

from those who are liars and deceitful persons. ¹

- ³ How will he repay you?
What else should happen to you, ²
[*you deceitful tongue*]?
⁴ A warrior's sharp arrows, ³
with glowing coals of broom tree ⁴ wood!
- ⁵ Woe is me, that I reside in Meshech, ⁵
that I live amid the tents of Kedar! ⁶
⁶ I have been living too long
amid people who hate peace!
⁷ When I speak of peace
they are for war!

PSALM 121

<ASSURANCE OF GOD'S PROTECTION>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm.>

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills ---
From where will my help come?
² My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.
- ³ May he not let your foot slip ---
may your guardian not get drowsy.
⁴ Behold the guardian of Israel
neither dozes nor sleeps!
- ⁵ The Lord is your guardian ---
the Lord is your defense (*or, protection*)
at your right hand.
⁶ By day the sun will not harm (*or, injure*) you,
nor the moon by night. ⁷
- ⁷ The Lord will guard you from all danger ---
he will guard our life.

1 Literally: "from lying lips, from deceitful tongue." Some scholars feel the words "deceitful tongue" are repeated by early scribes and should be either in verse 2b or 3c. There is no agreement as to which is felt to be the repeated phrase, should that actually be the situation.

2 Literally: "What will he give to you and what will he add to you?"

3 These would not be "hunter's arrows" but those used specifically for war.

4 Retama roetam, a thorny bush that, when burned, produces a hot fire for a long period of time.

5 A nation in Asia Minor. Some emend αεμ to read Massa, a region not clearly identified.

6 A region in the Syrian desert south of Damascus. The two regions mentioned in this verse are quite distant from each other.

7 Moon stroke was felt to be a cause of epilepsy, fevers or mental problems. The Latin word for moon provides the English word "lunacy."

8 The Lord will guard
your going and coming,
both now and forevermore.

PSALM 122

<A SONG OF PRAISE AND PRAYER FOR JERUSALEM>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm. Of David.>

1 I rejoiced when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the Lord!"
2 And now we are standing within your gates,
O Jerusalem!

3 Jerusalem --- built as the city
through which individuals are united together.⁸
4 to which the tribes resort,
the tribes of the Lord,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
5 There thrones for judgment stood,
the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the prosperity (*or, peace*)⁹ of Jerusalem!
"May those who love you prosper!"
7 May peace be within your ramparts (*or, walls*),
and tranquillity (*or, security*)¹⁰ within your towers (*or, citadels*).
8 For the sake of all the inhabitants¹¹ of Jerusalem
I will say, "Peace be within you!"
9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek your good.¹²

PSALM 123

<A PRAYER FOR MERCY>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm>>

1 I lift up my eyes to you,
O you who are enthroned in the heavens.
2 Behold, as the eyes of servants (*or, slaves*)
are on the hand of the master,
as the eyes of the maid (*or, slave girl*)

8 The Hebrew word for "united together" can be used for a union or association of members of a group. This use of the word is supported by LXX and Jerome. Some scholars find it is used only to describe the "compact construction" of the city and translate the line with that thought in mind. Both are grammatically correct understandings of the Hebrew wording.

9 "prosperity" describes the sense of the Hebrew word better than the traditional word in older translations: "peace".

10 "tranquillity" describes the sense of the Hebrew word better than "security" which has commonly been used in translations.

11 Literally: "my brothers and my friends."

12 In this Psalm the words for "pray", "peace", "prosperity", and "tranquillity" all have an alliterative resemblance.

are on the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes are on the Lord our God,¹³
until he has mercy upon us.

3 Be merciful to us, O Lord, be merciful to us,
for we have been treated with more than our share of contempt.
4 Our soul has been filled to overflowing
with the scorn of the arrogant.¹⁴
the contempt of the haughty (*or, proud oppressors*).¹⁵

PSALM 124

<A SONG OF GRATITUDE>

<A Pilgrimage Song. Of David>

1 "If it had not been for the Lord who was on our side?"
---- let Israel now say ----
2 "If it had not been for the Lord who was on our side,
when enemies¹⁶ assailed us,
3 we would have been swallowed up alive;
when their burning rage opposed us;
4 then the flood would have engulfed us,
the water would have covered us,
5 then the raging torrent would have drowned us.

6 "Praise the Lord (*or, Blessed be the Lord*),
who has not permitted us
to be torn apart by their wrath!¹⁷
7 We have escaped like a bird
from the fowler's¹⁸ trap (*or, snare*);
the trap (*or snare*) is broken,
and we have escaped!

