

PSALM 86

<A PRAYER IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE>

<A Psalm of David.>

- 1 O Lord, ¹ Listen to me, and answer me,
for I am helpless and wretched!
- 2 Save my life for I am steadfastly devoted to you!
Save your servant who trusts in you!
- 3 You are my God; be merciful to me, O Lord,
for I cry (*or, pray*) to you all day long. ²
- 4 Make your servant rejoice
for I pray ³ to you, O Lord,
- 5 for you, O Lord, are good and forgiving
abounding in constant love to all who call on you.
- 6 O Lord, be attentive to my prayer;
listen to my pleading cry.
- 7 In my time of distress I call to you,
for you will answer me.
- 8 There is none among the gods to compare with you, O Lord,
(*or, You are unique, O Lord,*)
nor are there any deeds like yours
(*or, your works are beyond comprehension
or, you alone achieve wonderful things*).
- 9 You have created all the nations and these will come
and worship ⁴ you, O Lord,
and pay homage to your name.
- 10 For you are mighty and perform wonderful deeds;
you alone are God!
- 11 Teach me what you want of me, ⁵ O Lord,
that I maybe obedient to ⁶ your truth;
cause my heart ⁷ to revere your name.
- 12 I will wholeheartedly give thanks to you, O Lord, my God
(*or, with my entire being*),
and I will honor your name (*or, declare your greatness*) forever,

1 In this Psalm the Psalmist uses four different words for God. Why Yahweh (often LORD) in small capital letters. Why Elohim or God. Why El or God. Why Adonai or Lord. The latter is used more often in this Psalm than in any other Psalm. No attempt has been made in this or in other Psalms in this translation to designate which word is used for the Divine Being.

2 So MT. LXX: "daily."

3 Literally: "lift up my soul."

4 Literally: "bow down before."

5 Literally: "your way."

6 Literally: walk in."

7 LXX and Syriac selected different vowel points and therefore read "my heart rejoice". Often the variants in LXX and Syriac stem from a different vowel point selection not only in the Psalms but in all the Hebrew Scripture translations.

13 for your abiding love toward me is great.
 You have rescued my soul from certain death.⁸
 14 O God, arrogant people have risen against me;
 a gang of ruffians seek my life;
 they are not concerned about (*or, interested in*) you.
 15 But you, O Lord, are a God of mercy and grace,
 patient and abounding in constant love and faithfulness.
 16 Turn to me and be merciful toward me;
 grant your servant your strength,
 and save the child of your servant girl.⁹
 17 Give me a sign of your favor,
 so that my enemies might see it and become frustrated,
 because you, Lord, have assisted me and comforted me.

PSALM 87¹⁰

<PRAISE TO THE CITY OF GOD>

<A Psalm of the Korahites. A Song.>

1 The city of God was founded on the sacred hill.¹¹
 2 The Lord loves the city of Jerusalem¹²
 more than any other place in Israel.¹³
 3 Glorious things are spoken of you,
 O city of God.

Selah.

4 "Among those who acknowledge me and I count as mine are
 Rahab,¹⁴ Babylon, Philistia and Tyre, along with Ethiopia¹⁵ ----
 "This person was born there." they say.
 5 It will be said of Zion:¹⁶
 "This one and that one were born in her";
 (*or, They were all: All are reckoned to be citizens of Zion*)
 for he, himself will preserve her as supreme.¹⁷
 6 The Lord inscribes in the registers of the people:
 "This person was born here."

8 Literally: "the lowest Sheol." Some scholars would place verses 8 - 13 after verses 14 - 17, thus making the Psalm have a more logical progression.

9 Literally: "the son of your handmaiden."

10 Some scholars would rearrange the verses in the following order: 1. 2. 3. 6. 4. 5. 7. Other scholars have varying schemes. The Hebrew is probable in several places but the concept of the Psalm seems certain.

11 Literally: "hill of holiness."

12 Literally: "the gates of Zion."

13 Literally: "all the dwelling places of Jacob."

14 A poetic name for Egypt. The name originally was that of a primal monster.

15 Hebrew: "Cush" or "Nubia."

16 LXX: "and Zion I call mother." The translators of the LXX read an additional two Hebrew letters not found or no longer found in the MT.

17 Hebrew uncertain. Is the Psalmist declaring that Diaspora Jews are equal to those whose home is in Jerusalem? Or: is he thinking of equal rights for proselytes who are to be considered as equals?

Selah

7 Singers and dancers alike say,¹⁸
"All my roots (*or, sources*) are in you.

PSALM 88

<A CRY FOR HELP>

<A Song. A Psalm of the Korahites.

To the Choirmaster: According to Mahalath - leannoth
{the tune: "Suffering of Affliction"}
A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.>

1 O Lord, my God, all day I call for help,¹⁹
I clamor (*or, lament*) before you during the night.
2 Let my prayer reach you,
be attentive to my plea!

