

ROD PARSLEY PRESENTS



*The*

# HOPE DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

THE  
PASSION  
TRANSLATION

WITH PSALMS & PROVERBS





*The*  
**HOPE  
DEVOTIONAL  
BIBLE**

THE  
**PASSION**  
TRANSLATION

*WITH PSALMS & PROVERBS*

— 2020 —  
*edition*

PRESENTED BY  
**ROD PARSLEY**



# The Hope Devotional Bible

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# INTRODUCTION

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Hope, like the middle child of three siblings, is sometimes overlooked as one of the three great graces of God listed in 1 Corinthians 13:13. But hope is no less necessary than its companions which tend to attract more attention. In fact, hope is an essential ingredient in the spiritual sustenance that is necessary to sustain your soul.

My wife Joni and I had an experience many years ago that impressed on us the significance of hope. Our son Austin, then three years old, had been experiencing difficulty in certain areas of development. We were referred to a world-renowned medical facility, where a multitude of tests and examinations were undertaken to try to find the cause.

I will never forget the moment the medical staff came into the waiting room to return our son to us after a particularly grueling day of evaluations. As they placed him in our arms, they gave us an unexpected diagnosis: Asperger's syndrome—a condition that is one of many points on the autism spectrum. As we struggled to



process what this meant for our son and all of us in his family, the doctors gave us a prognosis that was even more heart-wrenching: there was no cure, no treatment and no hope.

As overwhelmed as I was with the devastating news about our son, something about their last statement pierced the fog of shock and grief that had momentarily disoriented me.

No cure. That meant this was a condition with which we would all have to adjust and learn to live. And Joni, my intrepid and indefatigable wife, made it her quest to create an environment in our home that accommodated Austin's unique situation with exquisite grace.

No treatment. These were medical professionals whose business it was to know what was available. At that time, there was no effective treatment known. Perhaps new technologies or therapies or information would be developed in the days to come that would change that. (Thankfully, there have been.)

No hope. As the medical staff continued to give us an unembellished picture of what Austin's future would be, a holy indignation began to rise up in our hearts. We understood the impact of the words no cure and no treatment. But when the doctors said the words no hope, they were moving into a realm where we had information that was unavailable to them.



In spite of the depressing picture the hospital staff was painting for us, I heard other words that had their origin far beyond the walls of the building. In fact, I heard music—the lines of an old hymn that we used to sing frequently in the church where I grew up. Perhaps it is familiar to you:

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

*On Christ, the solid rock, I stand  
All other ground is sinking sand  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

No cure. All right, we would have to live with that. No treatment. At the time, that was true, but that changed as science advanced. But no hope? As the words of the old hymn reverberated in my soul, I was pulled back from the brink of despair. God would prove His magnificent faithfulness to us in this matter. If all we had to guide us was the words of the doctors, we would have certainly had no hope. But hope beyond the scope of human limitation began to inform our hearts on the long drive home after receiving the news.

It has been a long and difficult journey to where

we are now, and one that has included more than its share of struggles and setbacks. But I am happy to report that our son Austin has overcome every limitation that was outlined for him at first. He has also far exceeded every expectation for those who have been diagnosed with similar conditions as his. He graduated from high school with honors, has completed bible college, and has held a job for years. In addition, he has savant status among his peers regarding his encyclopedic knowledge of the film and music industries.

What began as hope in his mother's heart and in mine has become our everyday reality. I cannot think of what might have happened if we had not allowed hope to inspire us and encourage us during those dark hours and days following Austin's diagnosis. That hope was rooted and grounded in the unchanging character of a good and gracious God. It was God who took the initiative to provide for us the bedrock of hope when He sent Jesus to suffer on our behalf, offer His life as a sacrifice on the cross, and then be gloriously resurrected over two thousand years ago. The certainty of that long-ago event animated our hope and ultimately created our present reality.

Hope can do the same for you. Regardless of what you are facing, or how serious it is or how long it has persisted, I encourage you to place your hope in God. He will do wonders that begin with nothing more



than your earnest expectation. Let me share an example from the natural realm to illustrate what I mean.

Among the ancients, what we now know as the planet Venus was called the morning star or the evening star, depending on when it flamed above the circle of the earth. The apostle Peter refers to the morning star as “...a light that shines in a dark place...” in 1 Peter 1:19.

How dark are your circumstances right now? How dismal and depressing are your surroundings? God has help and hope for you, and the magnitude of His assistance is demonstrated in the heavens.

In the middle of your sleepless night, you arise to realize that the wind has blown away the clouds, and the sky is clear. And while it still seems as black as midnight, you notice something you don’t remember seeing before.

Like a glowing ember in the eastern sky, something is burning in the firmament just above the limit of your vision. It is far brighter than any star in the sky. Sent forth morning by morning by an almighty and everlasting God to tread the steps of the ancient dance of the heavenly spheres, it is not a star at all. It is the planet Venus, blazing like a lamp in the sable of the early morning sky. Compared to the magnitude of the heavens, it’s not very significant. In fact, its only significance is in what it symbolizes, which is this—the sun is coming.

Reflecting a glory far greater than itself, that small speck of rock and dust in the distance becomes a happy and hopeful herald of something so great that its own glory will soon be forgotten. And the hopelessness that preceded its presence will waste away like a wisp of so much smoke. The sun is coming to swallow the darkness of midnight with the power of its own shining.

Don't look down, don't despair, and don't be discouraged—look up. Hope is burning like a beacon in the blackest of midnight.

If you have light, you cannot be in darkness. If you have hope, you cannot be defeated.

And you have hope, because Jesus is alive. He is the true bright and morning star, and one day soon He will come in all of His glory. I can already see the brightness of His shining illuminating the horizon.

I have combined Psalms and Proverbs in this volume so that you can read a portion of Proverbs for wisdom at the beginning of each new day, and Psalms so that you can encounter God's peace every evening. I've also included 52 devotions on hope and other encouraging topics to carry you through your year. So let your eyes be lifted to the glory of His word, so that you, too, will be able to perceive the hope of His coming that will shine in your present situation just as the morning star predicts the sunrise that will drive away the shadows of night.



# HOPE DEVOTIONAL

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BY  
ROD PARSLEY

# 1

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*We have this certain hope like a strong, unbreakable anchor holding our souls to God himself. Our anchor of hope is fastened to the mercy seat which sits in the heavenly realm beyond the sacred threshold....*

## **Hebrews 6:19**

The hope spoken of here is of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible says that hope is like an anchor for the ship of our life. An anchor is designed to hold a ship steady when the wind blows and the storms rage. Hope will do the same thing for you in the storms of life. Just as the anchor cannot be seen when it is holding on to the bottom of the sea, the hope that holds you is not seen. You know hope is working when you do not move during times of adversity. Your anchor will hold!



# 2

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*Now faith brings our hopes into reality and becomes the foundation needed to acquire the things we long for. It is all the evidence required to prove what is still unseen.*

## **Hebrews 11:1**

Our expectation must not be diminished when our circumstances change. When the enemy comes at us with every little problem, we must not allow ourselves to be caught off guard. What are you expecting right now? Some people expect nothing but the worst. They don't expect a raise or a breakthrough. They don't expect to be healed.

How can you tell if someone has a positive expectation? If someone is expecting something good,

they make the necessary changes to receive it. When my wife was expecting each of our children, she made some significant changes as she prepared to receive them into our family and into our home. She waited with hopeful expectation. You and I are to likewise prepare to receive our answer from God.

After all, what is faith in God? Faith is trust—and where there is trust, there is preparation. And where there is faith, there can be no fear, for faith cancels fear. Your victory will be won or lost in the arena of expectation, and expectation begins with hope. So let your hope—your expectation—be of good things from a good God.

# 3

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*Here's what I've learned through it all: Don't give up; don't be impatient; be entwined as one with the Lord. Be brave and courageous, and never lose hope. Yes, keep on waiting—for he will never disappoint you!*

## **Psalm 27:14**

Just as in the natural birth process, there is a gestation period for a miracle. The Bible is filled with examples of people waiting for God's promises. Abraham and Sarah waited for God to give them their promised son. The children of Israel waited in captivity for their deliverer to appear.

David waited on God while he was being pursued by Saul's men. Israel waited for her Messiah, and the disciples waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit. We

are waiting now for our blessed Lord Jesus Christ for His Church.

God always comes through for those who wait on Him. The promised Son was born; the deliverer appeared; and the enemies were defeated. The Messiah was sent; and the Holy Spirit came. One day we who are waiting expectantly will be caught up in the clouds to be with our Lord forever! God is never late, and He never forgets His promise.



# 4

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*However, I say to you, love your enemy, bless the one who curses you, do something wonderful for the one who hates you, and respond to the very ones who persecute you by praying for them.*

## **Matthew 5:44**

Never forget that while you were yet a sinner, Christ died for you. Rejoice today in a love so deep and sure that death could not extinguish it. His love stretches from time eternal and reaches out to you with grace and mercy. That same love has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

God wants us to not only recognize our responsibility to operate in all the gifts of the Spirit, but He also expects us to validate those gifts by a lifestyle

that glorifies His name. That means loving our brother when our brother is unlovable.

Is there someone unlovable in your life? Think about that person today. Ask God to bless and touch that person. Ask the Spirit to reveal to you a way to show His love to that unlovely person today. Determine to reach out today with the love of Jesus.

# 5

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*But let them all be glad, those who turn aside to hide themselves in you. May they keep shouting for joy forever! Overshadow them in your presence as they sing and rejoice. Then every lover of your name will burst forth with endless joy.*

## **Psalm 5:11**

Joy is the awareness of love. You might think of joy as happiness. But don't be confused; joy is not an emotion—it is a supernatural expression given to us by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Unlike happiness, which is a fleeting emotion that often depends on our circumstances, joy is a deep and abiding sense of contentment that provides a foundation for our lives in Christ. Unlike fragile

happiness, which can wither during times of testing, joy grows and blossoms in the hard soil of tough times as we learn the true depth of the love of God for us.

We will never find joy by seeking excitement and pleasure. True joy only results when we give ourselves to God, and yield to His will and purpose. True joy is the gift of knowing that our loving Father holds our future in His hands. True joy is becoming aware of your Father's love.



# 6

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*I leave the gift of peace with you—my peace. Not the kind of fragile peace given by the world, but my perfect peace. Don't yield to fear or be troubled in your hearts—instead, be courageous!*

## **John 14:27**

Peace is love's assurance. Everyone is searching for peace: peace of mind, inner peace, world peace. But as born-again believers, we want to know the peace that Jesus promised us in John 14:27.

The peace of God is an inner calm we experience only when we put everything – our lives, our worries, our future – into the hands of our loving Father and fully trust Him for the result. When we face trials, we know He is in control. We know He holds the answers.

When life feels uncertain, we know He causes all things to work together for our good.

When we utterly submit to His will for us – even when our minds can't comprehend it – we can rest in His peace knowing that our sins are forgiven, that we are reconciled to God and that someday we will leave this earth to share forever in His glorious kingdom!

# 7

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*In the middle of the night I awake to give thanks to you because of all your revelation-light; so right and true!*

## **Psalm 119:62**

At midnight, Ruth was introduced to Boaz. At midnight, Paul and Silas sang, and heaven couldn't help but hear their song. Too often in the middle of the night, in the midst of our darkest crises, at the depths of our darkest valleys, we allow ourselves to become upset, distraught, and anxious. God sits on his throne saying, "When you have worn yourself out through your own ability, I will be here to help you and lift you up. When you have exhausted all your natural resources, when it seems the darkest and loneliest, when fear runs rampant - you have reached your midnight hour."

When you reach midnight, how do you respond? Do you stand firm or flee? Do you complain or confess Christ and the promises of God? Do you seek man or God for rescue? Do you try your own solutions or trust God to come through?

We serve a God who is so much greater than we allow Him to be. Rely on Him alone. Turn to Him. In the midnight hours of your life, God will bring your deliverance.



*If your faith remains strong, even while surrounded by life's difficulties, you will continue to experience the untold blessings of God! True happiness comes as you pass the test with faith, and receive the victorious crown of life promised to every lover of God!*

**James 1:12**

Patience is the attribute of love. Patience toward others is grounded in love – the kind of love that puts others' needs above your own and does not seek personal gain.

In the biblical sense, patience requires an entirely new attitude toward life and toward our dealings with others. When we face the difficulties of life, we must remember that as born-again believers our faith is

rooted in the belief that we will spend eternity walking heaven's streets of gold. We don't have to be too concerned with the challenges of this world – we were created for another!

Once we realize every situation on earth is just temporary, it changes our attitude. No matter what difficulties life throws our way, we can persevere and endure. We can remain patient with others and with ourselves, as a fruit of the love we have for both.

# 9

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*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know.*

## **Jeremiah 33:3 (MEV)**

We are living in a moment when the supernatural intervention of God is moving in an extraordinary manner into the ordinary affairs of people. God, who transcends time and space, has condescended to intervene in our lives with an unmistakable demonstration of who He is. We are privileged to live in the final moments of human history. The dawning of a brand-new day is upon us!

I believe God is getting ready to take you to a higher level. He is about to set something up for you! The next time you call upon His great name, be ready to gain insight into new ideas and new concepts. He might move you to a new geographical location; He

may give you a new business or give you favor to find a relationship that will bless you in every area of your life. Whatever it is, you will be accelerated beyond anything you could imagine.

*But the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit within you is divine love in all its varied expressions: joy that overflows, peace that subdues, patience that endures, kindness in action, a life full of virtue, faith that prevails, gentleness of heart, and strength of spirit. Never set the law above these qualities, for they are meant to be limitless.*

### **Galatians 5:22-23**

God has given you one weapon in your spiritual arsenal with which to combat the principalities and powers of darkness. Even though the Bible says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, in reality, you only need one weapon.

Just like the last book of the Bible is Revelation, not Revelations, there is one fruit of the Spirit, not fruits. The fruit of the Spirit is love. People often think there are nine fruits listed in Galatians 5. But I want you to see that joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control, are all expressions of love; the fruit of God's love working in and through you.

God is love. The outworking of God's love is that the fruit of His love manifests through your recreated human spirit. The Holy Spirit is your tutor, guide and Helper in the process of producing the fruit of God's love through your spirit.



# 11

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*We may weep through the night, but at daybreak it will turn into shouts of ecstatic joy.*

## **Psalm 30:5**

You may be walking through the driest, darkest, most desperate situation of your life, but hold on - joy comes in the morning. Remember, weeping lasts only for a night. Christ set the ultimate example, refusing to let go of the joy of redeeming His people even when it meant enduring the immense suffering of the cross.

Like Jesus, you can choose to focus on the imminent dawning of joy, keeping your hope alive through the dark nights. Don't allow the enemy to fill your mind with anxiety and worry. Encourage yourself

with Scripture and seek the presence of God. He will always meet you in your darkest place, accompanying you as you wait for the dawn.

# 12

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*So keep your thoughts continually fixed on all that is authentic and real, honorable and admirable, beautiful and respectful, pure and holy, merciful and kind. And fasten your thoughts on every glorious work of God, praising him always.*

Philippians 4:8

You can probably look back right now and see a time where you opened the door in your mind and let the devil in—where you did not submit to God, you did not resist the devil; therefore, he did not flee!

When you are rejoicing, the devil cannot get in your mind. When you are praising God and thanking Him for His goodness and mercy, the devil has no access

to your life.

Strive after Jesus Christ's excellence and perfection. If you are tempted to think thoughts beneath what is true, just, pure, lovely, and virtuous, start meditating on His Word. Replace every worldly thought with His Word.

Build up your spirit by praying in the Holy Ghost. Renew your mind with the Word of God and fill your mouth with His praises. Put up a "NO VACANCY" sign for the devil, and when he tries to enter in, slam the door by lifting up your voice in rejoicing.

# 13

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*He will reign as King of Israel forever, and his reign will have no limit.*

## **Luke 1:33**

There is no end to the peace of God. True peace is not the absence of conflict, but His blessed assurance in the midst of all conflict. When we pray to the Father for His kingdom to come into our lives, we ask Him to become our Father and to be responsible for our supply.

You deserved to spend eternity in hell, but He forgave you. When Jesus died on the Cross, He took your place and mediated an eternal peace with your heavenly Father. He endured torture and death, shame and separation to benefit all mankind. This is true

forgiveness, true love, and true peace.

Love as Jesus loves you, and forgive as Jesus forgives you. As you do, there will be no limit or end to His kingdom and His peace in your life. Find Jesus, the King, and you will find the kingdom; in the kingdom you will find endless peace. Peace with God, peace with yourself and with peace with others.

# 14

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*Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, we must be patient and filled with expectation as we wait for the appearing of the Lord. Think about the farmer who has to patiently wait for the earth's harvest as it ripens because of the early and latter rains. So you also, keep your hopes high and be patient, for the presence of the Lord is drawing closer.*

## **James 5:7-8**

Apples are a natural result of an apple seed uniting with the elements necessary for growth. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the natural result of the union of God's Spirit with your spirit. You have potential for fruitful living, because Jesus is your source! You have the ability to manifest every one of the gifts of the Spirit,



because He is the vine and you are a branch! Because He is love, you can love. Because He is patient with you, you can have patience with others.

If you are lacking fruit, it is because God's Spirit cannot flow freely through you. Determine to cut away every lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life that hinders fruit from coming forth. And have patience with yourself – just like the farmer, know that fruit doesn't grow overnight. Nurture the fruit of a Spirit-filled life with the Word of God and prayer and watch your fruit grow!

*Love overlooks the mistakes of others, but dwelling on the failures of others devastates friendships.*

**Proverbs 17:9**

Christians are all part of one body—the body of Christ. It is important to remember that as you speak with and about your fellow Christians. Jesus said the world would know the love of the Father through the way Christians treat each other. Petty disagreements and quarrels can quickly turn into anger, resentment and long-held grudges within the church. Instead, the love of God should drive us to kindness, which leads us to forgive.

When forgiveness is withheld from one member,

the whole body suffers. Gossip, slander and division tear apart the sacred community of brothers and sisters. The brotherly love Christians should be modeling for the world then becomes marred.

