

PSALMS
BOOK FOUR
PSALMS 90 - 106

PSALM 90

<O GOD OUR HELP IN AGES PAST>

<A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.>

- 1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place¹
 across all the ages.
- 2 Before the mountains came into being,
 before you formed² the earth and the world,
 from everlasting to everlasting³ you are God.⁴
- 3 You turn us back to dust⁵
 and say, "Return you mortals!"
- 4 For to you a thousand years
 are like a night watch.⁶
- 5 You bring about the sudden end to our lives;
 we are like asleep
 (*or, you make an end of us as ends a dream*);
 like grass which is refreshed at daybreak.
- 6 At daybreak it flourishes and is renewed;
 at dusk it fades and withers.
- 7 We are destroyed⁷ by your anger;
 we are terrified by your wrath.
- 8 You have set our sinfulness before you,
 our secret sins are revealed⁸ in your presence.
- 9 Under your wrath our lives suddenly come to an end,
 and fade away like a murmur.⁹
- 10 The length of our lives is seventy years,
 or eighty if we are strong:
Yet this life span¹⁰ is filled with labor and sorrow

1 So: MT no doubt with the concept of being a secure place. Some Hebrew manuscripts and LXX say "refuge."

2 Literally: "gave birth to the..." In the previous line "came into being" in the MT is "born."

3 I.e. : past and future.

4 Briggs and Dahood emend the word "la" to "l|", thus reading: "Do not turn us back to dust."

5 akd is clearly "dust" in Hebrew. The KJV translates it as "destruction."

6 One to four hours which, when asleep would seem to be truly brief.

7 Literally: "finished."

8 Literally: "in the light of your countenance."

9 So: Syriac. MT: "we bring our years to an end."

10 Emended following LXX Syriac & Jerome. Hebrew: "pride."

- and is quickly over and we die.¹¹
- 11 Who feels the power of your anger:¹²
 your wrath because of our awe of you?¹³
- 12 So teach us to be aware of the brevity of life
 that we may obtain wisdom
(or, make us understand that our life is brief).
- 13 Relent, O Lord! How long do we have left?
 Have compassion on your servants!
- 14 At daybreak fill us with your constant love;
 that we might sing and be glad during our remaining days.
- 15 Make us glad in proportion to the time you have afflicted us
 and to the years in which we have suffered misfortune
*(or, grant us equal portions of joy, gladness and sorrow
 during our remaining days).*¹⁴
- 16 May our deeds be evident to your servants,
 and your glorious power to our descendants.
- 17 Grant us the favor of the Lord our God
 and let the works of our hands prosper;
 Yes, let the work our hands prosper.

PSALM 91

*<GOD MY REFUGE AND FORTRESS>*¹⁵

- 1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High,
 whoever remains under the protection of the Almighty¹⁶
- 2 will¹⁷ say of the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress;
 my God, in whom I trust."
- 3 For he, himself, rescues you from the hidden dangers
 and from deadly diseases;
- 4 he will provide protective covering for you
 and with him you will find a secure refuge.
 His fidelity provides security.¹⁸
- 5 You need not fear dangers during the night,
 or sudden attacks during the day,
- 6 or the plague that strikes in darkness,
 or the ravaging and destructive forces at midday.

11 With different vowel points: "we are in darkness."

12 Gunkel translates: "and who perceives the severity of your wrath?"

13 Hebrew unclear.

14 The concept seems to be: we have lived with difficulty but within God's covenant family our lives can be joyful.

15 LXX attributes this Psalm to David. Four names for God are again used in this Psalm reminiscent of Psalm 86.

16 ydX is used.

17 So: LXX. MT says "I will say."

18 Literally: "his large and small shield."

7 A thousand may fall at your [left] side,
 ten thousand at your right hand;
 but you will not be harmed.

8 You will only see it with your own eyes
 and witness the punishment ¹⁹ of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the Lord your refuge ;²⁰
 the Most High your haven,
 10 no disaster will come to you,
 no disease (*or, calamity*) will come near your dwelling.

11 For he will order his angels to protect you ²¹
 to guard you in whatever you do.

12 They will sustain you with their hands
 to prevent you from hurting yourself on a stone.

13 You will trample on the lion and the cobra;
 you will trample lion cubs and poisonous serpents.

14 "Those who are devoted to me in love, I will deliver;
 I will protect them because they know my name.