8 "Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth."

13 Verse 2 has more alliteration in Hebrew than can be conveyed in English.

14 Literally: "those who are at ease" σπνναε i.e. a person who by reason of station, class or wealth felt secure in their tyranny.

15 Qere: σπγωψ ψαγ "the scorn of the proud." Some have emended the qere to read "the proud ones of the Greeks." Kethiv: σπνωψαγλ ν[λξ "the contempt of the haughty."

16 The Hebrew word is מדא "men."

17 Literally: "prey to their teeth".

18 The Hebrew word is plural.

PSALM 125

<THE SECURITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE>

<A Pilgrimage Song.>

- 1 Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved but endures forever.
- 2 Just as the mountains surround (*or, enfold*) Jerusalem,
so the Lord surrounds (*or, enfolds*) his people
[*now and forever*].¹⁹
- 3 For the scepter of wickedness will not be allowed to rest²⁰
on the land allotted to the righteous,
for fear that the righteous might stretch out
their hands to do evil.²¹
- 4 Do good, O Lord, to those who are good,
and to those who are upright in their hearts!
- 5 But: those who act corruptly
the Lord will banish along with the evildoers!

Peace be upon Israel!

PSALM 126

<A HARVEST OF JOY>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm.>

- 1 When the Lord restored²² the prosperity²³ of Zion
(*or, brought back those who returned to Zion*),
we were like those who dream.²⁴
- 2 Then our mouths were full of laughter
and our tongues shouted for joy;
and it was reported among the nations,
"The Lord has done great things for them."
- 3 The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoice!
- 4 Restore our prosperity,²⁵ O Lord,

19 The rhythm of the Psalm and possibly the sense suggest the omission of this line which literally reads: "from this time on and for ever-more."

20 So: emended along with the LXX to read $\tau\psi\nu\psi$ $\alpha\lambda$

21 The meaning of the Hebrew in this verse is uncertain.

22 The verses 1 - 3 are in question. Should they be past tense or future tense. Syriac is in future tense. LXX, Targums & Jerome in past tense. The preponderance of scholars seems to be with the past tense.

23 The Hebrew word: $\sigma\omega\beta\Xi$ gives the thought of "prosperity." It is thought that there was apparently an early textual error inserting the Hebrew word $\tau\psi\beta\Xi$ which means "captured" as in the alternate reading.

24 Literally: "we were veritable dreamers."

25 Cf. foot note 23 above and verse 1.

like streams in the water-courses²⁶ in the Negeb (*or, southern desert*).
 5 May those who sow in tears
 reap with shouts of joy!
 6 May those who go forth weeping;
 carrying the seed-bag²⁷ for sowing,
 return home with shouts of joy,
 and carrying their sheaves with them.

PSALM 127

<THE LORD ALONE CAN BLESS THE HOUSE>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm. Of Solomon.²⁸>

1 Unless the Lord builds the house,
 those who build it labor in vain.
 Unless the Lord watches over the city,
 the watchmen (*or, sentries*) keep their vigils in vain.
 2 It is in vain that you rise up early,
 and delay in going to bed,²⁹
 toiling to obtain your food,
 for³⁰ he gives to his beloved during sleep
 (*or, he gives sleep to his beloved*).³¹

3 Take note that sons³² are a heritage³³ from the Lord,
 the fruit of the womb a reward.
 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
 (*or, a guarantee of security to a warrior*)
 are the sons of one's youth.
 5 Happy is the man who has
 his quiver full of them;
 he³⁴ will not be defeated³⁵
 when he speaks (*or, contends*) with his enemies at the gate.³⁶

26 Hebrew: ~ψθψπα "wadi beds."

27 I.e. the process of sowing a field by hand. cf. Amos 9:13.

28 This can mean written in honor of Solomon, dedicated to Solomon or written by Solomon.

29 Literally: "being late to sit down [to eat]."

30 So: emended: ψκ MT: "so" !κ

31 Hebrew unclear. Some scholars emend the text to have words like: "honor, prosperity, high estate."

32 There is a similarity between the Hebrew words for "builds" and "sons. Only one vowel point is different.

33 Hebrew uncertain.

34 I.e. the father. So: LXX here and in line d.

35 Literally: "put to shame."

36 The city gate was a place where business was transacted, controversies aired and agreements reached.

PSALM 128

<THE HAPPY HOME OF THE FAITHFUL>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm.>

- 1 Oh, the happiness of ³⁷ everyone who reveres the Lord,
and who does his will.
- 2 You will eat the fruit of your labors; ³⁸
you will be happy and you will prosper.