If you have denied forgiveness to someone in the body, forgive them as Christ has forgiven you. It doesn't matter if they haven't asked for forgiveness—Christ died for us when we were still His enemies. Extend a hand of forgiveness to your brothers and sisters today, so the work of God may continue.

# 16

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*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show his works by his good life in the meekness of wisdom.*

## **James 3:13 (MEV)**

God has given us all good things and one of the best ways we can thank Him is by being good and doing good works. Goodness is defined as moral excellence, virtue and excellence of quality. Goodness is not just appearing to be good; it is the essence of a person's character. Goodness is the ambiance of love.

However, we will never be good on our own. As sinful humans, we can only be good through the work of the Holy Spirit. If we are to be good, we must spend time

with the source of all goodness: God. Do not engage in evil activities but seek to honor the Lord in your words, actions and even your thoughts.

If we give love, love will be returned to us. If we espouse good, then good will come to us. Be active in doing good, in thinking good and in being good, through the work of the Holy Spirit in you.

# 17

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*For you bring me a continual revelation of resurrection life, the path to the bliss that brings me face-to-face with you.*

## **Psalm 16:11**

God has the power to meet you at your deepest point of need.

The key is creating an environment where your faith can contact God's presence to receive your answer. You need the manifest anointing of God for a breakthrough. To do this, you must bring yourself to a place—physically, emotionally and spiritually—where you want nothing else but God and His anointing in your life...and will settle for nothing else than His presence.

Like the stone water pots at the wedding of Cana, God is preparing to pour out something special in your midst. But first, you must empty yourself of everything else. You must pour out your dreams, your hopes, your plans, your family, your future, your finances—so you can become an empty vessel for God to pour His anointing into.

Jesus is saying to you and me, “Give me what you have...and I will transform you into a vessel full of my anointing!” The anointing of God turns the ordinary into extraordinary!



*...then God's wonderful peace that transcends human understanding, will make the answers known to you through Jesus Christ. So keep your thoughts continually fixed on all that is authentic and real, honorable and admirable, beautiful and respectful, pure and holy, merciful and kind. And fasten your thoughts on every glorious work of God, praising him always. Follow the example of all that we have imparted to you and the God of peace will be with you in all things.*

### **Philippians 4:7-9**

Even though our culture is in chaos, we can be assured that the peace of God will be with us in all things. As we think on those things that are true, honest, just,

pure, lovely and good, our minds will focus on Jesus. Our expectation, even in these dark times, must be that the goodness of God will prevail for those who follow Christ.

The atmosphere of expectancy truly is the breeding ground of your miracle. Start each day expecting the best from Almighty God, surveying the day for a divine encounter.

*But even if we are faithless, he will still be full of faith, for he never wavers in his faithfulness to us!*

## **2 Timothy 2:13**

Faithfulness to God is the fruit of love's abundance, and it increases as we draw closer to Him.

There are times we actually think we are the ones hanging onto God. The truth is that God is the One hanging onto us! He is the faithful One.

That's why we sing: "Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning, new mercies I see. All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!"

You can trust God, for He is faithful. If we allow His Spirit to cultivate the fruit of love in our lives, He actually increases our ability to trust and have faith in Him. As the Holy Spirit reminds us of the promises God has already fulfilled in our lives, we have faith to trust Him even more.

*Later, he came back to his three disciples and found them all sound asleep. He awakened Peter and said to him, “Do you lack the strength to stay awake with me for even just an hour? Keep alert and pray that you’ll be spared from this time of testing. You should have learned by now that your spirit is eager enough, but your humanity is weak.*

## **Matthew 26:40-41**

Jesus asked His disciples to keep watch with Him, for His soul was crushed with grief. He was in deep agony and pain, yet even His faithful few could not stay awake. They were tired and fell asleep, leaving Christ to watch and pray alone.

Today, many believers are slumbering when they should be faithful in watching and praying. There is a lack of spiritual heat. Cold embers now reside where fiery souls once burned. Yet Christ is still asking us to “stay here and keep watch” with Him, because we do not know the day or the hour He will return.

Are you willing to watch? Are you willing to pray? Are your prayers in line with the expressed will of God, or are they in accordance to your own will and desires? Are you willing to set aside time to press on in prayer? Or are other things more important?

Christ expects that His Church will be one that watches and prays. Is your spirit eager to join Him and the faithful few in remaining vigilant? Will you watch and pray?

*With tender humility and quiet patience, always demonstrate gentleness and generous love toward one another, especially toward those who may try your patience.*

### **Ephesians 4:2**

When we are told that gentleness is love's attitude, what does it mean? Gentleness is directly associated with God's kindness. Because God is kind, He is gentle. Gentleness flows directly from God's disposition. The Bible sometimes uses the word meekness in addition to gentleness.

In the movies, Jesus is depicted as a sad, long-faced fellow who slowly walks around and softly touches



people, as if that is meekness, but that's not meekness at all. Meekness is controlled power. Meekness is having the hands of a carpenter, hammering large planks of wood together, yet gently cradling a baby in those powerful arms.

Just think of the wonder of these statements: Jesus reached out His hand and touched him...and immediately his leprosy was cleansed (Matthew 8:3) or He touched her hand, and the fever left her (Matthew 8:15). This was more than just a carpenter touching these people. It was the God who created the heavens and the earth. That's the power of God's love in gentle action, and that's love's attitude of gentleness alive in you!

*Instead, shape your lives to become like the Holy One who called you. For Scripture says: “You are to be holy, because I am holy.*

## **1 Peter 1:15-16**

Holiness is sanctification and separation unto God—which is what we are called to as believers. Holiness requires self-control and discipline, a commitment to a lifestyle.

Preachers of old like John Wesley knew that holiness was a command and not an option. They lived their lives in humble dedication to God. They served God, worked tirelessly, studied God’s Word diligently and prayed without ceasing.

But what does that mean for today? Personal discipline and holiness before God still go hand in hand. Your life should be one of discipline – of diligent Bible study, daily communication with God through prayer, fasting and service. As you do this, you will be set apart to be used by God.

*For you know that when your faith is tested it stirs up power within you to endure all things. And then as your endurance grows even stronger it will release perfection into every part of your being until there is nothing missing and nothing lacking.*

**James 1:3-4**

Have you ever asked yourself why the devil is always picking on you? One fact to consider is that Satan only attacks believers—why would he waste time on people who don't follow God? But let's go a step further and think about God's purpose.

Could it be because God is refining you and developing the fruit of the Spirit in you?

Nothing is wasted or without purpose in Him. God uses our mistakes to teach, to correct and to help us grow. Almighty God seizes every opportunity to direct us in His ways...if we are willing and if we obey. When your home is attacked, choose to fill it with the faith-filled Word of God—walk in your God-given authority. When change does not happen quickly, stand firm in your faith in Jesus and watch things turn around.

When you operate in the fruit of the Spirit, Satan can't continue his work of discord, disharmony, hatred and confusion. God's ultimate purpose is your success and victory!

# 24

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*So if the tree is good, it will produce good fruit; but if the tree is bad, it will bear only rotten fruit and it deserves to be cut down and burned. Look at the obvious fruit of their lives and ministries, and then you'll know whether they are true or false.*

## **Matthew 7:17-20**

Not everyone who calls him or herself a Christian is totally surrendered to Christ. Just like a fruitful tree that bears good fruit, when you abide in Christ Jesus you can't help but bear fruit in your life.

What kind of fruit are you producing? Is your life full of praise for God and faithful devotion to His Word,

or are you struggling with fear, anger or other sins? If it is the latter, you're not a hopeless case – you just need to get planted in His Word!

Produce good fruit by spending more time in prayer with your heavenly Father. Joshua 1:8 (MEV) says, “This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night so that you may act carefully according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way successful, and you will be wise.” Plant yourself in Him today so you may produce fruit for His kingdom!

*And my Lord will continue to deliver me from every form of evil and give me life in his heavenly kingdom. May all the glory go to him alone for all the ages of eternity!*

## **2 Timothy 4:18**

The Israelites suffered under the land of the Egyptians for years. They feared they would never be delivered from the hand of their oppressor.

When they left Egypt, God was with them. He not only delivered them but also restored them. Psalm 105:37 confirms God's promise to them saying, "not even one was feeble on their way out!" Do not fear the



world or the things of this world. Don't look at God as if He trembles when the enemy approaches.

Rest assured that He is able to turn your promise into a reality. If God's Word says you are going to be right in the center of a miracle, you can count on it.

The God who delivers you and keeps you from the enemy is present with you now. Reassure yourself by confessing His indwelling presence. Reassure your hope by speaking His Word from 2 Timothy 4:18.

*I know what it means to lack, and I know what it means to experience overwhelming abundance. For I'm trained in the secret of overcoming all things, whether in fullness or in hunger. And I find that the strength of Christ's explosive power infuses me to conquer every difficulty.*

## **Philippians 4:12-13**

There are people today who would lead you to believe that the sign of God's favor is getting everything we want or desire, and never facing a trial or challenge.

The Bible simply does not support this notion. God places us where we need to be to do His will and

reflect His glory. We can accept this with grace; using hard work, prayer, hope and faith to move us through the situations we do not enjoy.

Cultivate Paul's secret from Philippians 4:12 today! It will get you through these hard times. The Lord will always answer your prayers. He promises to answer you when you call. Trust that His promises are steadfast and secure. He knows what is best for you – and when.

*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*

**Isaiah 26:3 (MEV)**

The Hebrew word for peace in this passage is shalom, which means not only lack of conflict, but also wholeness and completeness, with nothing broken, nothing missing, and nothing lacking. It also means safety, prosperity and health. The word indicates having everything necessary as required by the intended purpose, like a ship fully rigged and stocked for voyage.

The Hebrew definitions of shalom and salvation

are very similar. The word for salvation in Hebrew is yeshua, which is also the Hebrew name for Jesus. Yeshua is defined as salvation, healing, deliverance, help, aid, victory, prosperity, security and well-being. You can trust that when Jesus saved you, He saved you for a purpose, and provides everything you need in order to achieve it.

Of course, it's no coincidence that the definition of our Savior's name contains components of both words: salvation and peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Fix your mind on Him as your Redeemer and find yourself kept in His perfect peace throughout the storms of life!

*Loving me empowers you to obey my commands. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Savior, the Holy Spirit of Truth, who will be to you a friend just like me—and he will never leave you. The world won't receive him because they can't see him or know him. But you know him intimately because he remains with you and will live inside you.*

**John 14:15-17**

Jesus did not leave the disciples alone without comfort—He promised to send another just like Him, one who would guide them. This other Helper, Jesus told the disciples, would be an abiding presence in their lives.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them on Pentecost, their eyes were opened to the truth of what Jesus had told them that night around the Passover table. To this day, the Spirit of Christ continues to be poured out, strengthening, counseling and ministering to those who believe.

A supernatural power and presence dwells in you and allows you to do everything Christ said you can do in His name. The Holy Spirit is a constant companion who will never leave you or forsake you but will bring direction, peace and comfort to every situation of your life.

*For example, if a brother or sister in the faith is poorly clothed and hungry and you leave them saying, “Good-bye. I hope you stay warm and have plenty to eat,” but you don’t provide them with a coat or even a cup of soup, what good is your faith? So then faith that doesn’t involve action is phony.*

**James 2:15-17**

Prayer and faith are key ingredients for change—but we still have work to do. We are called to impact the world for Christ and bring others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. You can do this by preaching the Gospel message and by helping those in need. By doing good,



you show Christ's love for others.

Doing something to create greater good in our world is an outward expression of our inward faith. We can effect change in the world because of our faith. Though works aren't how we are saved, works are how we serve the God who has saved us.

1 Corinthians 3:12-14 teaches us that on the Day of Judgment, Christ is going to test how we built on His foundation. He's going to show our work for what it is, test it and show its quality. You do not know when your last day on earth will be. You do not know when you will lose the opportunity to labor in God's fields. So go out and spread the Good News each day! It is the only good thing you can do that will stand the test of eternity.

*It is through him that you now believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, so that you would fasten your faith and hope in God alone.*

## **1 Peter 1:21**

Your perfection and faithfulness are my bodyguards, for you are my hope and I trust in you as my only protection.

## **Psalm 25:21**

Then I will say to my soul, “Don’t be discouraged; don’t be disturbed, for I fully expect my Savior-God to

break through for me. Then I'll have plenty of reasons to praise him all over again."

### **Psalm 43:5**

I'm sure the disciples felt hopeless the day they watched Jesus die. I'm sure they wondered, "How can this be?" They must have despaired as they watched His body being placed in the tomb. From an earthly perspective, it was hopeless. Their Messiah was gone. But God is more powerful than the disciples ever imagined. Jesus came back to life, taking the fear of death—and turning it inside out!

Scripture is full of hope – full of verses like the above Psalms calling us to hope for a better future, for life in death and for miracles in an unbelieving world. Put your hope in Jesus, knowing that He has conquered death to bring you life. What better hope can you have?

*I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.*

**Exodus 20:2-3 (MEV)**

There are dozens of “little gods” in disguise in our lives, even if we are Christians, worshipping the one true God. People’s opinions, our money, appearance, family, friends or entertainment can become other gods we put before God. The devil seeks to deceive us by trying to make us believe that having other gods is limited to worship of another deity instead of God. But there is so much more to the problem than that.

God would not see fit to warn us about putting other gods before Him if there were no other gods to

be worried about. Nor would He tell us, as He does in Deuteronomy 10:17 (MEV), that He is the “God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the fearsome God...”

Who or what is receiving the glory in your life today? Who or what is most important to you, and who or what do you seek to please above all else? If you cannot answer “God” to all of these, then I challenge you to sort through your priorities and redirect your faithfulness. Place Him at the center of your life and bring yourself back into alignment with this blessed commandment.

*Now may God, the inspiration and fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his super-abundance until you radiate with hope!*

**Romans 15:13**

God intends for our hearts to overflow with His joy. He fills you with joy as a result of your spirit man being in tune with Him. His joy sustains you when the doctor says you will not have long to live, when your kids are far from God, or when you don't have a dollar to change. True joy is unaffected by your circumstances.

When you become filled with the Holy Spirit, you receive His joy! In Luke 10:21, Jesus rejoiced in the

Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17 reveals that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. In Acts 2, those present in the Upper Room became “intoxicated” with the Holy Ghost, causing the crowd to believe they were drunken with wine.

They became drunk with joy! The early disciples of Jesus were drunk with the new wine of His Spirit and with the joy of the Spirit. Thank Him for His incomparable joy permeating your spirit.

*I waited and waited and waited some more, patiently, knowing God would come through for me. Then, at last, he bent down and listened to my cry. He stooped down to lift me out of danger from the desolate pit I was in, out of the muddy mess I had fallen into. Now he's lifted me up into a firm, secure place and steadied me while I walk along his ascending path. A new song for a new day rises up in me every time I think about how he breaks through for me! Ecstatic praise pours out of my mouth until everyone hears how God has set me free. Many will see his miracles; they'll stand in awe of God and fall in love with him!*

**Psalm 40:1-3**

David relied often upon the Lord for deliverance,



and God always answered! Seeking after God's heart, as David did, gets His attention and brings with it the benefit of His help when we are in need, whether we face physical danger or some other form of distress. Trust Him for your deliverance, and He will put a new song within you!

*And everything I've taught you is so that the peace which is in me will be in you and will give you great confidence as you rest in me. For in this unbelieving world you will experience trouble and sorrows, but you must be courageous, for I have conquered the world!*

## **John 16:33**

During His earthly ministry, Jesus walked in total victory. He responded promptly each time He heard His Father speak; therefore, He lived a powerful and victorious life bathed in God's peace.

When we pay close attention and heed the voice of God, He leads us in the same peace that guided Jesus through the storms and into His eternal destiny. When

you dwell in constant prayer, casting your cares upon Him, the storms of life will calm in your presence rather than agitate your heart.

Just think how incredible it would be to live a life filled with God's presence surrounding you and filling you to overflowing each day. This abundant life is possible when you follow God's direction and let Him carry you along His living waters of peace, cleansing you, making you whole and complete.

*For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there but water the earth and make it bring forth and bud that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

**Isaiah 55:10-11 (MEV)**

The Word of God is always right on time. It is never early, and it is never late, but it manifests in His perfect timing. His Word will always accomplish what He pleases, and it will always prosper in its purpose.

God has more for you than you could ever dream, and He has already seen you in your future. Apply His

Word to your life. When things don't seem to be going your way, just remember that His Word will not fail you. Accept all of God's will for you, not just those portions that appeal to you or fit into your mental picture of the way life should be.

Sometimes God's answer is, "Wait." Waiting does not mean no. It simply means wait. It is our job to wait well, with expectancy of His goodness, with praise for His imminent rescue, and with trust in His plan.

*...but I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect—life in its fullness until you overflow!*

### **John 10:10**

God wants to give you an abundant life. Jeremiah 33:3 (MEV) says, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know.”

When we ask and expect Him to bless us, we allow Him to work miracles in and through us! Jesus promised in Matthew 7:7, “Ask, and the gift is yours. Seek, and you’ll discover. Knock, and the door will be opened for you.”

Give thanks that your request has already been answered through the Lord Jesus Christ. Bolster your hope by praising God for all the blessings that He has bestowed upon you in the past. With all your heart expect Him to answer when you call.

*The voice of the Lord echoes through the skies and seas. The Glory-God reigns as he thunders in the clouds. So powerful is his voice, so brilliant and bright, how majestic as he thunders over the great waters!*

## **Psalm 29:3-4**

If you are having difficulty hearing from God, perhaps you just haven't been listening. He speaks in many ways – through His Word, through family and loved ones and through His creation.

Our heavenly Father's voice is powerful, so if we are having difficulty discerning what He is saying the problem may be with us!

Making time to listen to God is a required activity



for the mature Christian. When we get away from everything and don't let anything distract us, that's when God can speak most clearly to us. Maybe that's what you're afraid of! Set any fears you have aside; unplug, slow down and let God speak to you.