15 When they call me, I will answer them;
 I will be with them in distress.
 I will rescue them and honor them.

16 I will reward them with long life
 and show them my salvation!"

PSALM 92

<A HYMN OF PRAISE>

<A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath.>

1 It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
 to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
 2 to proclaim your constant love at dawn,
 and your faithfulness each night;
 3 with the lute ²² and the harp,
 to the melody of the lyre.

4 For you, O Lord, make me glad because of your deeds;
 I sing for joy of the works of your hands!

5 How great your works are, O Lord!
 How profound your thoughts!

6 The senseless person cannot know,

19 The word used in the MT is only used here in the OT. It gives the thought of a sense of punishment, destruction, etc.

20 So: emended. MT: "because you, Lord, are my refuge: you have made...."

21 MT: "For he will order his angels concerning you, to protect you in all your ways."

22 Hebrew: "to the ten." A ten stringed instrument.

the fool cannot understand:
 7 that even though the wicked sprout up like weeds,
 and the evildoers flourish,
 they are doomed to everlasting destruction,
 8 while you, O Lord are exalted forever.
 9 Surely, your enemies, O Lord,
 surely, your enemies will perish;
 all evildoers will be scattered.

10 But you have raised my horn ²³ like that of the wild ox;
 you have anointed me ²⁴ with fresh oil.
 11 I have seen the downfall of my enemies, ²⁵
 my ears have heard the cries of my evil assailants.

12 The righteous flourish like a palm tree,
 and thrive like a cedar in Lebanon.
 13 Those who are planted in the house of the Lord,
 will flourish in the courts of our God.
 14 They will continually produce fruit in old age,
 they are always filled with energies and freshness, ²⁶
 15 declaring: "The Lord is upright!
 He is my rock (*or, creator*) and there is no unrighteousness in him!"

PSALM 93

<THE LORD IS KING.>

1 The Lord reigns: he is robed in majesty (*or, grandeur*);
 the Lord is robed, he is endowed with strength.
 2 Yes, the world is firmly established! It will never be moved!
 Your throne is established from the onset of time;
 you are from all eternity.
 3 The floods have risen, O Lord,
 the floods have roared,
 the crashing of the flood waters resounds.
 4 More majestic than the thunder of great waters,
 more powerful than the breakers of the sea,
 the Lord on high is mighty!
 5 The Lord's decrees are enduring!
 O Lord, holiness eternally befits your house!

23 A symbol for strength. Cf. footnote 36, pg. 100.

24 Hebrew uncertain. Syriac: "you have moistened me." Possibly a renewed anointing.

25 The Hebrew word for "enemies" is used only here in the OT.

26 Literally: "sap and green."

PSALM 94

<TWO CRIES FOR HELP ²⁷>

- 1 O Lord, you God of retribution,²⁸
 you God of vengeance, manifest yourself!
- 2 Take action, O judge of the earth;
 give the arrogant what they deserve!
- 3 O Lord, how long will the wicked,
 how long will the wicked be triumphant?
- 4 They bluster their insolent words,²⁹
 for all the evildoers are filled with arrogance.
- 5 They trample on your people, O Lord,
 and oppress your chosen people.³⁰
- 6 They kill the widow and the foreigner,
 and murder the orphan;
- 7 and they say, "The Lord does not see us;
 the God of Jacob does not observe."
- 8 Understand, O dullest (*or, most brutish*) among the people!
 O fools, when will you learn?³¹
- 9 Does he who implanted the ear not hear?
 Does he who formed the eye not see?
- 10 Does he who disciplines nations not punish?
 Does he who teaches people lack knowledge?³²
- 11 The Lord knows our thoughts,
 that our thoughts are futile.
- 12 Happy are those whom you discipline, O Lord,
 and whom you teach through your law!
- 13 Give them relief³³ from times of trouble,
 until a pit³⁴ is dug for the wicked.
- 14 For the Lord will not abandon his people;
 he will not desert his chosen people;³⁵
- 15 for justice will return to the righteous,³⁶
 and all the upright in heart will support it.

27 Most scholars consider this to be one psalm. Several, however, feel the verses 15 ff. are a different Psalm, possibly because the LXX inserts Διψαλμια though this is not supported by the MT.