- 3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; ³⁹
your children ⁴⁰ will be like olive shoots around your table.
- 4 Take note that it is in this manner that those who revere the Lord
will be blessed.

- 5 May the Lord bless you from Zion!
May you share in the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life!
- 6 May you see your children's children (*or, descendants*).

Peace be upon Israel!

PSALM 129

<A PRAYER FOR THE SURVIVAL OF ZION.>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm.>

- 1 "Since my youth I have often been cruelly attacked."
---- let Israel now say ----
- 2 "Since my youth I have often been cruelly attacked,
yet they have never overcome (*or, destroyed*) me.
- 3 The plowmen have plowed across my back;
they have made their furrows long
(*or, deep wounds have made my back
like a plowed field*),
- 4 but the Lord, the righteous one,
has freed me ⁴¹ from being controlled by the wicked."

- 5 May all who hate Zion
be defeated and disgraced!
- 6 Let them be like grass on the house tops,
which withers before it has grown, ⁴²

37 The word, often translated "blessing" used here is ψπΞα which conveys the same concept as the word used in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5: μακαριοι. The usual in Hebrew the word for "blessing" is בורכ

38 Literally: "the labor of your hands."

39 Literally: "in the inner parts of your house" i.e. the part usually reserved for women.

40 Literally: "sons."

41 Literally: "cut the cords."

42 Literally: "before it becomes stalks."

7 so that the reaper might fill his hand
or it might be bound into bundles,
8 while those who pass by do not converse, saying,
"The blessing of the Lord be upon you!"
"We bless you in the name of the Lord."

PSALM 130

<A PENITENTIAL PRAYER>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm.>

1 Out of my despair I cry to you, O Lord!
2 Lord, listen to me!
May you attentively hear
my pleading cry!

3 If you would keep an account of iniquities, O Lord,
Lord, who could survive?
4 But you do forgive us,
and we revere you for this.⁴³

5 I wait for the Lord, my entire being waits
and I hope (*or, trust*)⁴⁴ in his word⁴⁵
6 My soul relies on the Lord,
more anxiously than a sentry awaiting the dawn,
more anxiously than a sentry awaiting the dawn.

7 O Israel, hope (*or, trust*) in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is constant love,
and abundant power to redeem.⁴⁶
8 He will save his people, Israel
from all their iniquities.⁴⁷

PSALM 131

<A SONG OF QUIET TRUST.>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm. Of David.>

1 O Lord, my heart is not filled with pride,
nor am I arrogant;
I do not aspire to things
that are too great or sublime for me.

43 Several scholars hold to the thought that we are literally to have "fear" of God in a more real sense than is covered with the word "revere."

44 The Hebrew word can be translated as "trust" or "hope". This is also true in verse 7.

45 MT: "for his word."

46 Literally: "redemption abundantly." Miles Coverdale translated beautifully with "plenteous redemption."

47 I.e. from all penalties of guilt which include forgiveness of sins and deliverance from sin's consequences.

2 But I have calmed and quieted my being,
like a child having just finished nursing at it's mother's breast.⁴⁸
My soul is as content as is a satisfied child.⁴⁹

3 O Israel, hope (*or, trust*)⁵⁰ in the Lord
now and forever.

PSALM 132

<DAVID AND ZION>⁵¹

<A Pilgrimage Psalm.>

1 O Lord, do not forget David
and all the problems⁵² he endured;
2 how he made an oath before the Lord
and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob,
3 "I will not enter my house⁵³
nor lie upon my couch;⁵⁴
4 I will not let my eyes
sleep or rest,
5 until I establish⁵⁵ a place for the Lord,
an abode for the Mighty one of Jacob."

6 We heard about it⁵⁶ in Ephrathah (*or, Bethlehem*),
we found it in the region of Jaar (*or, the fields of the forest*).⁵⁷
7 "Let us go to my abiding place;
let us worship at his footstool!"⁵⁸

8 "Rise up, O Lord and go to your resting place;
you, and the ark (*of the covenant*); a symbol of your might.
9 Your priests are righteous (*or, do what is right*),⁵⁹
and your faithful people shout for joy."