3 For my soul is filled with trouble,
and my life draws near the grave (*or, draws to a close*).²⁰
4 I am numbered among those who go down to the pit.
I am like a person who is helpless (*or, without strength*),²¹
5 like one who is abandoned²² among the dead,
like a slain warrior who lies in the grave,²³
like those whom you no longer remember,
for they are beyond your care (*or, protection*).²⁴

6 You have plunged me into the lowest pit,²⁵
in regions that are darkest and deep.²⁶
7 Your wrath weighs me down
and all your breakers overwhelm me
(*or, I feel as if I am being drowned*).
Selah.

8 You have caused my close companions to shun me;²⁷
you have made me repulsive to them.
I am confined (*or, imprisoned*) so that I cannot escape;
9 my eye grows weak from affliction (*or, sorrow*).

18 Hebrew uncertain. Literally: "And singers like dancers all my springs in you." LXX: "and they all rejoice whose dwelling is in you."

19 So: emended. Hebrew: "O Lord, God of my salvation." The emendation is based on the second line of the verse.

20 Hebrew: "Sheol."

21 MT and Syriac: "help."

22 Literally: "free" or "cut off." The Hebrew of this verse is unclear. Some read "my couch" instead of "abandoned."

23 A possible reference to the bodies of warriors on the battle field who are thrown into a mass grave.

24 Hebrew uncertain.

25 Literally: "the pit of the lowest part."

26 Literally: "in the dark place, in the depths."

27 Literally: "put away far."

O Lord, every day I call on you;
I lift up my hands to you in prayer!

10 Will you perform miracles for the dead?
Will the dead²⁸ rise up to praise you?

Selah.

11 Is your constant love declared in the grave?
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?²⁹

12 Are your miracles known in the darkness,
or your saving help³⁰ in the land of forgetfulness (*or, oblivion*)?³¹

13 But as for me, O Lord, I cry out to you for help;
in the morning my prayer greets you.

14 Why, O Lord, do you reject me?³²
Why do you hide your face from me?

15 From my youth I have been afflicted and near death.³³

I am worn out by the terrible things I have endured and am desperate!³⁴

16 Your wrath has overwhelmed me;
your dread assaults have destroyed me.

17 All day long they swirl about me like flood waters;
they engulf me from all sides.

18 You have caused friends³⁵ and neighbors to shun me;
my only companion is darkness (*or, darkness constitutes my companion*).

PSALM 89

<GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID>

<A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite>³⁶

1 O Lord, I will always sing of your constant love,³⁷

I will declare your faithfulness to all generations.

2 For your constant love was established³⁸ forever,

your faithfulness is as permanent as the heavens.³⁹

28 Hebrew: "shades." The Hebrew etymology suggests sinking down into Sheol and being powerless the dead are unable to praise.

29 Abaddon is a symbol for death or the grave. It is based on a Hebrew root word "to perish", thus the thought of "destruction."

30 This Hebrew word is translated variously; "righteousness, deliverance, vindication, salvation, righteous acts, righteous deeds."

31 A unique term for Sheol.

32 MT: "my soul."

33 Is leprosy implied, as some scholars suggest?

34 Hebrew uncertain. Possibly "distracted". It is found only here in the O.T.

35 The Hebrew word possibly could be translated "lover."

36 Scholars feel this Psalm is perhaps a combination of two or more independent compositions. One of the ways of dividing this Psalm is: Preface vs. 1 - 4; Hymn in praise of the Lord vs. 5-18; God's promises to David vs. 19-45; A prayer for deliverance vs. 46 - 52; Doxology v. 52.

37 So: LXX. "Love" is plural in the Hebrew text. Literally: "the steadfast loves of the Lord."

38 Literally a play on words prompts this word. Cf. I Samuel 7:5, 7, 13, 27.

39 MT: "you establish in the heavens your faithfulness". Two manuscripts say "as the heavens" instead of "in the heavens."

3 You have said: "I have made a covenant
with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant:
4 'I will establish your descendants forever,
and preserve your throne for all generations.' "
Selah.

5 Let the heavens praise your wonders (*or, miracles*), O Lord,
and also your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!
6 For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord?
Who among the heavenly beings ⁴⁰ is like the Lord;
7 God looked upon with reverence in the counsel of the holy ones,
great and awesome; ⁴¹ more than those who surround him!
8 O Lord, God All Powerful,
who is mighty like you, O Lord?
Your faithfulness surrounds you!
9 Your rule the raging seas;
and you calm the tumultuous waves.
10 You crushed Rahab ⁴² like one who was killed;
you defeated your enemies with your powerful arm.
11 The heavens are yours, the earth is also yours;
you have founded the universe and all its fullness.
12 The north and the south: you have created these;
Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name. ⁴³
13 You have great power; ⁴⁴
your strength is exalted.
14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your realm;
constant love and faithfulness attend you.

15 Happy are the people who know how to sing your praises,
who live, O Lord, in the light of your presence.
16 They rejoice in your name all day long,
and extol ⁴⁵ your righteousness
(*or, they will be exalted by your righteousness*);
17 for you are the glory of their strength;

The word translated "permanent" literally is "firm" in Hebrew.