28 In Hebrew the word is plural: "retributions" or "vengeances."

29 Literally: "They pour out, the speak an arrogant thing."

30 Literally: "your inheritance."

31 Literally: "become wise."

32 So: emended. The emendation carries out the theme of verses 9 & 10.

33 The Hebrew word includes the thought of inner peace in the face of outward trouble.

34 This reference is not "Sheol" but a device for trapping quarry.

35 See footnote 30.

36 Martin Luther translates: "for right must still remain right."

- 16 Who joins me against the wicked?
 Who takes my side against evildoers?
- 17 If the Lord had not been my help,
 my soul would have dwelt in the land of silence (*or, the grave*).
- 18 When I thought, "My foot is slipping,"
 your constant love, O Lord, supported me!
- 19 When my anxieties are great,
 your assurance calms me.
- 20 Can wicked rulers be allied with you ---
 those who organize oppression through unjust laws?
- 21 They band together against the righteous,
 and condemn the innocent to death.
- 22 But the Lord has become my protection;
 my God is my sheltering refuge.
- 23 God will repay them for their wickedness,
 and annihilate them through their own wickedness;
 the Lord our God will annihilate them!

PSALM 95

<A CALL TO WORSHIP AND OBEDIENCE³⁷>

- 1 O Come, let us sing to the Lord;
 let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
- 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving;
 let us extol him with songs of praise!³⁸
- 3 The Lord is a mighty God,
 and the mighty king over all divine beings.
- 4 In his hand are the depths³⁹ of the earth;
 the summits⁴⁰ of the mountains are his also.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it;
 and the dry land, which his hands have made,
 for with his hands God formed the dry land.
- 6 O come, let us worship and bow down,
 kneeling before the Lord, our maker!
- 7 For he is our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture (*or, the people he cares for*)
 and the flock he guides.⁴¹

37 A few scholars feel this is two unrelated Psalms due to the abrupt change in tone within the Psalm. This theory has not had a great following. The LXX ascribes the Psalm to David.

38 In lines 1, 2 and 4 the translation could be "shout for joy."

39 Hebrew uncertain. *yrqxm* is literally: "parts for searching out." An emendation, preferred by LXX, two Hebrew manuscripts and other translations is *yqxm* "far off places."

40 Hebrew uncertain. The translations use the word "heights."

41 Some scholars emend the text to read: "We are his people and the sheep of his pasture."

If only you would heed his voice today!
 8 Do not become stubborn, as at Meribah,
 as on the day of Massah in the wilderness,⁴²
 9 when your ancestors challenged me,
 and tested me although they had seen what I did for them.
 10 For forty years I was indignant⁴³ with that generation.
 and said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray
 (*or, who are disloyal*)
 and they do not follow my ways."
 11 Therefore, in my anger I swore:
 "They should not enter into my rest!"

PSALM 96

<A NEW SONG TO THE LORD⁴⁴>

1 O sing a new song to the Lord;
 sing to the Lord, all the world!
 2 Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
 proclaim his salvation every day!
 3 Declare his glory to the nations,
 his marvelous deeds among the nations.⁴⁵
 4 For the Lord is great and worthy of great praise;
 he is to be held in awe (*or, revered*) above all gods;
 5 for all the gods of other nations are worthless,⁴⁶
 but the Lord created heaven.
 6 Honor and majesty radiate from his presence;
 in his sanctuary are strength and beauty.

 7 Give the Lord, O nations of the earth;
 give the Lord glory and strength!
 8 Give the Lord the glory due his name (*or, the glory he deserves*);
 bring an offering and enter into his temple!
 9 Worship the Lord in holy attire (*or, in sacred vestments*);
 tremble⁴⁷ before him, all the earth!

 10 Declare this among the nations: "The Lord reigns (*or, is king*)!"

42 Meribah means "place of contention." Massah means "place of testing." The reference is to Exodus 17:13; Numbers 20:8-13; Deuteronomy 6:16; 33:8.

43 The Hebrew word expresses: deep dislike, revulsion and disgust.

44 Some scholars feel that Psalms 96 - 99 were composed by the same person because of their common theme. A few even feel that these Psalms are portions of the same long Hebrew poem though there is no real evidence of this.