*Let everyone everywhere shine with praise to Yahweh! Let it all out! Go ahead and praise him! For he has conquered us with his great love and his kindness has melted our hearts. His faithfulness lasts forever and he will never fail you. So go ahead, let it all out! Praise Yah! O Yah!*

### **Psalm 117**

If you love the Lord today, His Word promises that He will always be kind toward you and that His truth is and always will be everlasting. He can't fail, because His Word will always come to pass! How much better to trust in Him than in fallible mankind. Even the best earthly friend you have will let you down from time to time. But God never will! Make Him your forever friend today.

*Make God the utmost delight and pleasure of your life, and he will provide for you what you desire the most.*

**Psalm 37:4**

This familiar verse has at least two interpretations, both of which I believe are valid. I believe that when we delight in God, He will give us the things we desire most. But I also believe that He can give us the longings themselves – the things that then become the desires of our heart. He is a good, good Father that way! Whether you are looking for a passion He can bless or already have a burning desire in your heart, the way to find it is simple: delight yourself in the Lord.

*And without faith living within us it would be impossible to please God. For we come to God in faith knowing that he is real and that he rewards the faith of those who give all their passion and strength into seeking him.*

### **Hebrews 11:6**

Many think that God is impressed by works or by following the law in a legalistic manner. Some believe that if they show kindness or if they are “good,” this will please God. God is clear about what will please him—FAITH.

Do you have faith in God? Do you believe that He will answer your prayers and will provide for your needs? Faith doesn’t come without effort. To be faith-

filled you must be in a place where you are growing in God.

Faith goes beyond just saying “God exists.” Faith is following Him all the days of your life. Faith is trusting in Him even in the worst situations, and remembering Him in the best.

Believe that God will bless you as you seek Him and you will witness answered prayers as never before... because God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

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*You see, every child of God overcomes the world, for our faith is the victorious power that triumphs over the world.*

## **1 John 5:4**

At times opposition confronts us as a mighty force. The enemy would like you to believe that there is no hope, that you don't stand a chance.

Those who know God know that's a lie. God says that if we are born of Him, we overcome the world. Our victory has already been assured. It was won on the cross and provided for us with the shed blood of the

Lamb of God.

Because of His blood, you are of God, which makes you an overcomer. How can you stand in times of difficulty? How can you keep your head held high?

By faith in Jesus...by believing that He provided all that you need to overcome on the cross. Declare it daily. Stand on it without wavering.

Your Bible says, "Little children, you can be certain that you belong to God and have conquered them, for the One who is living in you is far greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4). Being born of God through Christ is the victory that overcomes the world.

*Then I will say to my soul, “Don’t be discouraged; don’t be disturbed, for I fully expect my Savior-God to break through for me. Then I’ll have plenty of reasons to praise him all over again.” Yes, living before his face is my saving grace!*

### **Psalm 43:5**

Regardless of what life has been throwing at you, take heart— God is still with you! David experienced despair and hopelessness, but he did not dwell there. Instead he chose to put his hope in the Lord. He liberated his mind from the attacks of the enemy and walked in the goodness of God.

Disappointments will come, but how you respond to them will determine whether you live a life of victory.



God is the God of hope; you have the power to shake off the chains of despair in Him! “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

In God there is freedom, for where His spirit is there is liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17). God is good—He works everything out for the good of them that love Him (Romans 8:28).

You are free, but you have to choose to accept it. You have to choose to believe it. How you respond to the attacks of the enemy and how you respond to the tests will determine if you become bound or walk in divine freedom.

*So now we come freely and boldly to where love is enthroned, to receive mercy's kiss and discover the grace we urgently need to strengthen us in our time of weakness.*

## **Hebrews 4:16**

You may feel weary because of the number of items remaining on your to-do list, but remember God's grace is sufficient for you.

As you look at your list, ask the Holy Spirit to show you which tasks are God-given and which are self-inflicted. If there are some you need to cut out, get rid of them so that you will be more effective in the tasks that deserve higher priority.

If you need more strength to accomplish what you need to do, come before His throne of grace and ask for His strength.

1 Peter 5:7 says, “Pour out all your worries and stress upon him and leave them there, for he always tenderly cares for you.” Ask for grace to help you complete your mission.

For “Yes, God is more than ready to overwhelm you with every form of grace, so that you will have more than enough of everything—every moment and in every way. He will make you overflow with abundance in every good thing you do” (2 Corinthians 9:8).

Grace and strength are waiting at the foot of His throne.

*Christ's resurrection is your resurrection too. This is why we are to yearn for all that is above, for that's where Christ sits enthroned at the place of all power, honor, and authority! Yes, feast on all the treasures of the heavenly realm and fill your thoughts with heavenly realities, and not with the distractions of the natural realm. Your crucifixion with Christ has severed the tie to this life, and now your true life is hidden away in God in Christ.*

### **Colossians 3:1-3**

One of the benefits of being born again is that you are hidden with Christ. This means that you are no longer defined by your sins, but are now made into a new person by Jesus' atoning work on Calvary's cruel and biting beam. Now, when God looks at you, He doesn't

see your past mistakes or failures. He sees Jesus.

It isn't always as easy to see ourselves differently. The ghosts of our past try to disturb our peace and hinder our progress. Remind yourself that God doesn't love you according to your track record of worthiness; He loves you according to the qualities of His character. He loves you despite your past. In fact, as a new creation in Him, you don't have a past—only a future, and it is bright in God.

*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent.*

## **Numbers 23:19**

This is good Gospel news! It is impossible for God to lie, because everything God says is true. Whatever He says becomes truth. So, don't believe what the enemy says about you. Believe what God says about you.

If God says He is your Shepherd (Psalm 23), then it's true and nothing can move Him away from you. If God says He will deliver you (Psalm 91:3), then it is true and nothing can hold back your deliverance. If God says you are healed (Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24), believe the truth of His Word!

There is absolutely nothing and no one that can make God lie! He is your refuge and your fortress, and you can trust Him at all times (Psalm 91:2). Men will disappoint you, but God is not a man. Men will try to destroy you, but God is not a man. Men will steal from you, but God is not a man. Men will lie to you, but God is not a man. Place your hope in God's never-changing hands.

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*No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication is from Me, says the Lord.*

## **Isaiah 54:17**

No matter what seemingly insurmountable obstacle is in front of you, when you declare the Word of God over your situation, that mountain has to move! When the enemy has a plan to take you out, God always has a plan to keep you in.

No weapon that is formed against you will ever prosper, because you belong to Almighty God! Build on the foundation laid by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.



Have faith that every battle you fight was already won by our King at Calvary.

Jesus was not a victim at Calvary. He was an advancing warrior! God has never lost a battle, and He is not about to start now. He has already gone before you into the battle, and He has won the victory!

*Yet even in the midst of all these things, we triumph over them all, for God has made us to be more than conquerors, and his demonstrated love is our glorious victory over everything!*

**Romans 8:37**

Because God has called you according to His purpose, and because He loves you, and you love Him, He works all things together for good. (Romans 8:28). How can you lose? Even when you make what seems to be a wrong choice, God works it for good when your heart is fixed on Him.

When you are called by God for His specific purpose, there is nothing that can stop His purpose from being fulfilled in your life. He knows far in advance

what you will or will not do, and He has already worked it into His plan.

After all, your salvation is not dependent on your works. It is through faith you are saved, not works, lest you become boastful. For it was only through this wonderful grace that we believed in him. Nothing we did could ever earn this salvation, for it was the gracious gift from God that brought us to Christ! So no one will ever be able to boast, for salvation is never a reward for good works or human striving. (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Because of what Jesus did at Calvary, you have been put in right standing with God Almighty to do mighty exploits for Him.

*So, what does all this mean? If God has determined to stand with us, tell me, who then could ever stand against us?*

**Romans 8:31**

Nothing can ever separate you from the Father's love. Even though we all have sinned and fallen short of His glory (Romans 3:23), we have been made righteous, put in right standing with God through the sacrifice of His Son.

God has justified us. There is no more guilt, shame or condemnation. Jesus paid the ultimate price for our freedom, and we can now rejoice in His presence!

No matter what battle we face, we are more than

conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37). Nothing can ever make God stop loving us.

So now I live with the confidence that there is nothing in the universe with the power to separate us from God's love. I'm convinced that his love will triumph over death, life's troubles, fallen angels, or dark rulers in the heavens. There is nothing in our present or future circumstances that can weaken his love. There is no power above us or beneath us—no power that could ever be found in the universe that can distance us from God's passionate love, which is lavished upon us through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One! (Romans 8:38-39).

*Even if the mountains were to crumble and the hills disappear, my heart of steadfast, faithful love will never leave you, and my covenant of peace with you will never be shaken,” says Yahweh, whose love and compassion will never give up on you.*

### **Isaiah 54:10**

No matter what you have done, God’s covenant of mercy will never be removed from you. You may feel afflicted and battered by the storm. You may feel that your world is in such an upheaval that you cannot be comforted, but God can restore your foundation that is shaken and falling apart.

God is going to rebuild your crumbled foundation that used to be made of concrete with a foundation of

precious stones. Great is your peace and the peace of your children. You are established in righteousness far from oppression and tyrants. God is about to remove people in your life who are consumers and polluters.

Let go of the piece of coal you're desperately holding onto, and let God give you a diamond. Jesus received the penalty for your sin and paid the price in full. Enjoy the fruit of salvation!

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he has anointed me to be hope for the poor, freedom for the brokenhearted, and new eyes for the blind, and to preach to prisoners, 'You are set free!' I have come to share the message of Jubilee, for the time of God's great acceptance has begun.*

## **Luke 4:18-19**

Jesus is the healer of hearts and minds just as much as He is the healer of our bodies.

Jesus sees your deepest hurt, and it is His desire to touch the cold and callous place in your heart that you thought could never be healed. A father came to Jesus: "Help me! My daughter has just died. Please come and place your hand upon her so that she will live again."



(Matt. 9:18). By the time they got to the man's home the funeral had already started! But death didn't have the last word.

Broken lives, broken dreams, broken homes, broken bodies, broken hearts—none of it gets the last word! Yes, “He heals the wounds of every shattered heart” (Ps. 147:3).

Jesus is a heart specialist. Not only will He heal your bruised, battered and broken heart, but He will also surgically remove the pain and torment of deep-seated wounds. Let Him bring healing and hope to every area of your life.

*Now, if anyone is enfolded into Christ, he has become an entirely new creation. All that is related to the old order has vanished. Behold, everything is fresh and new.*

### **2 Corinthians 5:17**

When you make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life, you become a new creature in Him, a new species of being that's never existed before – a new mother, a new father, a new son, a new daughter – you have a new hope and a new future. You are a new person from the top of your head to the soles of your feet!

While salvation is most certainly is an act of God in your life, it is also a process that requires you to do your part. Your job is to leave your old life behind and

embrace your new identity in Christ. You are to “put off the former way of life” and “put on the new nature” (Eph. 4:22). In other words, take a good long look at what you’re doing. Examine it. Don’t hang onto the desires of the flesh or the sinful ways of the world. Walk with those who walk with Jesus. They will strengthen your faith. You will strengthen theirs.

You cannot say that you believe God’s message but live as if you don’t. You are a new creation in Christ!

What is threatening to trip you up or encumber your life? Whatever sin may be a stumbling block in your new life in Christ, put it off! Then put on your new identity—as a new creation, and cast your burden on the Lord!

*Now may God, the inspiration and fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his super-abundance until you radiate with hope!*

## **Romans 15:13**

God gave His only begotten Son, a lamb without spot or blemish, to reconcile humanity back to Himself.

The Bible makes is clear: there is no expectation of immortality apart from the resurrection. For those apart from Christ, there is no hope. They are hopeless and helpless without God.

But because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cruel biting

beam of Calvary, Satan will not have the last word in the lives of believers. Good, not evil, will triumph! We can have hope beyond the scope of human limitation. That's the mark of true believers. It is what sets us apart from a doomed and dying world and gives us the courage to press on when giving up and dying would seem easier.

Hope in God fills your heart with unspeakable joy and peace that goes beyond all understanding. Rest in His promises in the face of every adversity and trial! The hope of God fills you ... so that you may abound in hope through the power of the Spirit!

Look forward with renewed hope in the promises of your God! Promises for you, your children and your children's children! Abound in the hope that sees past your circumstances and declare your victory.

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THE HOPE DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

PSALMS

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PROVERBS





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# PSALMS

## Introduction

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### AT A GLANCE

*Author:* Multiple authors, including David, Solomon, Asaph, the prophetic singers of Korah's clan, and Moses

*Audience:* Originally Israel, but the Psalms speak to humanity in general

*Date:* From the monarchy to the postexilic era

*Type of Literature:* Poems, which reflect several types: wisdom, lament, prayer, praise, blessings, liturgy, and prophetic oracles

*Major Themes:* Praise, prayer, wisdom, prophecy, and Jesus Christ

*Outline:* The book of Psalms is really five books in one. Moses gave us the five books of the Law called the Pentateuch; David gave us the five books of the Psalms. Each division ends with a doxology that includes the word "Amen!" The last division ends with Psalm 150 as the doxology, forming an appropriate conclusion to this "Pentateuch of David." These five divisions have been compared to the first five books of the Bible:

Psalms 1–41 (Genesis) — Psalms of man and creation

Psalms 42–72 (Exodus) — Psalms of suffering and redemption

Psalms 73–89 (Leviticus) — Psalms of worship and God's house

Psalms 90–106 (Numbers) — Psalms of our pilgrimage on earth

Psalms 107–150 (Deuteronomy) — Psalms of praise and the Word

### ABOUT PSALMS

I have loved the Psalms for over forty years. They have been my comfort and joy, leading me to the place where worship flows. When discouraged or downcast, I have never failed to take new strength from reading the Psalms. They charge my batteries and fill my sails. In fact, they seem to grow even more powerful as I grow older. Their thunder stirs me; their sweet melodies move me into the sacred emotions of a heart on fire. The dark rain clouds of grief turn to bright rainbows of hope just from meditating on David's soul-subduing songs.

The Psalms find the words that express our deepest and strongest emotions, no matter what the circumstances. Every emotion of our hearts is reflected in the Psalms. Reading the Psalms will turn sighing into singing and trouble into triumph. The word *praise* is found 189 times in this book. There is simply nothing that touches my heart like the Psalms. Thousands of years ago my deepest

feelings were put to music—this is what we all delightfully discover when reading the Psalms!

A contemporary name for the book of Psalms could be *Poetry on Fire*. These 150 poetic masterpieces give us an expression of faith and worship. They become a mirror to the heart of God’s people in our quest to experience God’s presence. Much of Christianity has become so intellectualized that our emotions and artistic creativity are often set aside as unimportant in the worship of God. The Psalms free us to become emotional, passionate, sincere worshippers. It is time to sing the Psalms!

### PURPOSE

The Psalms are clearly poetic. They are praises placed inside of poetry. Everyone who reads the Psalms realizes how filled with emotion they are! You will never be bored in reading the poetry that spills out of a fiery, passionate heart. These verses contain both poetry and music that touch the heart deeply, enabling you to encounter the heart of God through your emotional and creative senses.

### AUTHOR AND AUDIENCE

Most of these poetic masterpieces come to us from David, King of Israel. He wrote them during specific periods of his life: when he was on the run from Saul, grateful for the Lord’s protection and provision, scared for his future, mournful over his sin, and praising God with uplifted hands. Other authors include David’s son Solomon, Moses, Asaph, and the prophetic singers of Korah’s clan.

While they were written during specific periods in the history of Israel—from the monarchy to the postexilic eras—they connect to our own time as much as they reflect their time. So in many ways these poems are written to you and me. The original audience was the children of Israel, but the Psalms reflect the hopes and dreams, fears and failures of humanity in general.

### MAJOR THEMES

***Poetry of Praise.*** The Psalms are pure praise, inspired by the breath of God. Praise is a matter of life and breath. As long as we have breath we are told to praise the Lord. The Psalms release a flood of God-inspired insights that will lift heaviness off the human heart. The Psalms are meant to do for you what they did for David: they will bring you from your cave of despair into the glad presence of the King who likes and enjoys you.

***Poetry of Prayer.*** Mixed with intercession, the Psalms become the fuel for our devotional life. Each psalm is a prayer. The early church recited and sang the Psalms regularly. Many contemporary worship songs have been inspired by this book of prayer-poetry!

***Poetry of Wisdom.*** The Psalms unlock mysteries and parables, for within the purest praise is the cryptic language of a wise messenger. The wisdom of God is contained in these 150 keys; you have a key chain with master keys to unlock God’s storehouse of wisdom and revelation. It is the “harp” (anointed worship) that releases divine secrets. Read carefully Psalm 49:4: “I will break open mysteries with my music, and my song will release riddles solved.”

**Poetry of Prophecy.** Prophetic insights rest upon the Psalms. David’s harp brings revelation and understanding to the people. Singers who tap into the insights of the Psalms will bring forth truths in their songs, which will break the hearts of people and release divine understanding to the church. Prophets must become musicians and musicians must become prophets for the key of David to be given to the church.

**Poetry of Jesus Christ.** As with every part of the Old Testament, we are called to read the Psalms in two ways: (1) as the original audience heard them in their ancient Hebrew world; and (2) as the fulfillment of messianic prophecies, submitting by faith that these poems point to Jesus Christ. Therefore, at one level, these poems are all about him. There are 150 Psalms, and each of them reveals a special and unique aspect of the God-man, Christ Jesus. We could say every Psalm is messianic in that each finds its fulfillment in Christ. Looking backward in light of Christ’s revelation, we see they all point to our Lord Jesus, whom God has chosen as King over all.

Since these songs are all about Jesus, one of the keys to understanding the Psalms is to look for Jesus within its pages. Luke 24:44 says: “I told you that everything written about me would be fulfilled, including all the prophecies from the law of Moses through the Psalms and the writings of the prophets—that they would all find their fulfillment.” There are many secrets about Jesus waiting to be discovered here!

