!'

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64 Emendation: "pushed" or "stumble."

65 A Hebrew word that apparently means "meditation" though scholars are divided in their opinion of its meaning. It apparently was a time for an interlude since the word is combined with "Selah." It was not doubt a time of musical interlude at which the people were urged to meditate on the message. For the word "Selah" cf. Ps. 3:2.

66 Cf. Psalm 6:5.

67 Cf. Psalm 9:9.

68 Literally: "set ablaze" or "hotly pursue." ∴ "harass."

69 The LXX has a different text. "the sinners are acclaimed for the desires of their hearts and the wicked ones are praised."

70 Hebrew uncertain.

71 Possibly "your existence."

72 Literally: "hiss" or "snort."

73 Literally: "totter."

- σ 7 Their speech is filled with curses, lies and violence.  
 π They readily speak<sup>74</sup> hateful and evil words, causing people harm.  
 8 They set an ambush in the villages.  
 In hiding places they murder those who are innocent.  
 Their eyes constantly watch<sup>75</sup> stealthily for their victims.
- [ 9 They lurk in secret like a lion in his lair,  
 hiding to catch the helpless (*or, afflicted*).  
 They seize them and drag them into their net (*or, pull their net shut*).
- χ 10 Their victims are crushed<sup>76</sup> and collapse.  
 They fall into the clutches of the wicked ones.  
 11 They say to themselves: 'God has forgotten.  
 God covers his face. He will never see.'
- θ 12 O Lord! Arise! Lift up your hand,<sup>77</sup> O God!  
 Do not forget the helpless (*or, afflicted*).  
 13 Why do those who are wicked renounce God?  
 They say in their hearts, 'He will not demand an accounting from me.'
- ρ 14 But: really pay attention to trouble and suffering,  
 taking these within your power.<sup>78</sup>  
 The victims commit themselves to you  
 You have been a helper to those who are orphaned and in need.<sup>79</sup>
- φ 15 Break the power<sup>80</sup> of the wicked and evildoers.  
 Let their wickedness be revealed until none remains hidden.  
 16 The Lord reigns eternally as the ruler.  
 The nations will perish<sup>81</sup> from his hand.
- τ 17 The Lord will hear the pleas (*or, distress*) of those who are afflicted!  
 Encourage them to listen to their cries.<sup>82</sup>  
 18 Deal justly with those who are fatherless (*or, orphans*)  
 and those who are oppressed.  
 So that one person on earth might not be able to terrify another any more.

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74 Literally: "under the tongue."

75 Possible variant: "store up."

76 Ketiv: "are being crushed." Qure "crouches."

77 So literally: implying lifting up his hand against evildoers.

78 Hebrew uncertain. Literally: "to take in your hand."

79 Literally: "fatherless" or "orphans."

80 Literally: "arm."

81 LXX "vanish."

82 Hebrew uncertain. Possibly, "your ear will listen to the sighing of their hearts."

**PSALM 11**

**<SONG OF TRUST IN GOD>**

*<To the Choirmaster. Of David<sup>83</sup>>*

- 1 Take refuge with the Lord.  
How then can you say to me,  
"Flee quietly like a bird to your mountain."<sup>84</sup>
- 2 Be attentive! The wicked ones ready (*or, string*) their bow.  
They nock an arrow in the string,  
to shoot in the air, (*or, randomly*) at those  
who are upright in heart.
- 3 When the foundations are torn down  
(*or, the standards of society are in ruin*)  
what can the righteous do?<sup>85</sup>
- 4 The Lord is in his holy temple.  
The Lord is on his heavenly throne.  
His eyes see, his gaze<sup>86</sup> evaluates all of humanity.<sup>87</sup>
- 5 The Lord examines<sup>88</sup> both the righteous and the wicked  
(*or, The Lord, the righteous one, examines the wicked.*)  
He loathes<sup>89</sup> those who love violence.
- 6 He will rain down coals<sup>90</sup> of fire and burning sulfur  
(*or, brimstone cf. Genesis 19:24, fiery coals*).  
A scorching wind will become their lot.<sup>91</sup>
- 7 For the Lord is righteous.  
He loves righteousness.  
The upright will live in his presence.<sup>92</sup>

**PSALM 12**

**<PLEA FOR HELP IN EVIL TIMES>**

*<To the Choirmaster according to Sheminith>*

*<A Psalm of David.>*

- 1 Help, Lord, for there are none anymore<sup>93</sup> who are godly.

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83 Two Hebrew manuscripts and the LXX have "A Psalm of David."

84 Qere: singular. Ketiv: plural forms of the words: "you, mountain, bird." Syriac & Jerome say "flee to your mountain, O bird."

85 Other possible translations are: "For the foundations are destroyed. What has the righteous one done?" "If the foundations are destroyed what has the righteous person accomplished?"

86 Literally: "eyelids."

87 Literally: "sons of men."

88 Hebrew uncertain. "chooses, tries" ∴ "examines."

89 Literally: "his soul hates."

90 The MT says "traps" or "snares" which according to Briggs is a scribal error as evidenced in the LXX.

91 Literally: "the portion of their cup."

92 Literally: "see his face." According to the Psalmist destiny or fate are never impersonal.

93 LXX "there are fewer of them." "Help" in Hebrew, is the equivalent of "to save." It is used 47 times in the Psalms.

The faithful have vanished <sup>94</sup> from the midst of humanity. <sup>95</sup>  
 2 Every one speaks lies to his neighbor.  
 They all speak flatteringly <sup>96</sup> and deceptively (*or, with duplicity*).  
 3 May the Lord silence <sup>97</sup> glib speech and boastful conversation.  
 4 and those who say WWe will triumph with our tongues.  
 Our lips are our own! <sup>98</sup> Who can be our master?"  
 (*or, "Who can lord it over us?*  
*By our clever speech we will get what we want."*)

5 Because of the oppression of the poor,  
 those who are in need groan.  
 "I will now arise," <sup>99</sup> says the Lord.  
 "I will keep them as safe as they desire." <sup>100</sup>  
 6 The promises of the Lord are true!  
 They are like silver that has been refined  
 seven times, in a clay furnace. <sup>101</sup>

7 Do protect us, O Lord!  
 Continually guard us from such people. (*c. v I-4*)  
 8 Those who are wicked strut about openly <sup>102</sup>  
 when what is vile is praised in the midst of humanity. <sup>103</sup>

### PSALM 13

<PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ENEMIES>

<To the Choirmaster.>

<A Psalm of David.>

1 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me continually?  
 How long will you hide your face from me?  
 2 How long must I struggle <sup>104</sup> in my cares  
 and each day <sup>105</sup> have sorrow in my heart?  
 How long will my enemy be triumphant over me?  
 3 Be attentive and answer me, O Lord, my God!

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94 Possible variant: "truth (or faithfulness) have vanished."

95 Literally: "sons of men."

96 Literally: "lips of smoothness."

97 Literally: "cut off all flattering lips."

98 Variant reading: "our lips are our plowshares."

99 Hebrew uncertain.

100 Hebrew uncertain. MT "he puffs (or pants) at him."

101 Literally: "in a furnace to (or, in) the ground."

102 Literally: "go to and fro." Emendation: "vaunt themselves."

103 Hebrew uncertain.

104 The MT says "hold council." Some scholars feel the Hebrew word means "care, doubt, worry, grief." The margin of BHS is τωχ[ = pain. There is one letter difference between "pain" and τωβχ[ "plan" in Hebrew.

105 LXX "day and night."