40 Literally: "sons of gods."

41 So: LXX and Syriac. Hebrew: "greatly terrible."

42 Scholars feel that this is a legendary sea monster which represented the forces of chaos and evil. The name means "arrogance." In Ps. 87 the word Rahab is used meaning Egypt. Scholars feel the meaning differs here.

43 A few scholars translate "north" and "south" as Zaphon and Yamin. The former is Mount Zaphon, the latter is another name for Mount Amanus in Southern Turkey. There has been little acceptance of this interpretation. Tabor is a mountain north of the Sea of Galilee. Hermon is 45 miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

44 Literally: "a mighty arm."

45 So: emended. MT: "shall be exalted."

by your favor our strength ⁴⁶ is exalted.
 18 For our shield belongs ⁴⁷ to the Lord,
 our king to the Holy One of Israel.
*(or, The Lord is our shield <or, protector>
 the Holy One of Israel is our king.>*

19 In the past you spoke through a vision ⁴⁸
 and to your faithful one you said,
 "I have conferred the crown ⁴⁹ on the one who is mighty (*or, the champion*).
 I have exalted a youth: one chosen from among the people.
 20 I have selected David, my servant to be king.
 I have anointed him with my holy (*or, sacred*) oil.
 21 My hand will constantly be with him.
 My power will also strengthen him.
 22 His enemies will never deceive him;
 the wicked ⁵⁰ will not defeat him.
 23 I, myself, will destroy ⁵¹ his adversaries before him
 and vanquish those who hate him.
 24 My loyalty and my constant love will be with him,
 because of my power his strength will make him victorious.
 25 I will extend his power to the sea
 and his authority as far as the river. ⁵²
 26 He will say to me, "You are my father,
 my God, and the mighty rock where I find my salvation."
 27 And I will make him the first born son;
 the greatest of the kings of the earth.
 28 I will maintain my constant love for him eternally,
 and my covenant with him will endure forever.
 29 I will establish his posterity forever,
 and his throne as long as heaven endures.
 30 If his descendants forsake my law
 and do not live in accordance with my ordinances;
 31 if they desecrate my statutes
 and do not observe my commandments:
 32 I will punish ⁵³ them for their transgression,
 and flog them because of their iniquity
(Or because of their iniquity I will send plagues). ⁵⁴

46 The Hebrew word is "horn" which is a symbol of strength.

47 So if I is used as a preposition. If that is not the case the alternative translation prevails.

48 Cf. II Samuel 7:1-17.

49 So: emended. Hebrew: "help."

50 Hebrew uncertain in this verse. Hebrew: "man of wickedness."

51 Literally: "crush."

52 The reference is to the Euphrates river.

53 Literally: "beat them with a rod."

54 With different vowel points from those of the MT the word would be "plagues."

33 Yet I will continue with my constant love for him,
and I will not betray my faithfulness.
34 I will not renounce my covenant
or change the promises I made to him.
35 I have sworn, once and for all, by my holiness
that I will never lie to David.
36 His posterity will endure (*or, continue*) forever,
like the sun, his throne will continue:
37 like the moon, it will be permanent;
it will be an enduring testimony in the sky.⁵⁵
Selah.

38 Yet now you have spurned and rejected him,
you have enraged your king (*or, anointed one*).
39 You have repudiated the covenant with your servant;
you have thrown his crown in the dust.
40 You have breached all the walls of his city;
you have destroyed his fortifications.
41 All that pass by plunder him;
he has become the scorn of his neighbors.
42 You have granted victory to his enemies
(*or, exalted the right hand of his foes*);
you have made his enemies rejoice.
43 Moreover you have caused his weapon to be useless⁵⁶
and you have not sustained him in battle.
44 You have ended his ruling power;⁵⁷
and toppled his throne to the ground.
45 You have made him to be prematurely old
(*or, cut short the days of his youth*);
you have heaped disgrace on him.
Selah.

46 How long, O Lord? Will you hide yourself forever?
How long will your wrath blaze like fire?
47 Remember O Lord, how brief my life is
and with what frailty (*or, futility*) you have created all of humanity.
48 Who can live and never die?
who can escape the grave (*or, the power of Sheol*)?
Selah.

49 Lord, where are the proofs from the past of your constant love
which in your faithfulness you pledged to David?

55 So: emended. Hebrew: "the witness in the skies is sure."

56 Hebrew uncertain. Literally: "turned back the rock of his sword."

57 Hebrew uncertain: Literally: "removed his cleanness (or, luster)."

50 Remember, O Lord, how your servant has been abused;
for I now endure within me the insults of many people⁵⁸
51 with which your enemies taunt your chosen king (*or, lord*),
whith which they insult him wherever he goes.

52 Blessed be the Lord for ever!
Amen and Amen!

<*THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK OF PSALMS*>

58 Hebrew uncertain. So: emended. Hebrew: "all of many."