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# PSALMS

## Poetry on Fire

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### BOOK 1 THE GENESIS PSALMS *Psalms of man and creation*

#### 1<sup>a</sup> THE TREE OF LIFE

<sup>1</sup>What delight comes to the one who  
follows God's ways!<sup>b</sup>  
He won't walk in step with the wicked,  
nor share the sinner's way,  
nor be found sitting in the scorner's  
seat.

<sup>2</sup>His passion is to remain true to the  
Word of "I AM,"  
meditating day and night<sup>c</sup> on the  
true revelation of light.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>3</sup>He will be standing firm like a flourish-  
ing tree  
planted<sup>e</sup> by God's design,  
deeply rooted by the brooks of  
bliss,  
bearing fruit in every season of  
life.

He is never dry, never fainting,  
ever blessed, ever prosperous.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>4</sup>But how different are the wicked.  
They are like chaff<sup>g</sup> blown away by  
the wind.

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*a* 1 Although we cannot be sure, it is possible that Ezra compiled the Psalms and wrote Ps. 1 as an "introduction" to the Psalter. Others believe Ps. 1 was written by David or Jeremiah.

*b* 1:1 Psalm 1 is the contrast of those who follow God's ways with those who choose their own path. Read through this psalm with the purpose of learning how to live with God in the first place.

*c* 1:2 To meditate on the revelation of light day and night means to meditate 24/7 on what is good and delightful. However, *day* signifies a period of enlightenment (Eph. 1:18) and *night* signifies a period of obscurity. Both when we have the light of insight and when we seem to be in the dark, meditation is the key to unlock the revelation of God.

*d* 1:2 Or "Torah." From Ps. 1 we learn that the righteous and the wicked are distinguished by what they delight in.

*e* 1:3 Or "transplanted." That is, God planted our lives from where we were into a place of blessing. See Ps. 92:13–14.

*f* 1:3 The metaphors found in this verse can be paraphrased as "No matter what he sets out to do, he brings it to a successful conclusion."

*g* 1:4 Chaff is lifeless, only a shell without the kernel. Chaff depicts a life without the truth of Christ. See Ps. 35:5–6.

<sup>5</sup>The wicked will not endure the day  
of judgment,  
for God will not defend them.  
Nothing they do will succeed or  
endure for long,  
for they have no part with those who  
walk in truth.

<sup>6</sup>But how different it is for the  
righteous!  
The Lord embraces their paths as  
they move forward  
while the way of the wicked leads  
only to doom.

## 2 THE CORONATION OF THE KING

### Act I – The Nations Speak

<sup>1</sup>How dare the nations plan a rebellion.  
Their foolish plots are futile!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Look at how the power brokers of  
the world  
rise up to hold their summit  
as the rulers scheme and confer  
together  
against Yahweh and his Anointed  
King, saying:

<sup>3</sup>“Let’s come together and break away  
from the Creator.  
Once and for all let’s cast off these  
controlling chains  
of God and his Christ!”<sup>b</sup>

### Act II – God Speaks

<sup>4</sup>God-Enthroned<sup>c</sup> merely laughs at them;  
the Sovereign One mocks their  
madness!

<sup>5</sup>Then with the fierceness of his fiery  
anger,  
he settles the issue<sup>d</sup> and terrifies  
them to death<sup>e</sup> with these words:

<sup>6</sup>“I myself have poured out<sup>f</sup> my King  
on Zion,<sup>g</sup> my holy mountain.”<sup>h</sup>

### Act III – The Son Speaks

<sup>7</sup>I will reveal the eternal purpose of  
God.

For he has decreed over me, ‘You  
are my favored Son.

And as your Father I have crowned  
you as my King Eternal.

Today I became your Father.

<sup>8</sup>Ask me to give you the nations<sup>i</sup> and I  
will do it,  
and they shall become your legacy.  
Your domain will stretch to the ends  
of the earth.

<sup>9</sup>And you will shepherd them<sup>j</sup> with  
unlimited authority,  
crushing their rebellion as an iron  
rod<sup>k</sup> smashes jars of clay!’ ”

### Act IV – The Holy Spirit Speaks

<sup>10</sup>“Listen to me, all you rebel kings  
and all you upstart judges of the  
earth.

a 2:1 Or “Why are they devising emptiness?” Some Jewish scholars believe that Ps. 1 and Ps. 2 form one psalm, for the theme of both is the way of the godly vs. the way of the ungodly.

b 2:3 The word found here for “Christ” is the Hebrew word for “Messiah” or “Anointed One.”

c 2:4 The Aramaic is *Maryah*, the Aramaic form of YHWH or Lord Yahweh.

d 2:5 Or “In good time he drives them away.”

e 2:5 Or “snorts with anger.” The Hebrew word *‘aph* (“fiery anger”) has a homonym that means “nose.”

f 2:6 The Hebrew word (*nacak*) is frequently used for pouring out a drink offering to God. See Num. 28:7. Jesus was “poured out” as a consecrated offering.

g 2:6 The word *Zion* is found 157 times in the Bible and 38 times in the Psalms.

h 2:6 For the believer today, Zion is not only a place but also a realm where Christ is enthroned.

i 2:8 Or in the Masoretic Text “Ask wealth of me.”

j 2:9 As translated from the Septuagint.

k 2:9 God’s “iron rod” can be a metaphor for the power of spiritual truth. See Pss. 23:4; 45:6.



Learn your lesson<sup>a</sup> *while there's still time.*

<sup>11</sup>Serve and worship the awe-inspiring God.

Recognize his greatness and bow before him, trembling with reverence in his presence.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Fall facedown before him and kiss the Son<sup>c</sup>

before his anger is roused against you.

Remember that his wrath can be quickly kindled!

But many blessings are waiting for all who turn aside to hide themselves in him!"

<sup>2</sup>Listen to how they whisper their slander against me, saying:  
"Look! He's hopeless! Even God can't save him from this!"

*Pause in his presence<sup>d</sup>*

### The Help of God

<sup>3</sup>But *in the depths of my heart I truly know*

that you, Yahweh, have become my Shield;

You take me and surround me with yourself.<sup>e</sup>

Your glory<sup>f</sup> covers me continually.

You lift high my head.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>4</sup>I have cried out to you,<sup>h</sup> Yahweh, from your holy presence.<sup>i</sup>

You send me a Father's help.

*Pause in his presence*

## 3 COVERED BY THE GLORY

*King David's song when he was forced to flee from Absalom, his own son*

### The Humbling of a King

<sup>1</sup>Lord, I have so many enemies, so many who are against me.

### The Song of Safety

<sup>5</sup>So now I'll lie down and sleep like a baby—

then I'll awake in safety, for you surround me with your glory.

*a* 2:10 Or "Do what is wise."

*b* 2:11 Or "rejoice with trembling." The Hebrew word for "rejoice" means "to spin around with excited emotions" or "to twirl."

*c* 2:12 Or "be ruled by the Son." The Hebrew word for "kiss" is *nashaq* and can also mean "to be ruled by" or "be in subjection to" the Son. Yet another possible translation of this difficult verse is "be armed with purity."

*d* 3:2 This is the Hebrew word *Selah*, a puzzling word to translate. Most scholars believe it is a musical term for pause or rest. It is used seventy-one times in the Psalms as an instruction to the music leader to pause and ponder in God's presence. An almost identical word, *Sela*, means "a massive rock cliff." It is said that when *Selah* is spoken, the words are carved in stone in the throne room of the heavens.

*e* 3:3 Many translations render this "You are a shield around me." The ancient Hebrew can be translated "You, O Lord, are my taker" (Augustine). The implication is that God shields us by taking us into himself. Jesus Christ is the taker of humanity, the one who was made flesh. He not only took our nature, he also took our sins that he might take us into glory.

*f* 3:3 Or "my glory."

*g* 3:3 In the time of David, to lift up the head signified acquittal when judged, being freed from the prison of shame. See 2 Kings 25:27–28; Jer. 52:31.

*h* 3:4 The Hebrew reads "I have cried out to you with my voice." How else do we cry out to God—isn't it always with our voice? But the word for "voice" has many different Hebrew meanings. It can also mean "the bleating of a lamb." David was God's lamb bleating out to his Shepherd for help.

*i* 3:4 Or "from your holy hill."

<sup>a</sup>Even though ten thousand dark powers<sup>a</sup> prowl around me,  
I won't be afraid.

### The Secret of Strength

<sup>7</sup>Rise up and help me, Yahweh! Come and save me, God!  
For you will slap them in the face,  
breaking the power of their words to harm me.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>8</sup>For the Lord alone is my Savior.<sup>c</sup>  
What a feast of favor and bliss he gives his people!

*Pause in his presence*

## 4 AN EVENING PRAYER FOR HELP

*For the Pure and Shining One<sup>d</sup>*

*For the end,<sup>e</sup> a melody by King David*

<sup>1</sup>God, you are my righteousness, my Champion Defender.  
Answer me when I cry for help!  
Whenever I was in distress, you enlarged me.<sup>f</sup>  
I'm being squeezed again—I need your kindness right away!  
Grant me your grace, hear my prayer, and set me free!

<sup>2</sup>Listen to me, you elite among men:  
How long will you defame my honor<sup>g</sup> and drag it down into shame?  
Will you ever stop insulting me?  
How long will you set your heart on shadows,  
chasing your lies and delusions?

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>3</sup>May we never forget that Yahweh works wonders<sup>h</sup>  
for every one of his devoted lovers.

And this is how I know that he will answer my every prayer.

<sup>4</sup>Tremble in awe before the Lord, and do not sin against him.  
Be still upon your bed and search your heart before him.<sup>i</sup>

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5</sup>Bring to Yahweh the sacrifice of righteousness and put your trust in him.

<sup>6</sup>Lord, prove them wrong when they say, "God can't help you!"

Let the light of your radiant face break through and shine upon us!

<sup>7</sup>The intense pleasure you give me surpasses the gladness of harvest time,

<sup>a</sup> 3:6 Or "military troops."

<sup>b</sup> 3:7 Or "You broke the teeth [lies] of the wicked."

<sup>c</sup> 3:8 The Hebrew word used sixty times in the Psalms for deliverance is *Yeshuah*, a variant form of the name for Jesus. This is pointing us to where our salvation is found.

<sup>d</sup> 4 The Hebrew word used here, found in the inscription of fifty-four Psalms, is usually rendered as "choirmaster" or "chief director of music." It is taken from the root word for "shining" or "brilliant" (i.e., purity, holiness). Another way to translate "choirmaster" is "the shining one" or "the one who glitters from afar." Jesus Christ is the chief musician of all eternity who sings in the midst of his people (Heb. 2:12).

<sup>e</sup> 4 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is "stringed instruments" or "smiting."

<sup>f</sup> 4:1 Or "you created room for me."

<sup>g</sup> 4:2 Or "my glorious one."

<sup>h</sup> 4:3 There is considerable variation in possible translations from different manuscripts. Some manuscripts read "Yahweh sets apart a faithful one for himself." Another possible translation is "Yahweh has revealed to me his marvelous love."

<sup>i</sup> 4:4 Or "Meditate on your bed and repent [lament]." It is always wise at the end of every day to cleanse our hearts in God's grace and mercy.

even more than when the harvesters  
gaze upon their ripened grain  
and when their new wine overflows.  
<sup>a</sup>Now, because of you, Lord, I will lie  
down in peace and sleep comes at  
once,  
for no matter what happens, I will  
live unafraid!

## 5 SONG OF THE CLOUDED DAWN

*For the Pure and Shining One  
For her who receives the  
inheritance,<sup>a</sup> by King David*

### Morning Watch

<sup>1</sup>Listen, Yahweh, to my passionate  
prayer!<sup>b</sup>  
Can't you hear my groaning?  
<sup>2</sup>Don't you hear how I'm crying out  
to you?  
My King and my God, consider my  
every word,  
for I am calling out to you.  
<sup>3</sup>At each and every sunrise you will  
hear my voice  
as I prepare<sup>c</sup> my *sacrifice* of prayer  
to you.  
Every morning I lay out the pieces  
of my life on the altar  
and wait *for your fire to fall upon my  
heart.*<sup>d</sup>

### Making It Right

<sup>4</sup>I know that you, God, are never  
pleased with lawlessness,  
and evil ones will never be invited  
into your house.  
<sup>5</sup>Boasters collapse, unable to survive  
your scrutiny,  
for your hatred of evildoers is clear.  
<sup>6</sup>You will make an end of all those  
who lie.  
How you hate their hypocrisy and  
despise all who love violence!

### Multitude of Mercy

<sup>7</sup>But I know that you will welcome me  
into your house,  
for I am covered by your covenant of  
mercy and love.  
So I come to your sanctuary<sup>e</sup> with  
deepest awe  
to bow in worship and adore you.  
<sup>8</sup>Yahweh, lead me in the pathways of  
your pleasure  
just like you promised me you  
would,  
or else my enemies will conquer me.  
Smooth out your road in front of me,  
straight and level, so that I will know  
where to walk.

### Multitude of Sins

<sup>9</sup>Their words are unreliable.  
Destruction is in their hearts,

*a* 5 The Hebrew word used here is *neliloth* or “flutes.” It can also be translated “inheritances.” The early church father Augustine translated this as “For her who receives the inheritance,” meaning the church of Jesus Christ. The Father told the Son in Ps. 2 to ask for his inheritance; here we see it is the church that receives what Jesus asks for. We receive our inheritance of eternal life through the death and resurrection of the Son of God. The Septuagint reads “For the end,” also found in numerous inscriptions of the Psalms.

*b* 5:1 Or “My words—give them a hearing, Lord!”

*c* 5:3 The Hebrew word for “prepare” is *arak*, a priestly term for lighting the altar fire, preparing a sacrifice, and laying it out in order upon the altar to be consumed.

*d* 5:3 Implied in the concept of preparing the morning sacrifice. The Aramaic text states, “At dawn I shall be ready and shall appear before you.” The Hebrew can also be translated “I’ll be on the watchtower [for the answer to come].” See Pss. 59:16; 88:13; Hab. 2:1.

*e* 5:7 Or “I come to the temple of your holiness.”



drawing people into their darkness  
with their speeches.<sup>a</sup>

They are smooth-tongued  
deceivers, flattering with their  
words.

<sup>10</sup>Declare them guilty, O God!

Let their own schemes be their  
downfall!

Let the guilt of their sins collapse on  
top of them,  
for they rebel against you.

### Multitude of Blessings

<sup>11</sup>But let them all be glad,  
those who turn aside to hide them-  
selves in you.

May they keep shouting for joy  
forever!

Overshadow them in your presence  
as they sing and rejoice.

Then every lover of your name will  
burst forth with endless  
joy.

<sup>12</sup>Lord, how wonderfully you bless the  
righteous.

Your favor wraps around each one  
and covers them  
under your canopy of kindness and  
joy.

## 6<sup>b</sup> A CRY FOR HEALING

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A song for stringed instruments, for  
the new day<sup>c</sup> by King David*

### How Long?

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh, don't condemn me.

Don't punish me in your fiery anger.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Please deal gently with me, Yahweh;  
show me mercy, for I'm sick and frail  
and weak.

Heal me, Yahweh, for I'm falling apart.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>3</sup>My soul is so troubled; but you,  
Yahweh—how long?<sup>f</sup>

### Return to Me

<sup>4</sup>Yahweh, turn to me and rescue my life  
because I know your faithful love  
will never fail me.

<sup>5</sup>In the darkness of death who  
remembers *your name in worship*?  
How could I bring you praise if I'm  
buried in a tomb?<sup>g</sup>

### Extreme Anguish

<sup>6</sup>I'm worn out with my weeping and  
groaning.

Night after night I soak my pillow  
with tears.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 5:9 Or "their throat is an open grave."

<sup>b</sup> 6 Psalm 6 is a part of the daily prayer ritual of religious Jews.

<sup>c</sup> 6 This is the Hebrew word *sheminith*. Although we cannot be certain, many scholars believe it to mean "eighth." It could represent a harp with eight strings, an octave, the eighth division of singers, the eighth day, or the eighth month. Eight is the biblical number of a new beginning, a new day. Jewish rabbis have taught that the number eight is the number of the future messianic age when Messiah comes and makes all things new.

<sup>d</sup> 6:1 David implied that he had sinned and needed forgiveness. This is the first of seven penitential psalms (32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143).

<sup>e</sup> 6:2 Or "my bones are shaking." Bones are often used metaphorically for our inner being.

<sup>f</sup> 6:3 The Hebrew ends abruptly, with sudden silence and broken syntax. Words failed David, too broken to finish his sentence. This sudden silence is a figure of speech called *aposiopesis*.

<sup>g</sup> 6:5 Or "Sheol," the realm of the dead. This is the first psalm to mention the grave (or Sheol). It is depicted in the poetic literature of the Hebrews as a vast wasteland, a stronghold of darkness, and a beast of prey.

<sup>h</sup> 6:6 Or "I cause my bed to swim with tears." Our beds are frequently the washing place where the sheep are sheared (Song. 4:2). The bed was the place of David's sin; it became the place of his weeping. Even as Adam sinned in a garden, Jesus wept in a garden over Adam's sin.

and flood my bed with weeping.  
<sup>7</sup>My eyes of *faith*<sup>a</sup> won't focus any-  
 more, for sorrow fills my heart.  
 There are so many enemies who  
 come against me!

### He Heard My Cry

<sup>8</sup>Turn from me, all you  
 troublemakers!<sup>b</sup>  
 For Yahweh has turned to hear the  
 sound of my weeping.  
<sup>9</sup>Yes! Yahweh my *healer* has heard all  
 my pleading  
 and has taken hold of my prayers<sup>c</sup>  
 and answered them all.  
<sup>10</sup>Now it's my enemies who have been  
 shamed.  
 Terror-stricken, they will turn back  
 again,<sup>d</sup>  
 knowing the bitterness of sudden  
 disgrace!