45 Literally: "the peoples."

46 The Hebrew word *mylya* "idols" in the OT is often a parody of the Hebrew word for "God" *mhyhla* hence the translation "worthless."

47 The Hebrew word *wygp* *wlyx* literally means "to writhe" or "whirl around", thus giving the thought of "dancing" or "agony." A possible translation might be "dance in his honor." Some scholars emend the word thus: *wygm wlx* meaning "entreat his favor." This expression is found in Psalm 119:58 and some of the prophet's writings.

Yes, the earth is firmly established, it can not be shaken;
he will judge the nations justly!"

- 11 Let the heavens be glad, let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar and everything within the sea;⁴⁸
12 let the fields rejoice, along with all their crops.
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy
13 at the presence of the Lord, for he comes:
for he has⁴⁹ come to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness
and the people with his truth.

PSALM 97

<FORMIDABLE MAJESTY>

- 1 The Lord is king! Let the earth be glad;
let the many coastlines (*or, islands*)⁵⁰ rejoice!
2 Clouds and thick darkness surround him;
the foundation of his throne is righteousness and justice.
3 Fire is his vanguard,
and consumes his adversaries⁵¹ on every side.
4 His lightning illumines the world;
the earth trembles at the sight.
5 The mountains melt like wax in the presence of the Lord,
in the presence of the Lord of the world.

6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness;
and all the nations see his glory.
7 All who worship images (*or, idols*);⁵²
who make their boast in worthless idols are humiliated;
for all gods must bow down⁵³ before him
(*or, bow down, all gods before him*).
8 Zion hears and rejoices;
the towns (*or, cities*)⁵⁴ of Judah rejoice,
because of your judgments, O God:
9 because you, O Lord, are supreme over all the world;
you transcend (*or, are above*) all gods!

10 The Lord loves those who hate evil,⁵⁵

48 Verse 11a is an exhortation. Lines 11b and 12a are declarations.

49 So literally in Hebrew.

50 The Hebrew conveys the thought of "coastal settlements."

51 Hebrew: *wyr* "adversaries. Some scholars emend to *wydc* "and flames about his steps."

52 The word *lsp* is only found here in the Psalter. It is "something made of wood, stone or metal", hence an idol.

53 An imperative form in Hebrew.

54 Hebrew: "daughters."

55 So: emended. MT: "you who love the lord hate evil."

he guards the lives of his faithful ones;
he rescues them from the land of the wicked.
11 Light dawns⁵⁶ for the righteous;
and joy (*or, radiance*) for those who are upright in heart.
12 O, you righteous, rejoice in the Lord,
and give thanks to his holy name.

PSALM 98

<SAVIOR, KING AND JUDGE>

<A Psalm.⁵⁷>

1 O sing a new song to the Lord
for he has done the most marvelous⁵⁸ things!
His right hand and his holy arm
have won him victory.
2 The Lord has manifested his victory,
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.
3 He has remembered his constant love⁵⁹
and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel;
for the distant parts of the earth
have seen the victory of our God.

4 All the earth: shout for joy to the Lord!
Burst into jubilant songs⁶⁰ of praise!
5 Give praises to the Lord with the harp,
[with the lyre]⁶¹ and with melodious songs!
6 With trumpets and the blare of the ram's horn⁶²
shout for joy before the king, the Lord!

7 Let the sea roar and everything within the sea,
the world and it's inhabitants.
8 Let the rivers⁶³ clap their hands,
let the mountains (*or, hills*) sing together joyously
9 In the presence of the Lord: for he comes to rule the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the people (*or, nations*) with absolute justice.

56 So: LXX, Jerome and one Hebrew MSS. Hebrew: [rz "is sown". Emendation: xrz "arises, shines forth."

57 The LXX ascribes this Psalm to David.

58 A superlative word form.

59 LXX inserts "to Jacob".

60 Literally: "burst forth and sing aloud."

61 Omitted by many Hebrew manuscripts.

62 The Hebrew word *rpwv* "shofar" is a ram's horn. Trumpets are mentioned in Numbers 10:2. The ram's horn is a very different instrument.

63 The Hebrew word literally means "floods." Most scholars use the word "river" as an appropriate translation in this situation.