10 For your servant David's sake,

48 Literally: "finished" or "completed." These words in Hebrew might imply "weaned" or "nursed." Scholars are divided as to the meaning. Is this a description of the satisfaction of the child who has just finished nursing or is it the child's satisfaction that it is now happily weaned.

49 Literally: "as a weaned child clinging to me."

50 Cf. note 44, Psalm 130:5.

51 Possibly to celebrate the anniversary of the Ark of the Covenant (also called the Ark of God) arriving in Jerusalem. cf. I Samuel 4:1 - 6:16.

52 The Hebrew word can mean "difficulties, trials, problems, self-denial, hardships or afflictions."

53 Hebrew: "the tent of my house."

54 Literally: "the bed of my couch."

55 The Hebrew word is "find" but does not convey the same connotation as in the English language.

56 I.e. the "Ark of the Covenant."

57 Jaar is the singular form of Jearim. Possibly Kiriath Jearim ca. 8 1/2 miles NW of Jerusalem. Or: the Ark of God was found in a forested area.

58 Some scholars feel this refers to "in God's presence" but others feel it signifies worship before the Ark of the Covenant.

59 A few scholars translate the Hebrew word as "triumph", that the priests are clothed triumphantly.

do not reject your anointed one (*or, your chosen king*)!

- 11 The Lord made a solemn vow to David
which he will not renounce:
"I will place your own offspring
on your throne.
12 If your sons are true to my covenant
and my testimonies which I will teach them;
then their sons will succeed you
on the throne forever."

13 For the Lord has chosen Zion;
he desired it as his habitation:
14 "This is where I will remain forever;
here I have chosen to reside.
15 I will abundantly bless the needs of Zion;
I will satisfy the needy with food.
16 I will clothe its priests with salvation,
and it's faithful believers with shouts for joy.
17 There I will grant power to a descendant of David.
I have prepared continuing success for my anointed one.
18 I will cover his enemies with disgrace,
but upon himself, his crown will sparkle
(*or, his kingdom will flourish*)."

PSALM 133

<THE BLESSEDNESS OF UNITY>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm. Of David.>

- 1 Behold how good and pleasant it is
when God's people ⁶⁰ live together ⁶¹ in harmony!
2 It is like precious oil ⁶² upon the head,
running down the beard, ⁶³
upon the beard of Aaron,
which runs down over the collar of his robes, ⁶⁴
3 as copious as if the dew of Hermon ⁶⁵
was coming down on the mountains of Zion
where the Lord has ordained the blessing:
Life forevermore!

60 Literally: "when brothers dwell also together."

61 NEB: "worship."

62 Literally: "good oil", i.e. blended by the perfumer as specified in Exodus 30:23 ff.

63 The French Common Language Version refers to these lines as being olive oil given to a visitor in a home to be used to refresh the traveling guest.

64 Someone has described this portion of the verse to be "bathos" though it certainly must have been a very appropriate description at the time it was first written.

65 Briggs feels this signifies a very heavy dew.

PSALM 134

<A NIGHT HYMN FOR THE PEOPLE.>

<A Pilgrimage Psalm.> ⁶⁶

- 1 Come, ⁶⁷ bless (*or, praise*) the Lord,
all you who serve the Lord,
who minister in the house of the Lord at night!
- 2 Raise your hands (*in prayer*) ⁶⁸ in the sanctuary, ⁶⁹
and bless (*or, praise*) the Lord!
- 3 May the Lord who created heaven and earth,
bless you from Zion!

PSALM 135

<IN PRAISE OF THE LORD'S KINDNESS.>

- 1 Praise the Lord (*or, Hallelujah*).
Praise the name of the Lord;
give praise, you servants of the Lord,
- 2 all you who stand in the house of the Lord,
in the courts of the house of God!
- 3 Praise the Lord (*or, Hallelujah*), for the Lord is good!
Praise his name, for he is gracious (*or, kind*). ⁷⁰
- 4 For the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself,
Israel as his own possession (*or, treasure*).
- 5 I know the Lord is great;
that our Lord is greater than all gods.
- 6 The Lord does whatever pleases him,
in both heaven and earth,
as well as in the seas and all depths.
- 7 He makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth (*or, on the horizon*),
he makes lightning ⁷¹ for the rain
and releases the wind from his storehouses. ⁷²
- 8 He struck down the firstborn of Egypt,
both human and animal.
- 9 In the midst of Egypt
he sent signs and portents (*or, wonders*)
against Pharaoh and all his servants.