## 7 SONG FOR THE SLANDERED SOUL

*David's passionate song<sup>e</sup> to Yahweh  
 To the tune of "Breaking the Curse  
 of Cush, the Benjamite"*<sup>f</sup>

### Rescue Me

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh, my God, I turn to hide my  
 soul in you.

Save me from all those who pursue  
 and persecute me.

<sup>2</sup>There is none to deliver me *but  
 you!*

Don't let my foes fall upon me like  
 fierce lions with teeth bared.

Can't you see how they want to rip  
 my soul to shreds?

<sup>3</sup>Yahweh, my God, if I have done evil  
 like they say I have,  
 and my hands are guilty,

<sup>4</sup>if I have wronged someone at peace  
 with me,

if I have betrayed a friend, repaying  
 evil for good,

or if I have unjustly harmed my  
 enemy,

<sup>5</sup>Then let my enemy pursue and over-  
 take me.

Let them grind me into the ground.

Let them take my life from me and  
 drag my dignity through the dust!

*Pause in his presence*

### Vindicate Me

<sup>6</sup>Yahweh, arise in your anger against  
 the anger<sup>g</sup> of my enemies.

Awaken your fury and stand up for  
 me!

Execute the judgment<sup>h</sup> you have  
 decreed against them.

<sup>a</sup> 6:7 The Hebrew is singular, "My eye;" a likely metaphor for the eye of his heart. David's faith was growing weak.

<sup>b</sup> 6:8 See Ps. 5:5; Matt. 7:23.

<sup>c</sup> 6:9 Or "accepted my prayers." The Hebrew word can mean "to grasp," "to lay hold of," "to marry," or, figuratively, "to accept."

<sup>d</sup> 6:10 See Pss. 9:18; 31:8.

<sup>e</sup> 7 The inscription reads "shiggaion," which means "a loud cry" and is taken from a Hebrew word that means "roar." It is a wild and passionate song. Have you ever been under such pressure that you felt like roaring? That is a "shiggaion." Some scholars believe the central thought of the word is that of wandering. It may also indicate the style of music to which the song was written.

<sup>f</sup> 7 The name Cush means "firelike," "burned," or "blackened." This person's identity is not definite, but some believe this is an oblique reference to Saul, whose heart was burned and blackened by his sin and whose character was "firelike." Saul was a Benjamite.

<sup>g</sup> 7:6 Or "outrages (plural)."

<sup>h</sup> 7:6 Or "Command justice!" It is in God's hands alone to bring true justice to the earth, for he is the Righteous Judge.

<sup>7</sup>All the people gather around you.  
Return to your place on high to  
preside over them.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>8</sup>You are Yahweh who judges the  
people.  
Vindicate me *publicly*, Yahweh, and  
restore my honor and integrity.<sup>b</sup>  
Declare me innocent.

<sup>9</sup>Once and for all, bring to an end the  
evil tactics of the wicked!  
Establish the *cause* of the righteous,  
for you are the righteous God, *the  
soul searcher*,  
who tests every heart  
to examine the thoughts and  
motives.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>10</sup>God, your wraparound presence is  
my shield.  
You bring victory to all who are pure  
in heart.

<sup>11</sup>God, your righteousness is revealed  
when you judge.  
Because of the strength of your  
forgiveness,  
your anger does not break out every  
day.<sup>d</sup>

### God's Lethal Weapons

<sup>12-13</sup>Yet if one does not repent,

you will not relent to sharpen<sup>e</sup> your  
*shining* sword.

You have an arsenal of lethal  
weapons  
that you've prepared for them.  
You have bent and strung your  
bow,  
making your judgment-arrows shafts  
of burning fire.

<sup>14</sup>Look how the wicked conceive their  
evil schemes.  
They go into labor with their lies and  
give birth to trouble.

<sup>15</sup>They dig a pit *for others to fall into*,  
not knowing that they will be the  
very ones  
who will fall into it.

<sup>16</sup>Every pit-digger who works to trap  
and harm others  
will be trapped by his own  
treachery.

### Thankful Praise

<sup>17</sup>But I will give my thanks to you,  
Yahweh,  
for you make everything right in the  
end.

I will sing my highest praise to the  
God of the Highest Place!

<sup>a</sup> 7:7 There is at least a hint here of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, who had all authority to judge given to him and now rules from on high.

<sup>b</sup> 7:8 Augustine, an early church father, translates this word as "harmlessness." David saw himself as harmless to his enemies. This is what integrity is all about. We maintain our character even when misunderstood or persecuted. Are you like this?

<sup>c</sup> 7:9 Or "hearts and kidneys," which is a Hebraic way of saying all of human nature, including our thoughts, motives, and feelings.

<sup>d</sup> 7:11 As translated from the Septuagint. Although the Hebrew is "God is angry during all the day," this verse has other possible translations. The Latin Vulgate: "God is a judge, righteous, strong, and patient. Will he be angry every day?" The Septuagint: "not bringing forth his anger every day." The Syriac: "he is not angry every day." In other words, even though God judges righteously, his anger does not break out every day. There are over ten words in Hebrew that can be translated "anger." The word used in this verse is *za'am* and comes from a word that means the "roar" or "groan" of a camel.

<sup>e</sup> 7:12-13 The Hebrew word for "sharpen" can also be translated "brighten." God will make bright his sword of truth for the righteous and to the ungodly. God's Word is a sword to bring light and judgment to the heart.

# 8

## GOD'S SPLENDOR

*For the Pure and Shining One  
Set to the melody of "For the Feast  
of Harvest"<sup>a</sup> by King David*

### God's Majesty

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh, our Sovereign God,  
your glory streams from the heavens  
above,  
filling the earth with the majesty of  
your name!

*People everywhere see your splendor.*

<sup>2</sup>You have built a stronghold by the  
songs of children.

Strength rises up with the chorus of  
infants.

This kind of praise has power to  
shut Satan's mouth.

Childlike worship will silence<sup>b</sup>  
the madness of those who oppose you.

### Human Dignity

<sup>3</sup>Look at the splendor of your skies,  
your creative genius glowing in the  
heavens.

When I gaze at your moon and your  
stars,

*mounted like jewels in their settings,  
I know you are the fascinating artist  
who fashioned it all!*

But I have to ask this question:

<sup>4</sup>Why would you bother with puny,  
mortal man

or care about human beings?<sup>c</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Yet what honor you have given to men,  
created only a little lower than

Elohim,<sup>d</sup>

crowned<sup>e</sup> with glory and  
magnificence.

<sup>6</sup>You have delegated to them  
rulership over all you have made,  
with everything under their  
authority,  
placing earth itself under the feet of  
*your image-bearers.<sup>f</sup>*

<sup>7-8</sup>All the created order and every  
living thing

of the earth, sky, and sea—  
the wildest beasts and all that move

in the paths of the sea<sup>g</sup>—

everything<sup>h</sup> is in submission to  
*Adam's sons.*

<sup>9</sup>Yahweh, our Sovereign God,  
your glory streams from the heavens  
above,

<sup>a</sup> 8 Or "For the director of music, according to gittith." *Gittith* could mean "winepress," or refer to a musical instrument common to the Gittites, making it a Philistine lute (2 Sam. 6:10–11; 15:18). The Moffat translation reads "Set to a vintage melody." This inscription in the Septuagint is "To the director over the wine vats."

<sup>b</sup> 8:2 Or "muzzle." There may be a vast difference between the glory of the heavens and the little mouths of children and babies, yet by both the majestic name of the Lord is revealed. It is amazing that perfected praises do not rise to God from the cherubim or seraphim, but from children and babies, the weakest of humanity.

<sup>c</sup> 8:4 See Job 7:17–21; 25:2–6; Ps. 144:3.

<sup>d</sup> 8:5 This is the same Hebrew word used for the Creator-God in Gen. 1:1.

<sup>e</sup> 8:5 Or "surrounded."

<sup>f</sup> 8:6 The Septuagint translation of Ps. 8:5–7 is quoted in Heb. 2:6–8. Today, all things are not yet under our feet. Even mosquitoes still come to defeat us. But there will be a time of restoration because of Christ's redemption, when everything will rest beneath our authority. See Isa. 11:6–9; 65:25; Matt. 19:28; Rev. 20:4–6.

<sup>g</sup> 8:7–8 The "paths of the sea" speaks of God's way of deliverance (Isa. 11:15–16), for Jesus was the One who walked on the water (Job 9:8; Ps. 77:19).

<sup>h</sup> 8:7–8 Or "sheep and oxen, beasts of the field, birds of the air, fish of the sea, and everything that moves in the paths of the sea."



filling the earth with the majesty of  
your name!

*People everywhere see your splendor!*

## 9 TRIUMPHANT THANKS

*For the Pure and Shining One*

*To the tune of "The Secrets of the Son"<sup>a</sup>*

*A Psalm of David*

### Delighting in God

<sup>1</sup>I will worship you, Yahweh, *with  
extended hands*

as my whole heart erupts with  
praise!<sup>b</sup>

I will tell everyone everywhere about  
your wonderful works!

<sup>2</sup>I will be glad and shout in triumph.

I will sing praise to your *exalted*  
name, O Most High.

### Deliverance

<sup>3</sup>For when you appear, I worship  
you while my enemies run in retreat.  
They stumble and perish before your  
presence.

<sup>4</sup>For you have stood up for my cause  
and vindicated me *when I needed  
you the most.*

From your righteous throne you  
have given me justice.

### Divine Judgment

<sup>5</sup>With a blast of your rebuke, nations  
are destroyed.

You obliterated their names forever  
and ever.

<sup>6</sup>*The Lord thundered* and our enemies  
have been cut off,  
vanished in everlasting ruins.  
All their cities have been destroyed—  
even the memory of them has been  
erased.

<sup>7</sup>But Yahweh, *our mighty God*, reigns  
forever!

He sits enthroned as King ready to  
render his verdicts  
and judge all with righteousness.

<sup>8</sup>He will issue his decrees of judgment,  
deciding what is right for the entire  
world,  
dispensing justice to all.

<sup>9</sup>All who are oppressed may come to  
Yahweh as a high  
shelter in the time of trouble, a per-  
fect hiding place.

<sup>10</sup>For everyone who knows your *won-  
derful* name

keeps putting their trust in you.

They can count on you for help no  
matter what.

O Lord, you will never, no never,  
neglect those  
who come to you.

<sup>11</sup>Listen, everyone! Sing out your  
praises to the God  
who rules in Zion!

Tell the world about all the miracles  
he has done!

<sup>12</sup>He tracks down killers and avenges  
bloodshed,

but he will never forget the ones  
forgotten by others,

hearing every one of their cries for  
justice.

<sup>a</sup> 9 As translated by Augustine, an early church father. The Hebrew is "to the death of the son." Because of David's sin with Bathsheba, the son born to them had to die, not as a judgment upon the child, but as a sacrifice to cleanse David of his sin. This was God's way of restoring David. A sinless son bore the guilt. This is a picture of Jesus!

<sup>b</sup> 9:1 The Hebrew word for "praise" is *yadah*, which can mean "to shoot [an arrow]" or "to worship with extended hands." It implies an ecstatic burst of praise that is thrown into the heavens like a shout. It is the praise that breaks strongholds. A fresh determination arose in David's spirit to praise his way into victory.

## Daughter of Zion

<sup>13</sup>So now, O Lord, don't forget me.  
Have mercy on me.  
Take note of how I've been  
humiliated  
at the hands of those who hate me.  
You are the one who can snatch me  
away from the gates of death.

<sup>14</sup>Then I will sing your praises as I  
pass through the gates  
of the Daughter of Zion, rejoicing in  
your deliverance!

<sup>15</sup>For the nations get trapped  
in the very snares they set for others.  
The hidden trap they set for the  
weak

has snapped shut upon themselves!  
<sup>16</sup>Yahweh is famous for his justice.  
While the wicked are digging a pit  
for others,  
they are actually setting the terms  
for their own judgment.

They will fall into their own pit.  
*Consider the truth of this<sup>a</sup>  
and pause in his presence*

## Destruction of the Wicked

<sup>17</sup>*Don't forget this:* all the wicked will  
one day  
fall into the darkness of death's  
domain,<sup>b</sup>  
including the nations that forget God  
and reject his ways.

<sup>18</sup>He will not forget the needs of the  
poor.  
One day the needy will be  
remembered,  
and their hopes will not be forever  
dashed in disappointment.

<sup>19</sup>Yahweh, it's time to arise and judge  
the nations who defy you.

Don't let rebellious men triumph.

<sup>20</sup>Make them tremble in fear before  
your presence.  
Place a lawgiver over them.  
Make them know that they are only  
puny, frail humans  
who must give account to you!

*Pause in his presence*

10<sup>c</sup> THE CRY OF THE OPPRESSED

## The Lord is Concealed

<sup>1</sup>Lord, why do you seem so far away  
when evil is near?  
Why have you hidden yourself when  
I need you the most?<sup>d</sup>

<sup>2</sup>The arrogant in their elitist pride  
persecute the poor and helpless.  
May you pour out upon them  
the very evil they've dreamed up  
against others!

<sup>3</sup>How they brag and boast of their  
cravings, exalting the greedy.  
They congratulate themselves as  
they despise you—

<sup>4</sup>these arrogant ones, so smug and  
secure!  
In their delusion the wicked boast,  
saying,  
"God doesn't care about what we do.  
There's nothing to worry about!"

<sup>5</sup>So successful are they in their  
schemes  
and prosperous in all their plans!  
Your laws are far from them;  
they scoff at their enemies.

<sup>6</sup>They boast that neither God nor men  
will bring them down.  
They sneer at all their enemies,  
saying in their hearts,

a 9:16 The Hebrew word *higgaion* means "to consider the truth of the matter."

b 9:17 This is the word *Sheol*, the underworld, which is frequently translated "hell."

c 10 It is likely that Pss. 9 and 10 were originally one acrostic psalm. Eight Hebrew manuscripts unite them as well as the Aramaic, Septuagint, and the Latin Vulgate.

d 10:1 Or "when trouble is near."

“We’ll have success in all we do  
and never have to face trouble.”

<sup>7</sup>Their mouths spew out cursing, lies,  
and threats.

Only trouble and turmoil come from  
all their plans.

<sup>8-9</sup>Like beasts lurking in the shadows  
of the city,  
they crouch silently in ambush, wait-  
ing for the innocent to pass by.  
Pouncing on the poor, they catch  
them in their snare  
to murder their prey in secret  
as they plunder their helpless  
victims.

<sup>10</sup>They crush the lowly as they fall  
beneath their brutal blows,  
watching their victims collapse in  
defeat!

<sup>11</sup>Then they say to themselves,  
“The Lofty One<sup>a</sup> is not watching  
while we do this.  
He doesn’t even care! We can get  
away with it!”

### The Lord is Concerned

<sup>12</sup>Now arise, Yahweh-God! Crush them  
once and for all!  
Don’t forget the helpless and  
oppressed.

<sup>13</sup>How dare the wicked think they’ll  
reject God and escape judgment.  
They say to themselves,  
“God won’t hold me accountable.”

<sup>14</sup>Lord, I know you see all that they’re  
doing,  
noting their each and every deed.  
You know the trouble and turmoil  
they’ve caused.  
Now punish them thoroughly for all  
that they’ve done!  
The poor and helpless ones trust in  
you, Lord,

for you are famous for being the  
helper of the fatherless.

I know you won’t let them down.

<sup>15</sup>Break the power of the wicked and  
all their strong-arm tactics.

Search them out and destroy them  
for the evil things they’ve done.

<sup>16</sup>You, Yahweh, are King forever and  
ever!

All the nations will perish from your  
land.

<sup>17</sup>Yahweh, you have heard the desires  
of the humble  
*and seen their hopes.<sup>b</sup>*

You will hear their cries and encour-  
age their hearts.

<sup>18</sup>The orphans and the oppressed will  
be terrified no longer,  
for you will bring them justice, and  
no earth-dweller will trouble them  
again.

## 11 SONG OF THE STEADFAST

*For the Pure and Shining One by  
King David*

### The Advice to Flee

<sup>1</sup>My faith shelters my soul continually  
in Yahweh.

Why would you say to me:

*“Run away while you can!”*

Fly away like a bird to hide in the  
mountains *for safety*.

<sup>2</sup>For your enemies have prepared a  
trap for you!

Can’t you see them hiding  
in their place of darkness and  
shadows?

They’re set against all those who live  
upright lives.

<sup>3</sup>What can the righteous accomplish  
when truth’s pillars are destroyed  
and law and order collapse?”

<sup>a</sup> 10:11 This is the Hebrew name for God *El*, the “Lofty [Exalted] God.”

<sup>b</sup> 10:17 The tenderhearted, compassionate God is able to hear our unspoken desires. What moves our hearts moves his heart. How kind is Yahweh!

**The Answer of Faith**

<sup>4</sup>*Yet Yahweh is never shaken*—

he is still found in his temple of holiness,  
reigning as King Yahweh over all.  
He closely watches and examines everything man does.

With a glance, his eyes<sup>b</sup> examine every heart,  
for his heavenly rule will prevail over all.

<sup>5</sup>*Yahweh tests both the righteous and the wicked.*

God's very soul detests lovers of violence.

<sup>6</sup>*He will<sup>c</sup> rain down upon them judgment for their sins.*

A scorching wind will be their lot in life.

<sup>7</sup>*But remember this: Yahweh is the Righteous One who loves justice, and every godly one will gaze upon his face!*

## 12 SONG FOR THE NEW DAY

*For the Pure and Shining One*

*A song of smiting, sung for the new day by King David<sup>d</sup>*

**Intercession**

<sup>1</sup>*Help, Lord! Save us! For godly ones are disappearing.*

Where are the dependable, principled ones?

They're a vanishing breed!

<sup>2</sup>*Everyone lies, everyone flatters, and everyone deceives.*

Nothing but empty talk, smooth talk, and double-talk.

<sup>3-4</sup>*You will destroy every proud liar who says, "We lie all we want. Our words are our weapons, and we won't be held accountable.*

*Who can stop us?"*

*May Yahweh cut off their twisted tongues*

*and seal their lying lips.*

*May they all be silenced—those who boast and brag with their high-minded talk.*

**Intervention**

<sup>5</sup>*But the Lord says, "Now I will arise!*

*I will defend the poor, those who were plundered, the oppressed, and the needy who groan for help. I will spring into action to rescue and protect them!"*

<sup>6</sup>*For every word Yahweh speaks is sure and reliable.*

*His truth is tested, found to be flawless, and ever faithful.*

*It's as pure as silver refined seven times in a crucible of clay.<sup>e</sup>*

*a* 11:4 This is an implied contrast made explicit from the text. This psalm shows the contrast between what can be shaken and what is unshakable.

*b* 11:4 The actual Hebrew is "his eyelids." Some see the "eyelid" as the lid of the ark of the covenant, which was the mercy seat.

*c* 11:6 Or "May he."

*d* 12 The events surrounding this psalm could be the killing of the priests by Saul in 1 Sam. 22:17–19. Saul ordered the death of "eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod." The killing rampage continued until an entire community of priests had been slaughtered with their women and children. This great evil marked David from that day forward. The inscription found in the Septuagint is "The Eighth Psalm of David."

*e* 12:6 The clay furnace ("crucible") is the heart of man. We are the earthen vessels inside which God has placed his flawless words. His words test us, they try us, and they refine us, seven times over, until they are purified and assimilated into our spirits. The fire of testing purifies us as vessels to carry the Word within our hearts.



**Inspiration**

<sup>7-8</sup>Lord, you will keep us safe,  
out of the reach of the wicked.  
Even though they strut and prowl,  
tolerating and celebrating what is  
worthless and vile,  
*you will still lift up those who are  
yours!*

# 13 PRAYER TURNS DEPRESSION INTO DELIGHT<sup>a</sup>

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A Psalm of David*

**Depression**

<sup>1</sup>*I'm hurting*, Lord—will you forget me  
forever?<sup>b</sup>

How much longer, Lord?

Will you look the other way when  
I'm in need?<sup>c</sup>

<sup>2</sup>How much longer must I cling to this  
constant grief?

I've endured this shaking of my soul.

So how much longer will my enemy  
have the upper hand?

**Intercession**

<sup>3</sup>Take a good look at me, Yahweh, my  
God, and answer me!  
Breathe your life into my spirit.

Bring light to my eyes in this pitch-  
black darkness

or I will sleep the sleep of death.

<sup>4</sup>Don't let my enemy proclaim, "I've  
prevailed over him."

For all my adversaries will celebrate  
when I fall.

<sup>5</sup>I have always trusted in your kind-  
ness, *so answer me.*

I will spin in a circle of joy  
when your salvation<sup>d</sup> lifts me up.

<sup>6</sup>I will sing my song of joy to you,  
Yahweh,

for in all of this you have strength-  
ened my soul.

My enemies say that I have no Savior,  
but I know that I have one in you!

# 14 GOD LOOKS DOWN FROM HEAVEN<sup>e</sup>

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A Psalm of David*

**No God**

<sup>1</sup>Only the withering soul<sup>f</sup> would say to  
himself,

"There is no God."

Anyone who thinks like this is cor-  
rupt and callous,  
devoid of what is good.

<sup>a</sup> 13 Some believe David composed this psalm shortly after being anointed to be the king of Israel. David knew greatness was his destiny, but he struggled with the persecution and challenges that came before his exaltation. In the wilderness David trusted and prayed his way out.

<sup>b</sup> 13:1 This is the psalm that describes the journey from self to God, from despair to delight, from feeling abandoned to feeling affirmed. It begins with pain and ends with praise. Moaning gives way to music. We each can take comfort in what David experienced.

<sup>c</sup> 13:1 David felt as though God was hiding his face from his cries. David was left alone to wrestle with his doubts, feeling as though his patience could hold on no longer. Have you ever been there?

<sup>d</sup> 13:5 The term for "salvation" is *yeshu'sh*, which is nearly identical to "Jesus, our Salvation." Our Savior plans blessings and hope for each of us as we trust in him.

<sup>e</sup> 14 With a few differences, Ps. 14 and Ps. 53 are nearly identical. Ps. 14 is practical; Ps. 53 is prophetic. Ps. 14 deals with the past, Ps. 53 with the future.

<sup>f</sup> 14:1 Or "fool." The word for "fool" comes from a Hebrew word meaning "withering." If we make no room for God, we have withered hearts, our moral sense of righteousness is put to sleep, and the noble aspirations of the heart shrivel up and die.

<sup>2</sup>Yahweh looks down *in love*,  
looking over all of Adam's sons and  
daughters.  
He's looking to see if there is anyone  
who acts wisely,  
any who are searching for God and  
wanting to please him.

### None Who Are Good

<sup>3</sup>But everyone has wandered astray,  
walking stubbornly toward evil.  
Not one is good; he can't even find  
one.  
<sup>4</sup>They live in luxury while exploiting  
my people!  
Won't these workers of wickedness  
ever learn?  
They don't ever think of praying to  
God.

### Overwhelmed with Dread

<sup>5</sup>But look at them now, in panic, trem-  
bling with terror.  
For God is on the side of his godly  
*lovers*.  
<sup>6</sup>Yahweh is always the safest place for  
the poor  
when the workers of wickedness  
oppress them.

### Overcome with Joy

<sup>7</sup>How I wish that Israel's rescue  
would arise from the midst of Zion!  
When Yahweh restores his people,  
Jacob's joy will break forth  
and Israel will be glad!

## 15 LIVING IN THE SHINING PLACE<sup>a</sup>

*A poetic song by David*

### A Question Posed

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh, who dares to dwell with  
you?  
Who presumes the privilege of  
being close to you,  
living next to you in your shining  
place<sup>b</sup> of glory?

### The Answer Provided

<sup>2</sup>They are passionate and  
wholehearted,  
always sincere and always speaking  
the truth—  
for their hearts are trustworthy.  
<sup>3</sup>They refuse to slander<sup>c</sup> or insult  
others;  
they'll never listen to gossip or  
rumors,  
nor would they ever harm a friend  
with their words.  
<sup>4</sup>They will despise evil and evil  
workers  
while commending the faithful ones  
who follow after the truth.  
They make firm commitments and  
follow through,  
even at great cost.  
<sup>5</sup>They never crush others with  
exploitation  
and they would never be bought  
with a bribe  
against the innocent.

<sup>a</sup> 15 The first line in Hebrew reads "Yahweh, who may abide [as a guest] in your tent [tabernacle]?" Perhaps David's prophetic musicians sang this song of instruction as they laid the ark to rest in David's tent. It is a song that reveals who will dwell in God's holy presence and who will live with him in heaven's glory. It actually is a description of Zion's perfect Man, Christ Jesus, and all those who are transformed into his image (Rom. 8:29).

<sup>b</sup> 15:1 The Hebrew word for "sanctuary" is taken from a root word for "shining place." This psalm gives us David's equivalent to Jesus' Sermon on the Hillside. If we will dwell in the Holy Place, there must first be a holy place in our spirits where God dwells. God's guests must submit to the holiness that lives there. There is etiquette for God's house revealed in this psalm.

<sup>c</sup> 15:3 The Hebrew word for "slander," *ragal*, means to spy on someone and look for evil to use against that person.

Those who do these things will  
never be shaken;  
they will stand firm forever.

# 16 THE GOLDEN SECRET

*A precious song, engraved in gold,<sup>a</sup>  
by David*

## My Protection

<sup>1</sup>Keep me safe, O mighty God.

I run to you, my safe place.

<sup>2</sup>I said to Yahweh,

“You are my Maker and my Master.

Any good thing you find in me has  
come from you.”

<sup>3</sup>And he said to me, “My holy lovers  
in the land are my glorious ones,  
who fulfill all my desires.”

<sup>4</sup>Yet there are those who yield to their  
weakness,<sup>b</sup>

and they will have troubles unending.

I never gather with such ones,<sup>c</sup>

nor give them honor in any way.

## My Portion

<sup>5</sup>Yahweh, you alone are my inheritance.

You are my prize, my pleasure, and  
my portion.

You hold my destiny *and its timing* in  
your hands.

<sup>6</sup>Your pleasant path<sup>d</sup> leads me to  
pleasant places.

I’m overwhelmed by the  
privileges

that come with following you!

## My Praise

<sup>7</sup>The way you counsel me makes me  
praise you more,

for your whispers in the night give  
me wisdom,

showing me what to do next.

<sup>8</sup>Because I set<sup>e</sup> you, Yahweh, always  
close to me,

my confidence will never be  
weakened,<sup>f</sup>

for I experience your wraparound  
presence every moment.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>9</sup>My heart and soul explode with joy—  
full of glory!

Even my body will rest confident  
and secure.

<sup>10</sup>For you will not abandon me to the  
realm of death,

nor will you allow your Faithful One  
to experience corruption.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 16 The Hebrew word used in the inscription is *michtam*. There are many variations of translation for this word. Here are the major ones: “golden,” “graven,” “a permanent writing,” “precious,” “hidden,” “a spiritual secret,” or “jewel.” The Septuagint renders this “a sculptured writing of gold”; other translations call it a “golden poem.” Perhaps the most accepted translation of *michtam* is “engraved in gold.” This speaks of the divine nature engraved into our hearts by the Word. A new humanity is now stamped with God-life, engraved in his golden glory.

<sup>b</sup> 16:4 As translated from the Septuagint.

<sup>c</sup> 16:4 As translated from the Septuagint.

<sup>d</sup> 16:6 Or “boundary lines.”

<sup>e</sup> 16:8 The Hebrew word *shava* carries the sense of being equal or similar. David was not saying he was equal to Yahweh, but that he thought the way God thought. David had made his heart and mind to be identical with the heart and mind of God. Always before himself, before anything, were the desires of God. It was the heart and mind of God that had first place in David’s heart and thoughts.

<sup>f</sup> 16:8 It is possible to translate this section as “I have determined in my heart to be identical with the mind and heart of God, and I will not let my resolve be weakened.”

<sup>g</sup> 16:8 Or “because he is at my right hand.”

<sup>h</sup> 16:10 Or “the pit.” This is likely a metaphor for Sheol.

<sup>11</sup>Because of you, I know the path of life,  
as I taste the fullness of joy in your presence.  
At your right side<sup>a</sup> I experience  
divine pleasures forevermore!

## 17 A CRY FOR JUSTICE

*A priestly prayer<sup>b</sup> of David*

**Hear Me!**

<sup>1</sup>Listen to me, Lord.

Hear the passionate prayer of this honest man.

My cause is just and my need is real.  
I've done what's right and my lips speak truth.

<sup>2</sup>Examine and exonerate me.

Vindicate me and show the world I'm innocent.

<sup>3</sup>For in a visitation of the night  
you inspected my heart and refined my soul in fire  
until nothing vile was found in me.  
I will not sin with my words.

<sup>4</sup>Following your word has kept me from wrong.

Your ways have molded my foot-steps,  
keeping me from going down the paths of the violent.

<sup>5</sup>My steps follow in the tracks of your chariot wheels,

always staying in their path,  
never straying from your way.

<sup>6</sup>You will answer me, God; I know you always will.

Hear my words like you always do  
as you listen to my every prayer.

**Hide Me!**

<sup>7</sup>Magnify the marvels of your mercy to all who seek you.<sup>c</sup>

You are the *loving* Savior of all who turn aside  
to hide themselves in you.

<sup>8</sup>Protect me from harm;  
keep an eye on me as you would a child<sup>d</sup>  
who is reflected in the twinkling of your eye.

Yes, hide me within the shelter of your embrace,  
under your outstretched wings.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Protect me there from all my foes.

For there are many who surround my soul  
to completely destroy me.

<sup>10</sup>They are pitiless, heartless—hard as nails,  
swollen with pride and filled with arrogance!

<sup>11</sup>See how they close in on me,  
waiting for the chance to throw me to the ground.<sup>f</sup>

*a* 16:11 Jesus was pierced in his side with the spear of man's hatred. Eternal pleasures are found hidden in the wounds of Christ, where Jesus responded to the world's hatred with sacred blood and water flowing from his side. Forgiveness and grace splashed on the dirt. We are now seated with Christ at his right side.

*b* 17 This is the Hebrew word *tephillah*, and it is found in the titles of five Psalms (17; 86; 90; 102; 142).

*c* 17:7 As translated from the Septuagint.

*d* 17:8 Or "daughter."

*e* 17:8 This could also be a reference to the mercy seat, where sacred blood was sprinkled in the Holy of Holies. There the golden cherubim overshadowed all who entered the divine chamber (Ex. 25:18–20).

*f* 17:11 This is also what the soldiers did to Jesus. They threw him to the ground and nailed him to the cross.

<sup>12</sup>They're like lions eager to tear me apart,  
like young and fearless lions lurking in secret,  
so ferocious and cruel—ready to rip me to shreds.

### Help Me!

<sup>13</sup>Arise, God, and confront them!  
Challenge them with your might!<sup>a</sup>  
Free me from their clutches and rescue me from their rage.

<sup>14</sup>Throw them down to the ground,  
those who live for only this life on earth.  
Thrust them out of their prosperity  
and into their portion in eternity,  
leaving their wealth and wickedness behind!

<sup>15</sup>As for me, because I am innocent, I  
will see<sup>b</sup> your face  
until I see you for who you really are.  
I will be satisfied in an awakening of  
your likeness *in me*!

## 18<sup>c</sup> I LOVE YOU, LORD

*A song<sup>d</sup> to the Pure and Shining One by King David, his servant, composed when the Lord rescued David from all his many enemies, including from the brutality of Saul.<sup>e</sup> He said:*

<sup>1</sup>I love you, Yahweh, and I'm bonded to you,<sup>f</sup>  
my strength!

<sup>2</sup>Yahweh, you're the bedrock beneath my feet,  
my faith-fortress, my *wonderful* deliverer,  
my God, my rock of rescue *where none can reach me*.

You're the shield around me,  
the mighty power<sup>g</sup> that saves me,  
and my high place.

<sup>3</sup>All I need to do is to call on you,  
Yahweh, the praiseworthy God.  
When I do, I'm safe and sound in you—  
delivered from my foes!

<sup>a</sup> 17:13 The word used here is "sword." An alternative translation would be "Rescue my soul from the wicked one, who is your sword." The wicked are sometimes God's tools to execute his judgments (Isa. 10:5; Jer. 51:20).

<sup>b</sup> 17:15 The Hebrew word for "see," *chaza*, means "to see a vision."

<sup>c</sup> 18 This magnificent poem is so important to the Holy Spirit that it appears twice in the Bible. You will also find it in 2 Sam. 22.

<sup>d</sup> 18 There are fifty psalms that are described as "a song" in the inscription, and each one is a power song of victory and breakthrough.

<sup>e</sup> 18 Or "the paw of Saul." Saul was like a beast that chased David until his death.

<sup>f</sup> 18:1 David didn't employ the common Hebrew word for "love," *ahav*, but instead used the Hebrew word for "pity" or "mercy." How could David have mercy for God? The word he used, *racham*, is the word for a mother who loves and pities her child so much it manifests with a deep love and emotional bond. This concept, although difficult to convey in English, carries the thought of embrace and touch. It could actually be translated "Lord, I want to hug you." Haven't you ever felt like that?

<sup>g</sup> 18:2 Or "horn" (i.e., horn of my salvation), which comes from a root word meaning "ray of brightness."



<sup>4-5</sup>For when the cords of death  
 wrapped around me  
 and torrents of destruction over-  
 whelmed me,<sup>a</sup>  
 taking me to death's door,  
<sup>6</sup>in my distress I cried out to you, the  
 delivering God,  
 and from your temple-throne you  
 heard my troubled cry,  
 and my sobs went right into your  
 heart.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>7</sup>The earth itself shivered and shook.  
 It reeled and rocked before him.  
 As the mountains trembled, they  
 melted away,  
 for his anger was kindled on my  
 behalf!

<sup>8</sup>Fierce flames leapt from his mouth,<sup>c</sup>  
 erupting with blazing, burning coals  
 as smoke  
 and fire encircled him.

<sup>9-10</sup>He stretched heaven's curtain open  
 and came to my defense.  
 Swiftly he rode to earth as the  
 stormy sky was lowered.  
 He rode a chariot of thunderclouds  
 amidst thick darkness;  
 his steed was a cherub,  
 soaring on outstretched wings of  
 Spirit-Wind.

<sup>11</sup>Wrapped in the thick-cloud darkness,  
 his thunder-tabernacle surrounded  
 him.  
 He hid himself in mystery-darkness;  
 the dense rain clouds were his  
 garments.

<sup>12</sup>Suddenly the brilliance of his pres-  
 ence broke through  
 with lightning bolts and hail—  
 a tempest dropping coals of fire.

<sup>13</sup>The Lord thundered; the great God  
 above every god  
 spoke with his thunder-voice from  
 the sky.

The Most High uttered his voice!

<sup>14</sup>He released his lightning-arrows,  
 and routed my foes.

See how they ran and scattered in  
 fear!

<sup>15</sup>Then with his mighty roar he laid  
 bare the foundations of the earth,  
 uncovering the secret source of the  
 sea.

The hidden depths of land and sea  
 were exposed  
 by the blast of his hot breath.

<sup>16</sup>He rescued me from the mighty waters  
 and drew me to himself!

<sup>17</sup>Even though I was helpless in the  
 hands  
 of my hateful, strong enemy,<sup>d</sup>  
 you were good to deliver me.

<sup>18</sup>When I was at my weakest,<sup>e</sup> my  
 enemies attacked—  
 but the Lord held on to me.

<sup>19</sup>His love broke open the way,  
 and he brought me into a beautiful,  
 broad place.<sup>f</sup>

He rescued me—because his delight  
 is in me!<sup>g</sup>

<sup>20</sup>He rewarded me for doing what's  
 right and staying pure.

*a* 18:4-5 Or "waves of Sheol [death] engulfed me." See 2 Sam. 22:5.

*b* 18:6 This scene is not only a poetic portrayal of how God answered David's prayer, but also a picture of the sufferings of a greater Son of David, Jesus, who hung on the cross with cries of agony. God heard him and shook the planet as thick clouds covered the sun.