66 This is the last of the fifteen Pilgrimage Psalms.

67 Literally: "Behold." This Hebrew word רָא perhaps had its source in Psalm 133. It does not suit the meter of this Psalm.

68 This was the posture for prayer.

69 Literally: "holiness."

70 An alternate reading is: "it is pleasant to do so." Cf. Psalm 133:1 where the same Hebrew word is translated "blessed."

71 The Hebrew word is plural.

72 For a parallel to verses 5 - 7 see Exodus 18:11; Psalm 115:3; Jeremiah 10:13.

10 He struck down many nations
and killed mighty kings.
11 Sihon, king of the Amorites;⁷³
Og, king of Bashan,⁷⁴
and all the royalty of Canaan,
12 and gave their land as a heritage (*or, patrimony*),
a heritage (*or, patrimony*) to his people Israel.

13 O Lord, your name endures forever,
your fame, O Lord, endures through all generations!
14 For the Lord will vindicate his people,
and have compassion on his servants.

15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
of human handiwork.
16 They have mouths but cannot speak,
they have eyes but cannot see.
17 They have ears but cannot hear,
and there is no breath in their nostrils.⁷⁵
18 Those who make them ---
and all who trust in them,
will become like them.⁷⁶

19 O house of Israel, bless the Lord!
O house of Aaron, bless the Lord!
20 O house of Levi, bless the Lord!
You who revere the Lord, bless the Lord!
21 Blessed be the Lord in (*or, from*) Zion,
he who dwells in Jerusalem!

Praise the Lord (*or, Hallelujah*)!⁷⁷

PSALM 136

<A LITANY OF THANKSGIVING.>

[*Praise the Lord (or, Hallelujah)*]⁷⁸

1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
his constant mercy⁷⁹ endures eternally!

73 Cf. Numbers 21:21-27; Deuteronomy 2:30-33; 3:1-11.

74 Cf. Numbers 21:33-35.

75 Literally: "mouths."

76 Grammatically it would be: "may all become, or, All who made them and trust in them will become...."

77 This Psalm ends as it began with Hallelujah. In a few manuscripts this Hebrew word is the opening word of Psalm 136 rather than being the end Psalm 135.

78 Cf. footnote 77, above.

79 The Hebrew word $\omega\delta\sigma\xi$ implies fidelity and love. Its meaning has more facets than our English words "mercy" or "love." Perhaps "covenant fidelity" would convey the concept.

2 O give thanks to the God of gods,
his constant mercy endures eternally!
3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
his constant mercy endures eternally!

4 He alone performs great⁸⁰ miracles;
his constant mercy endures eternally;
5 who by his wisdom made the heavens,
his constant mercy endures eternally;
6 who spread out the earth over the waters,
his constant mercy endures eternally;
7 who made the great luminaries,
his constant mercy endures eternally;
8 the sun to dominate the day,
his constant mercy endures eternally;
9 the moon and stars to dominate the night
his constant mercy endures eternally!

10 He struck down the first-born of Egypt,
his constant mercy endures eternally;
11 and brought Israel out from the midst of Egypt,
his constant mercy endures eternally;
12 with a strong hand and outstretched arm,
his constant mercy endures eternally;

13 He divided⁸¹ the Red Sea (*or, Sea of Reeds*)⁸² in two,
his constant mercy endures forever;
14 and made Israel able to pass through the midst of it,
his constant mercy endures forever;
15 but swept⁸³ Pharaoh and his host into the Red Sea (*or, Sea of Reeds*),
his constant mercy endures forever!

16 He led his people through the wilderness,
his constant mercy endures forever;
17 who struck down great kings,
his constant mercy endures forever;
18 and killed famous kings,
his constant mercy endures forever,
19 Sihon, king of the Amorites,
his constant mercy endures forever;
20 and Og, king of Bashan,

80 The word "great" is omitted by the Dead Sea Scrolls and LXX.

81 "split" might more accurately describe the Hebrew word.

82 Cf. footnote 80: Psalm 106:7. So also in verse 15.

83 Literally: "shook off."

his constant mercy endures forever;
21 and gave them land as a heritage (*or, patrimony*),
his constant mercy endures forever;
22 a heritage (*or, patrimony*) to his servant Israel,
his constant mercy endures forever!