*c* 18:8 Or "nostrils."

*d* 18:17 Death is our strong enemy. Only through Christ are we delivered from its grip.

*e* 18:18 Or "In the day of my calamity."

*f* 18:19 This could be the throne room of heaven.

*g* 18:19 Here in verses 16-19 you can see the glorious resurrection of Christ as the Father reached down and kissed the Son with life and love. Read it again and think of Christ in the tomb being raised by the Father.

<sup>21</sup>I will follow his commands and  
I'll not sin by ceasing to follow him,  
no matter what.

<sup>22</sup>For I've kept my eyes focused on his  
righteous words,  
and I've obeyed everything that he's  
told me to do.

<sup>23</sup>I've been blameless before him and  
followed all his ways,  
keeping my heart pure.

<sup>24</sup>And so Yahweh has rewarded me  
according to my righteousness,  
because I kept my heart clean before  
his eyes.

<sup>25</sup>*Good people will taste your  
goodness.*

And to those who are loyal to you,  
you love to prove that you are loyal  
and true.

<sup>26</sup>And for those who are purified, they  
find you always pure.

But you'll outwit the crooked and  
cunning with your craftiness.

<sup>27</sup>To the humble you bring heaven's  
deliverance,  
but the proud and haughty you  
disregard.

<sup>28</sup>God, all at once you turned on a  
floodlight for me!

You are the revelation-light in my  
darkness,  
and in your brightness I can see the  
path ahead.

<sup>29</sup>With you as my strength I can crush  
an enemy horde,  
advancing through every stronghold  
that stands in front of me.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Yahweh, what a perfect God you are!  
All Yahweh's promises have proven  
true.  
What a secure shelter for all those

who turn to hide themselves in you,  
the wraparound God.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Could there be any other god like  
Yahweh?

For there is not a more secure foun-  
dation<sup>c</sup> than you.

<sup>32</sup>God, you have wrapped me in power  
and made my way perfect.

<sup>33</sup>Through you I ascend to the highest  
peaks  
to stand strong and secure in you.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>34</sup>You've trained me with the weapons  
of warfare-worship;  
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

<sup>35</sup>You empower me for victory with  
your wraparound presence.  
Your power within makes me strong  
to subdue.

By stooping down in gentleness,  
you made me great!

<sup>36</sup>You've set me free, and now I'm  
standing complete,  
*ready to fight some more!*

<sup>37</sup>I caught up with my enemies and  
conquered them  
and didn't turn back until the war  
was won!

<sup>38</sup>I smashed them to pieces and  
I finished them once and for all;  
they're as good as dead.

<sup>39</sup>You've placed your armor upon me  
and made my enemies bow low at  
my feet.

<sup>40</sup>You've made them all turn tail and  
run,  
for through you I've destroyed them  
all!

<sup>41</sup>They shouted for help, but no one  
dared to rescue them.  
They cried out to Yahweh, but he  
refused to answer them.

a 18:29 Or "by my God I can jump over a wall."

b 18:30 The Hebrew word used here (often translated "shield") means "to wrap around in protection." God himself is our shield of grace.

c 18:31 Or "rocky cliff."

d 18:33 Or "You make my legs like a deer to stand firm on the heights."

<sup>42</sup>So I pulverized them to powder and  
cast them to the wind.

I swept them away like dirt on the  
floor.

<sup>43</sup>You gave me victory on every side,  
for you make me a leader of nations.  
Even those I've never heard of come  
and bow at my feet.

<sup>44</sup>As soon as they heard of me they  
submitted to me.  
Even the rebel foreigners obey my  
every word.

<sup>45</sup>Their rebellion fades away as they  
come near;  
trembling in their strongholds,  
they come crawling out of their  
hideouts,  
cringing in fear before me.

<sup>46</sup>Yahweh lives!  
Praise is lifted high to the unshak-  
able God!  
Towering over all, my Savior-God is  
worthy to be praised!

<sup>47</sup>Look how he pays back harm to all  
who harm me,  
subduing all who come against me.

<sup>48</sup>He rescues me from my enemies;  
he lifts me up high and keeps me  
out of reach,  
far from the grasp of my violent foe.

<sup>49</sup>So I thank you, Yahweh, with my  
praises!  
I will sing my song to the highest God,  
so all among the nations will hear  
me.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>50</sup>You have given me, your king, great  
victories.

You've always been tender and kind  
to me, your anointed one,  
your loving servant, David, and to all  
my descendants!

## 19 GOD'S WITNESSES

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A poem of praise by King David,  
his loving servant*

### God's Story in the Skies

<sup>1</sup>God's splendor is a tale that is told,  
written in the stars.<sup>b</sup>  
Space itself speaks his story  
through the marvels of the heavens.  
His truth is on tour in the starry  
vault of the sky,  
showing his skill in creation's  
craftsmanship.

<sup>2</sup>Each day gushes out its message<sup>c</sup> to  
the next,  
night by night whispering its knowl-  
edge to all—

<sup>3</sup>without a sound, without a word,  
without a voice being heard,  
<sup>4</sup>yet all the world can hear its echo.  
Everywhere its message goes out.  
What a heavenly home God has set  
for the sun,  
shining in the superdome of the sky!

<sup>5</sup>See how he leaves his celestial cham-  
ber each morning,  
radiant as a bridegroom ready for  
his wedding,  
like a day-breaking champion eager  
to run his course.

<sup>6</sup>He rises on one horizon, completing  
his circuit on the other,  
warming lives and lands with his  
heat.

### God's Story in the Scriptures

<sup>7</sup>Yahweh's Word<sup>d</sup> is perfect in every  
way;  
how it revives our souls!

a 18:49 Paul quoted this verse as one of four prophecies to show that Christ came for all people, not just the Jews. See Rom. 15:9.

b 19:1 Or "The heavens are continually rehearsing the glory of God."

c 19:2 Or "speaks its prophecy."

d 19:7 Or "The Torah."



Yahweh's laws lead us to truth,  
and his ways change the simple into  
wise.

<sup>8</sup>Yahweh's teachings are right and  
make us joyful;  
his precepts are so pure!  
Yahweh's commands challenge us to  
keep close to his heart!  
The revelation-light of his Word  
makes my spirit shine radiant.

<sup>9</sup>Yahweh's decrees are trustworthy.  
The fear of Yahweh is pure, endur-  
ing forever.

<sup>10</sup>The rarest treasures of life are found  
in his truth.  
That's why God's Word is prized like  
others prize the finest gold.  
Sweeter also than honey are his  
living words—  
sweet words dripping from the  
honeycomb!

<sup>11</sup>For they warn us, your servants,  
and keep us from following the  
wicked way,  
giving a lifetime guarantee:  
great success to every obedient soul!

<sup>12</sup>How would I discern the wayward-  
ness<sup>a</sup> of my heart?  
Lord, forgive my hidden flaws when-  
ever you find them.

<sup>13</sup>Keep cleansing me, God,  
and keep me from my secret, selfish  
sins;  
may they never rule over me!  
For only then will I be free from fault  
and remain innocent of rebellion.

<sup>14</sup>So may the words of my mouth, my  
meditation-thoughts,  
and every movement of my heart be  
always pure and pleasing,

acceptable before your eyes, Yahweh,  
my only Redeemer, my Protector.<sup>b</sup>

## 20 A VICTORY DECREE

*For the Pure and Shining One  
For the end times, by David<sup>c</sup>*

### May God Hear You

<sup>1</sup>In your day of danger may Yahweh  
answer and deliver you.

May the name of the God of Jacob<sup>d</sup>  
set you safely on high!

<sup>2</sup>May supernatural help be sent from  
his sanctuary.

May he support you from Zion's  
fortress!

<sup>3</sup>May he remember every gift you  
have given him  
and celebrate every sacrifice of love  
you have shown him.<sup>e</sup>

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>4</sup>May Yahweh give you every desire of  
your heart  
and carry out your every plan *as you  
go to battle*.

<sup>5</sup>When you succeed, we will celebrate  
and shout for joy.

Flags will fly when victory is yours!  
Yes, God will answer your prayers,  
and we will praise him!

<sup>6</sup>I know Yahweh gives me all that I  
ask for  
and brings victory to his anointed  
king.  
My deliverance cry will be heard in  
his holy heaven.

By his mighty hand miracles will  
manifest  
through his saving strength.

a 19:12 The word *waywardness* is taken from the Hebrew word for "errors."

b 19:14 Or "my rock [of protection]."

c 20 The inscription for Pss. 20–22 is "For the end times," as translated from the Septuagint.

d 20:1 Jacob was one transformed by God's grace, changed from a schemer who took from others into Israel, God's prince.

e 20:3 Or "May he consider your burnt offerings generous."

<sup>7</sup>Some find their strength in their weapons and wisdom,  
but my miracle-deliverance can never be won by men.  
Our boast is in Yahweh our God,  
who makes us strong and gives us victory!

<sup>8</sup>Our enemies will not prevail; they will only collapse and perish in defeat while we will rise up, full of courage.

<sup>9</sup>Give victory to our king, O Yahweh!  
The day we call on you, give us your answer!

## 21 THROUGH YOUR STRENGTH

*For the end times, to the Pure and Shining One*

*David's poem of praise<sup>a</sup>*

### Looking Back

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh, because of your strength the king is strong.

Look how he rejoices in you!

He bursts out with a joyful song

because of your victory!

<sup>2</sup>For you have given him his heart's desire,  
anything and everything he asks for.  
You haven't withheld a thing from the king.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>3</sup>Rich blessings overflow with every encounter with you,  
and you placed a royal crown of gold upon his head.

<sup>4</sup>He wanted life<sup>b</sup>—you have given it to him and more!

The days of his blessing stretch on one after another, forever!

<sup>5</sup>You have honored him and made him famous.

Glory-garments are upon him,  
and you surround him with splendor and majesty.

<sup>6</sup>Your victory heaps blessing after blessing upon him.

What joy and bliss he tastes, rejoicing before your face!<sup>c</sup>

<sup>7</sup>For the king trusts in Yahweh,  
and he will never stumble, never fall.

The forever-love of the Most High holds him firm.

### Looking Forward

<sup>8</sup>Your almighty hands have captured your foes.

You uncovered all who hate you and you seized them.

<sup>9-10</sup>When you appear before them,  
*unveiling the radiance of your face,*  
they will be consumed by the fierce fire of your presence.

Yahweh's flames will swallow them up.

They and their descendants will be destroyed by an unrelenting fire.

<sup>11</sup>We will watch them fail,  
for these are the ones who plan their evil schemes against the Lord.

<sup>12</sup>They will turn and run at the sight of your judgment-arrows aimed straight at their hearts.

### Looking Up

<sup>13</sup>Rise up and put your might on display!

By your strength we will sing and praise your glorious power!

<sup>a</sup> 21 Think of this song as a praise song to Jesus, our true King.

<sup>b</sup> 21:4 This can be viewed as a prophecy of our Lord Jesus asking for resurrection-life. Every verse of this psalm is prophetic, pointing us to Jesus.

<sup>c</sup> 21:6 Or "You make him joyful in joy with your face!"

## 22 A PROPHETIC PORTRAIT OF THE CROSS<sup>a</sup>

*For the Pure and Shining One  
David's song of anguish  
To the tune of "The Deer at the  
Dawning of the Day"*<sup>b</sup>

### The Cross

<sup>1</sup>God, my God!

Why would you abandon me now?<sup>c</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Why do you remain distant,  
refusing to answer<sup>d</sup> my tearful cries  
in the day  
and my desperate cries for your help  
in the night?

I can't stop sobbing.

Where are you, my God?

<sup>3</sup>Yet I know that you are most holy.  
You are God-Enthroned, the praise  
of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>Our fathers' faith was in you—  
through the generations they trusted  
in you  
and you came through.

<sup>5</sup>Every time they cried out to you in  
their despair,  
you were faithful to deliver them;  
you didn't disappoint them.

<sup>6</sup>But I am like a worm,  
crushed and bleeding crimson,<sup>e</sup>  
treated as less than human.

I've been despised and scorned by  
everyone!

<sup>7</sup>Mocked by their jeers, despised with  
their sneers,  
as all the people poke fun at me,  
spitting their insults,

<sup>8</sup>saying, "Is this the one who trusted  
in God?

Now let's see if Yahweh will come to  
your rescue!

Let's see how much he delights in  
him!"

<sup>9</sup>Lord, you delivered me safely from  
my mother's womb.

You are the one who cared for me  
ever since I was a baby.

<sup>10</sup>Since the day I was born, I've been  
placed in your custody.

You've cradled me throughout my  
days,  
and you've always been my God.

<sup>11</sup>So don't leave me now, for trouble is  
all around me,  
and there's no one to help me.

<sup>12</sup>I'm surrounded by many violent foes  
like bulls;  
forces of evil encircle me like the  
strong bulls of Bashan.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Like ravenous, roaring lions tearing  
their prey,  
they pour curses from their mouths.

<sup>a</sup> 22 Thirty-three prophecies from this psalm were fulfilled when Jesus was on the cross.

<sup>b</sup> 22 This could be an amazing picture of Christ giving birth at the cross to a generation of his seed. They are like children of God born in the dawning of that resurrection morning.

<sup>c</sup> 22:1 When Jesus quoted these words while dying on the cross, he was identifying himself as the one David wrote about in this psalm. It is a breathtaking portrayal of what Jesus endured through his suffering for us. The psalm ends with another quotation of Jesus on the cross: "It is finished!"

<sup>d</sup> 22:2 David used poetic nuance here, for the word "answer" (*'anah*) is also a Hebrew homonym for "affliction."

<sup>e</sup> 22:6 The Hebrew word for "worm" is *tola*, which is also the word for "crimson" or "scarlet." *Tola* was a certain worm in the ancient Near East that, when crushed, bled a crimson color so strong it was used as a dye for garments. Jesus was not saying he was a despised worm, but that he will bleed as he is crushed for our sins.

<sup>f</sup> 22:12 The root word for "bull" means "to break or destroy." The word *Bashan*, although known as a fertile land northeast of Lake Galilee, is also a word for "serpent." These represent the many demonic spirits who came against the Son of God as he was being crucified.

<sup>14</sup>Now I'm completely exhausted.<sup>a</sup>  
 Every joint of my body has been  
 pulled apart.  
 My courage has melted away.  
<sup>15</sup>I'm so thirsty and parched.  
 My tongue sticks to the roof of my  
 mouth.  
 And now you lay me in the dust of  
 death.  
<sup>16</sup>They have pierced my hands and  
 my feet.<sup>b</sup>  
 Like a pack of wild dogs they tear  
 at me,  
 swirling around me with their  
 hatred.  
 A band of evil men surrounds me.  
<sup>17</sup>I can count all my bones.  
 Look at how they gloat over me and  
 stare!  
<sup>18</sup>With a toss of the dice they divide  
 my clothes among themselves,  
 gambling for my garments!  
<sup>19</sup>Yahweh, please don't stay far away.  
 My strength, come quickly to my  
 rescue.  
<sup>20</sup>Give me back my life.  
 Save me from this violent death.  
 Save my precious one and only<sup>c</sup>  
 from the power of these dogs!<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>21</sup>Save me from all the power of the  
 enemy,  
 from this roaring lion raging against  
 me  
 and the power of his dark horde.

### The Resurrection

<sup>22</sup>I will declare your name before all  
 my brothers  
 and praise you in the midst of the  
 congregation.<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>23</sup>Those who fear Yahweh, praise him!  
 Let all the seed of Jacob glorify him  
 with your praises.  
 Stand in awe of him, all you off-  
 spring of Israel!  
<sup>24</sup>For he has not despised my cries of  
 deep despair.  
 He's my first responder to my  
 sufferings,  
 and when I was in pain,  
 he was there all the time and heard  
 the cries of the afflicted.  
<sup>25</sup>You're the reason for my praise; it  
 comes from you and goes to you.  
 I will keep my promise to praise you  
 before all who fear you  
 among the congregation of your  
 people.  
<sup>26</sup>Let all the poor and broken eat until  
 satisfied.  
 Bring Yahweh praise and you will  
 find him.  
 May your hearts overflow with life  
 forever!  
<sup>27</sup>From the four corners of the earth,  
 the peoples of the world will remem-  
 ber and return to Yahweh.  
 Every nation will come and worship  
 him.

a 22:14 Or "I'm poured out like water."

b 22:16 As translated from some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac; other Hebrew manuscripts read "Like the lion my hands and my feet." This is a powerful prophecy of crucifixion, given by David many centuries before crucifixion was invented by the Romans.

c 22:20 Or "unique" or "darling." Each of us is that "one and only" child or "unique darling" mentioned here in this psalm. See Song. 6:9. On the cross, Jesus—like a deer giving birth at the dawning light (see inscription of Ps. 22)—cared less that his body was being torn apart and more about our protection and salvation. He prayed for us as he faced death on the cross.

d 22:20 The "dogs" are metaphors for evil spirits who were bent on destroying Jesus on the cross. The Hebrew word for "dog" is taken from a root word meaning "to attack."

e 22:22 Between v. 21 and v. 22 the glorious resurrection of Jesus takes place. The music is elevated to a higher key as victory is sounded forth. "My people gather" is a reference to the church that was birthed through his resurrection glory. (See also v. 25.)



<sup>28</sup>For Yahweh is King of all, who takes charge of all the nations.

<sup>29</sup>The wealthy of this world will feast in fellowship with him right alongside the humble of heart, bowing down to the dust, forsaking their own souls.

They will all come and worship this worthy King!

<sup>30</sup>His *spiritual* seed<sup>a</sup> shall serve him. Future generations will hear from us about the wonders of the Victorious Lord.

<sup>31</sup>His generation yet to be born will glorify him.