23 It is he who remembered us in our degradation,⁸⁴
his constant mercy endures forever;
24 and rescued us from our enemies,
his constant mercy endures forever;
25 he who gives food to all flesh,
his constant mercy endures forever!

26 O give thanks to the God of heaven,
his constant mercy endures forever!⁸⁵

PSALM 137

<THE SONG OF AN EXILE.>

1 There by the waters⁸⁶ of Babylon,
we sat down⁸⁷ and wept,
when we remembered Zion.

2 On the aspens (*or, poplars*)⁸⁸
we hung up our lyres,⁸⁹
3 for our captors demanded us to sing
for the amusement of our tormentors,⁹⁰ saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
4 How can we sing the Lord's song
in a foreign land?

5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither⁹¹
(*or, may I never again be able to play a lyre!*)
6 Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth
(*or, let me never again be able to sing*),
if I do not think of you,

84 The Hebrew word means "low place" or "humiliation."

85 Some manuscripts add: "give thanks to the Lord of lords, his mercy endures forever!" This is reminiscent of verses 2 and 3.

86 Literally: "streams" which could mean natural stream or an irrigation canal between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. hence the selection of the word "waters."

87 This was the posture of mourning in that day.

88 A special poplar "Populus euphraticus" or "Mesopotamian aspen."

89 The Hebrew word describes the larger of the stringed instruments usually translated as lyres.

90 Hebrew uncertain. LXX: "those who led us away."

91 Some translators say "forget it's cunning."

if I do not think of Jerusalem
ahead of my greatest joys!

7 Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites,
the day of Jerusalem's fall;
how they said, "Tear it down, tear it down!
Down to its foundations!"

8 O daughter of ⁹² Babylon, you devastators
(*or, you who are devastated*)! ⁹³

He will be happy who pays you back in the same manner
with which you have dealt with us! ⁹⁴

9 He will be happy who takes your little ones
and dashes them against the rocks! ⁹⁵

PSALM 138

<THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE.>

<A Psalm of David.> ⁹⁶

1 I give thanks to you, O Lord,
with all my heart;
before the gods ⁹⁷ I sing your praise! ⁹⁸

2 I bow down toward your temple
and give thanks to your name
because of your constant love and faithfulness;
for you have exalted your name and your word
above everything. ⁹⁹

3 On the day I called, you answered me.
You increased my soul's strength (*or you encouraged me*) ¹⁰⁰

4 All the kings of the earth will praise ¹⁰¹ you, O Lord;
for they have heard your spoken words (*or, promises*).
5 and they will sing of the ways of the Lord:

92 Literally "of" is omitted hence "O daughter, Babylon."

93 Literally: "the destroyer" in the MT. It should no doubt read "you who are destroyed." The Targums read "you predator."

94 The "Lex Talonis."

95 Be reminded that in warfare in that day it was usual for conquerors to kill children, especially male children. The gruesome description used in this Psalm was no doubt common practice.

96 This is the first of a group of eight Psalms attributed to David.

97 The Hebrew word is $\mu\rho\psi\eta\lambda\alpha$ which is translated "angels" in LXX, and Vulgate; "kings" in Syriac; "judge" in the Targums. This is another example of Qere and Kethiv.

98 The Hebrew word carries with it the concept of thanks here and in verses 2 and 4. The German equivalent of "The Good News Bible" has "with my song I will praise you and not other gods!" which seems to aptly convey the Hebrew concept. LXX adds: "for you have heard the words of my mouth" which no doubt was inserted by a scribe who was anticipating the line from verse 4.

99 Hebrew uncertain. Literally: "you exalted your word above all your name." LXX omits "your word" and instead reads "your holy name."

100 Hebrew uncertain. MT literally: "you made me arrogant in my soul with strength."

101 Possibly "confess you."

"The glory of the Lord is great!"

- 6 Though the Lord is exalted, he regards the lowly;
but the haughty he perceives¹⁰² from afar
(*or, he humbles the proud from afar!*)
7 Though I walk in the midst of opposition (*or, enemies*),
you preserve my life;
you stretch out your hand,
saving me from the wrath of my enemies
and your right hand provides for me.
8 The Lord will fulfill his purpose (*intervening*) on my behalf!
Your constant love, O Lord, is eternal!
Do not abandon us!¹⁰³

PSALM 139¹⁰⁴

<GOD IS ALWAYS NEAR.>

<To the Choirmaster: A Psalm of David.>¹⁰⁵

- 1 O Lord, you have examined me and know me.
2 You know when I sit down and when I stand;
you discern my thoughts¹⁰⁶ from afar.
3 You scrutinize (*or, observe*)¹⁰⁷ my walking and reclining
and are familiar with all my ways.
4 Even before a word is on my tongue,¹⁰⁸
O Lord, you know it completely.
5 You surround¹⁰⁹ me on all sides
and lay your protective hand on me.
6 Such knowledge is beyond my understanding;
it is too lofty,¹¹⁰ I cannot comprehend (*or, fathom*) it.
7 Where can I escape from your spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?¹¹¹
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I descend to the abode of the dead,¹¹² you are there!
9 If I take the wings of dawn

102 In Hebrew the word for "perceives" is possibly a homonym of "humble, bring down" thus: "he humbles the proud.."

103 Literally: "the work of your hands."

104 Some scholars feel this Psalm is comprised of two original Psalms. verses 1 - 18 and verses 19-23 with 24 as a kind of summary or finale.

105 One LXX manuscript ascribes this Psalm to Zechariah with the added comment: "in the dispersion."

106 The Hebrew word for "thoughts" includes the concept of purpose, aim and desire. It is only used here and in verse 17.

107 The Hebrew word means "scatter, winnow" hence the translation that is used. The person winnowing would be examining or scrutinizing the grain as it is winnowed.

108 Literally: "there is not even a word on my tongue."

109 Literally: "besiege."

110 Literally: "inaccessible, extraordinarily high."

111 Literally: "your face."

112 Literally: "make my bed in Sheol."

and settle in the farthest regions of the sea,
 10 Even there your hand will still guide me
 and your right hand will protect¹¹³ me.
 11 If I say, "The darkness will surely hide me,¹¹⁴
 and the light about me becomes night,"¹¹⁵
 12 even the darkness is not dark for you,
 the night is bright as day;
 for darkness and light are alike to you.¹¹⁶

13 You formed my innermost being (*or, conscience*)¹¹⁷
 You fashioned¹¹⁸ me in my mother's womb.
 14 I praise you that I am fearfully and wonderfully made.¹¹⁹
 Your works are wonderful!
 You know me very well (*or, I know that very well!*)¹²⁰
 15 My nature¹²¹ was not hidden from you,¹²²
 when I was being made (*or, molded*) in secret,
 intricately developed¹²³ in the depths of the earth.¹²⁴
 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance (*or, limbs, skeleton*);¹²⁵
 in your book were written every one of them,¹²⁶
 the days that were determined for me,
 when as yet none of them existed.¹²⁷
 17 O Lord, your thoughts are weighty to me!
 How vast the sum¹²⁸ of them!
 18 If I would recount them --- they outnumber the sand.
 When I wake --- I am still with you
 (*or, were I to come to an end, I would still be with you*).¹²⁹

113 Literally: "hold."

114 Hebrew uncertain. MT: "bruise." Emended: ψνκωεψ "hide" or "cover."

115 A Dead Sea Scroll has: "the night becomes a belt around me."

116 Some scholars omit this line since it overloads the poetic nature of the Psalm, considering it to be a gloss.

117 Literally: "my kidneys" which in that day were thought to be the seat of emotions.

118 Hebrew: εμσ "weave together." Some use different vowel points to have a word meaning "to overshadow" or "cover."

119 So: LXX, Syriac & Jerome. Hebrew: "fearful things I am wonderful." Emended to read: ταλπω ταρων "you are fearful and wonderful."

120 Literally: "my soul knows it very well." A Dead Sea Scroll has "I thank you because you are awesome; wondrously wonderful are your works."

121 Literally: "frame" which was the Hebrew way of describing a person's nature or being.

122 This line is based on a re-pointing of the MT.

123 Literally: "woven together."

124 Hebrew uncertain in verses 14-16. Some scholars emend this line to say "in the remotest recesses of the womb."

125 "unformed substance" is only used here in the OT. It presumably is a description of an embryo.

126 A reference to the time before development, prior to birth, or: the allotted time of life. Scholars debate which of these two concepts is presented here. The Hebrew is unclear. Numerous emendations have been suggested but none dominate in acceptance by various scholars.

127 So: Ketiv. Qere: "every one that was fixed there." A Dead Sea Scroll has "and for it there was one among them" thus no doubt also being a Qere.

128 In Hebrew this is a plural word.

129 If emended to read: ψτωχθξ