And they will all declare, “It is finished!”<sup>b</sup>

## 23 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

*David’s poetic praise to God*

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh is my best friend and my shepherd.<sup>c</sup>

I always have more than enough.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>2</sup>He offers a resting place for me in his luxurious love.<sup>e</sup>

His tracks take me to an oasis of peace near *the quiet brook of bliss!*<sup>f</sup>

<sup>3</sup>That’s where he restores and revives my life.<sup>g</sup>

He opens before me the right path and leads me along in his footsteps of righteousness<sup>h</sup>

so that I can bring honor to his name.

<sup>4</sup>Even when your path takes me through the valley of deepest darkness, fear will never conquer me, for you already have!

Your authority is my strength and my peace.<sup>i</sup>

The comfort of your love takes away my fear.

I’ll never be lonely, for you are near.

a 22:30 Jesus, our crucified Savior, had no natural offspring. These are the sons and daughters who were birthed by the work of the cross.

b 22:31 Or “He has done it!” See John 19:30.

c 23:1 The word most commonly used for “shepherd” is taken from the root word *ra’ah*, which is also the Hebrew word for “best friend.” This translation includes both meanings. The unique term for shepherd is *ro’eh tzon*—“lover of the flock.” This teaches us that a shepherd was not just a responsible overseer, but a caring father figure, tending to his flock out of a deep sense of love. Shepherds were also fierce protectors of their flocks. Jesus is the Fierce Protector of his people.

d 23:1 Or “I lack nothing.” What a wonderful declaration over your life! To never be in lack, always possessing more than enough. Our God meets our emotional, physical, and spiritual needs.

e 23:2 Or “in spring [green] meadows.” A good shepherd knows where to pasture his flock. These green meadows would be a resting place, free from all fear. The Greek verb “to love” is *agapao*, which is a merging of two words and two concepts. *Ago* means “to lead like a shepherd,” and *pao* is a verb that means “to rest.” Love is our Shepherd leading us to the place of true rest in his heart.

f 23:2 The Hebrew word *menuhâ* means “the waters of a resting place.” See Isa. 11:10.

g 23:3 Or “he causes my life [or “soul,” Hb. *nephesh*] to return.” So often life drains out of us through our many activities, but, as David found, God restores our well-being when we pursue what pleases God and when we rest in him.

h 23:3 Or “circular paths of righteousness.” It is a common trait for sheep on the hillsides of Israel to circle their way up higher. They eventually form a path that keeps leading them higher. This is what the psalm is referring to here. Each step we take following our Shepherd will lead us higher, even though it may seem we are going in circles.

i 23:4 Or “Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

<sup>5</sup>You become my delicious feast  
even when my enemies dare to fight.  
You anoint me with the fragrance of  
your Holy Spirit;<sup>a</sup>  
you give me all I can drink of you  
until my cup overflows.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>c</sup>*So why would I fear the future?*  
Only goodness and tender love pursue me all the days of my life.  
Then afterward, when my life is through,  
I'll return to your glorious presence<sup>c</sup>  
to be forever with you!

## 24 THE KING OF GLORY

*David's poetic praise to God<sup>d</sup>*

### Creation's King

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh claims the world as his.  
Everything and everyone belong to him!

<sup>2</sup>He's the one who pushed back oceans<sup>e</sup>  
to let the dry ground appear,  
planting firm foundations for the earth.

### Who Comes before the King?

<sup>3</sup>Who, then, is allowed to ascend the mountain of Yahweh?  
And who has the privilege of entering into God's Holy Place?

<sup>4</sup>Those who are clean—whose works and ways are pure,  
whose hearts are true and sealed by the truth,  
those who never deceive, whose words are sure.

<sup>5</sup>They will receive Yahweh's blessing and righteousness given by the Savior-God.

<sup>6</sup>They will stand before God,  
for they seek the pleasure of God's face,<sup>f</sup> the God of Jacob.

*Pause in his presence*

### The King is Coming!

<sup>7</sup>So wake up, you living gateways!  
Lift up your heads, you doorways of eternity!<sup>g</sup>

Welcome the King of Glory,  
for he is about to come through you.

<sup>8</sup>You ask, "Who is this King of Glory?"  
Yahweh, armed and ready for battle,  
Yahweh, invincible in every way!

<sup>9</sup>So wake up, you living gateways, and rejoice!

Fling wide, you eternal doors!

Here he comes; the King of Glory is ready to come in.

<sup>10</sup>You ask, "Who is this King of Glory?"  
He is Yahweh, armed and ready for battle,

<sup>a</sup> 23:5 Or "You anoint my head with oil." "Oil" or "fragrance" becomes a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>b</sup> 23:5 Or "your cup cheers me like the best wine (LXX)," or "my chalice that inebriates me, how goodly it is (Vulgate)."

<sup>c</sup> 23:6 Or "return to Yahweh's palace."

<sup>d</sup> 24 The Septuagint adds "for the Sabbath." Ps. 24 celebrates God as the Warrior-King, ruling over a kingdom of purity and holiness. Pss. 22–24 form a trilogy. Ps. 22 speaks of the Savior's cross, Ps. 23 speaks of the Shepherd's staff, and Ps. 24 speaks of the Sovereign King. We see three viewpoints of Jesus' love for us: Ps. 22—the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), Ps. 23—the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20), and Ps. 24—the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).

<sup>e</sup> 24:2 Or "who established it upon the ocean currents."

<sup>f</sup> 24:6 The Hebrew is plural ("faces").

<sup>g</sup> 24:7 God's people are identified as living gates and doorways. When God opens the doors of eternity within us, no one is able to shut them. To "lift up" our heads is a figure of speech for a bold confidence that brings rejoicing and hope.

the Mighty One, the invincible commander of heaven's hosts!<sup>a</sup>

Yes, he is the King of Glory!

*Pause in his presence*

## 25<sup>b</sup> DON'T FAIL ME, GOD!

*King David's poetic praise to God*

<sup>1</sup>Always I will lift up my soul into your presence, Yahweh.

<sup>2</sup>*Be there for me*, my God, for I keep trusting in you.

Don't allow my foes to gloat over me or the shame of defeat to overtake me.

<sup>3</sup>Could anyone be disgraced when he has entwined his heart with yours?

But my foes will all be defeated and ashamed when they harm the innocent.

<sup>4</sup>Direct me, Yahweh, throughout my journey so I can experience your plans for my life.

Reveal the life-paths *that are pleasing to you*.

<sup>5</sup>Escort me into your truth; *take me by the hand* and teach me.<sup>c</sup>

For you are the God of my salvation; I have wrapped my heart into yours all day long!<sup>d</sup>

<sup>6-7</sup>Forgive my failures as a young man, and overlook the sins of my immaturity.

Give me grace, Yahweh! Always look at me through your eyes of love—your forgiving eyes of mercy and compassion.

When you think of me, see me as one you love and care for.

<sup>8</sup>How good you are to me! When people turn to you, Yahweh, they discover how easy you are to please—so faithful and true!

Joyfully you teach them the proper path, even when they go astray.

<sup>9</sup>Keep showing the humble your path, and lead them into the best decision. Bring revelation-light that trains them in the truth.

<sup>10</sup>Loving are all the ways of Yahweh, loving and faithful for those who keep his covenant.

<sup>11</sup>For the honor of your name, Yahweh, never count my many sins, and forgive them all—lift their burden off of my life!<sup>e</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Who are they that live in the holy fear of Yahweh?

You will show them the right path to take.

a 24:10 Or "Yahweh Tseva'ot." The word *tseva'ot* is the plural of the word *tsava*, a feminine noun meaning "force." When these two Hebrew nouns are placed together, they would be translated as "Yahweh of the forces."

b 25 Psalms 25–39 are fifteen poetic songs about bringing pure worship before God. Pss. 25–29 speak of our confidence to worship God. Pss. 30–34 point us to receiving life eternal from our Hero-God. The last five, Pss. 35–39, bring us to the importance of personal purity and holiness before God as we worship him in truth.

c 25:5 Or "Reveal your truth to me as I move forward."

d 25:5 The Hebrew word most commonly translated as "wait" (wait upon the Lord) is *qavah*, which also means "to tie together by twisting" or "to entwine" or "to wrap tightly." This is a beautiful concept of waiting upon God, not passively, but entwining our hearts with him and his purposes.

e 25:11 The Hebrew word used here for "forgive" or "pardon" is a rare word used only twice in the Old Testament and comes from a root word meaning "to lift off a burden."

<sup>13</sup>Then prosperity and favor will be  
their portion,  
and their descendants will inherit  
the earth.

<sup>14</sup>There's a private place reserved for  
the devoted lovers of Yahweh,  
where they sit near him and receive  
the revelation-secrets of his  
promises.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Rescue me, Yahweh, for you free my  
feet from every trap.

<sup>16</sup>Sorrows fill my heart as I feel help-  
less, mistreated—  
I'm all alone and in misery!  
Come closer to me now, for I need  
your mercy.

<sup>17</sup>Turn to me, for my problems seem  
to be going from bad to worse.  
Only you can free me from all these  
troubles!

<sup>18</sup>Until you lift this burden, the burden  
of all my sins,  
my troubles and trials will be more  
than I can handle.

Can't you feel my pain?

<sup>19</sup>Vicious, violent<sup>b</sup> enemies hate me.  
There are so many, Lord. Can't you  
see?

<sup>20</sup>Will you protect me from their power  
against me? I have taken shelter  
in you.

Let it never be said that when I  
trusted you,  
you didn't come to my rescue.

<sup>21</sup>Your perfection and faithfulness are  
my bodyguards,  
for you are my hope and I trust in  
you as my only protection.

<sup>22</sup>Zealously, God, we ask you

to come save Israel from all her  
troubles,  
for you provide the ransom price for  
your people!<sup>c</sup>

## 26 DECLARE ME INNOCENT

*King David's poetic praise to God*

### David's Trust and Transparency

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh, be my judge and declare  
me innocent!

Clear my name, for I walk in  
integrity  
and trust you without wavering.

<sup>2</sup>Yahweh, you can scrutinize me.  
Refine my heart and probe my every  
thought.

Put me to the test and you'll find me  
true.

<sup>3</sup>I will never lose sight of your stead-  
fast love for me.

Your faithfulness has steadied my  
steps.

### David's Truthfulness

<sup>4</sup>I won't keep company with tricky,  
two-faced men,  
nor will I go the way of those with  
hidden motives.

<sup>5</sup>I despise the sinner's hangouts.  
You won't find me walking with the  
wicked.

<sup>6-7</sup>When I come to your altar, Yahweh,  
I'll be clean before you,<sup>d</sup>  
approaching with songs of  
thanksgiving,  
singing songs of your mighty  
miracles.

a 25:14 Or "covenant."

b 25:19 This is the Hebrew word *hamas*.

c 25:22 Psalm 25 is an acrostic psalm; that is, in the Hebrew text every verse begins with a progressive letter of the alphabet. It is considered a poetic device of Hebrew literature. Go back through the psalm and notice how many verses begin with the next letter of our English alphabet. See if you can find them.

d 26:6-7 Or "I wash my hands in innocence."



## David's Testimony

<sup>8</sup>Yahweh, I love to live in your house,  
this dwelling place of dazzling  
glory!

<sup>9</sup>Don't treat me as one of these  
scheming sinners  
who plot violence against the  
innocent.

<sup>10</sup>Look how they devise their wicked  
plans;  
their hands are always ready to  
receive a bribe.

<sup>11</sup>*I'm not like them, Lord—not at all.*  
Save me, redeem me with your  
mercy,  
for I have chosen to walk only in  
what is right.

<sup>12</sup>Among the worshipers I will praise  
Yahweh,  
for I am safe and secure because of  
you!

## 27 FEARLESS FAITH

*David's poetic praise to God before  
he was anointed king<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh is my revelation-light<sup>b</sup>  
and the source of my salvation.  
I fear no one!  
I'll never turn back and run, for you,  
Yahweh,  
surround and protect me.

<sup>2</sup>When evil ones come to destroy me,  
they will be the ones who turn back.

<sup>3</sup>My heart will not fear even if an  
army rises to attack.  
I will not be shaken, even if war is  
imminent.

<sup>4</sup>Here's the one thing I crave from  
Yahweh,  
the one thing I seek above all else:  
I want to live with him every  
moment in his house,<sup>c</sup>  
beholding the marvelous beauty<sup>d</sup> of  
Yahweh,  
filled with awe, delighting in his  
glory and grace.

I want to contemplate<sup>e</sup> in his temple.

<sup>5-6</sup>In the day of trouble, he will trea-  
sure<sup>f</sup> me in his shelter,  
under the cover of his tent.  
He will lift me high upon a rock,  
out of reach from all my enemies  
who surround me.

Triumphant now, I'll bring him my  
offerings of praise,  
singing and shouting with ecstatic  
joy!

Yes, I will sing praises to Yahweh!

<sup>7</sup>Hear my cry. Show me mercy, and  
send the help I need!

<sup>8</sup>I heard *your voice* in my heart say,  
"Come, seek my face;"  
my inner being responded,

<sup>a</sup> 27 Inscription from the Septuagint. Most Bible scholars agree this psalm was written during the time of a devastating war where David witnessed the cruelty, savagery, and horrors of war.

<sup>b</sup> 27:1 See John 1:5, 9; 1 John 1:5.

<sup>c</sup> 27:4 A temple had not yet been built when David wrote this psalm. He was saying that he longs to be surrounded with God's presence, enclosed and encircled with holiness.

<sup>d</sup> 27:4 The meaning of the Hebrew word for "beauty" (*no'am*) is not easily conveyed by one English word. It can also be translated "sweetness," "pleasantness," "friendliness," "graciousness," "goodness," "loveliness," "splendor," or "delightfulness." Take each of these terms and read the verse again, inserting the possible alternatives. We must be captured by the awesomeness of God each time we come before him and rejoice in his friendship.

<sup>e</sup> 27:4 The Hebrew verb *baqar* can also mean "inquire," "meditate," "take pleasure in," and, in a general sense, "worship," "pray," or "seek [guidance]." However, *baqar* comes from a root word that means "to arise at dawn." Perhaps David was saying that he would arise every dawn to take pleasure in God.

<sup>f</sup> 27:5-6 Or "hide," "save," "store," "esteem."

“Yahweh, I’m seeking your face with all my heart.”

<sup>9</sup>So don’t turn your face away from me.<sup>a</sup>

You’re the God of my salvation;  
how can you reject your servant in anger?

You’ve been my only hope,  
so don’t forsake me now when I need you!

<sup>10</sup>My father and mother abandoned me.

But you, Yahweh, took me in and made me yours.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Now teach me, Yahweh, all about your ways and tell me what to do. Make it clear for me to understand, for I am surrounded by *waiting* enemies.

<sup>12</sup>Don’t let them defeat me, Lord. You can’t let me fall into their clutches!

They keep accusing me of things I’ve never done,  
breathing out violence against me.

<sup>13</sup>Yet I believe with all my heart that I will see again your goodness, Yahweh, in the land of life eternal!

<sup>14</sup>Here’s what I’ve learned through it all:

*Don’t give up*; don’t be impatient;  
be entwined as one with the Lord.<sup>c</sup>  
Be brave and courageous, and never lose hope.

Yes, keep on waiting—for *he will never disappoint you!*

## 28 MY STRENGTH AND SHIELD

*David’s poetic praise to God*

### My Defender

<sup>1</sup>I’m pleading with you, Yahweh, help me!<sup>d</sup>

Don’t close your ears to my cry, for you’re my defender.<sup>e</sup>

If you continue to remain aloof and refuse to answer me,  
I might as well give up and die.

<sup>2</sup>Hear my cry for help as I turn toward your mercy seat,  
as I lift my hands toward your sacred sanctuary.

<sup>3</sup>Don’t allow me to be punished along with the wicked—  
these hypocrites who speak sweetly to their neighbors’ faces while holding evil against them in their hearts.

### My Vindication

<sup>4</sup>Go ahead and punish them as they deserve.

Let them be paid back for all their evil plans  
in proportion to their wickedness.

<sup>5</sup>Since they don’t care anything about you,  
or understand the great things you’ve done,  
take them down *like an old building being demolished*,  
never again to be rebuilt.

<sup>a</sup> 27:9 The Septuagint is “Don’t overlook me.”

<sup>b</sup> 27:10 Every child needs four things: acceptance, focused attention, guidance, and protection. All four of these emotional needs are met by God (vv. 7–14). See Isa. 40:11; Rom. 8:15–16.

<sup>c</sup> 27:14 Or “wait upon the Lord.” See footnote on Ps. 25:5.

<sup>d</sup> 28:1 This psalm was likely written when David was exiled because of the rebellion of his son Absalom. He was not longing and looking for his throne but for God’s throne (see v. 2).

<sup>e</sup> 28:1 Or “my rocky summit.”

<sup>a</sup>But Yahweh, may your name be  
blessed *and built up*!  
For you have answered my passion-  
ate cry for mercy.

### My Strength

<sup>7</sup>Yahweh is my strength and my wrap-  
around shield.

When I fully trust in you, help is on  
the way.

I jump for joy and burst forth with  
ecstatic, passionate praise!

I will sing songs of what you mean  
to me!

<sup>8</sup>You will be the inner strength of all  
your people,  
Yahweh, the mighty protector of all,  
and the saving strength for all your  
anointed ones.

<sup>9</sup>Save your people whom you love,  
and bless your chosen ones.  
Be our shepherd leading us forward,  
forever carrying us in your arms!

## 29 THE GLORY-GOD THUNDERS

*King David's poetic praise to God  
for the last days  
The Feast of Tabernacles<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Proclaim his majesty, all you mighty  
sons of Yahweh,<sup>b</sup>  
giving all the glory and strength  
back to him!

<sup>2</sup>Be in awe before his majesty.

Be in awe before such power and  
might!

Come worship wonderful Yahweh,  
arrayed in all his splendor,  
bowing in worship as he appears in  
the beauty of holiness.

Give him the honor due his name.

Worship him wearing the  
glory-garments

of your holy, priestly calling!

<sup>3-4</sup>The voice of the Lord echoes  
through the skies and seas.

The Glory-God reigns as he thunders  
in the clouds.

So powerful is his voice, so brilliant  
and bright—

how majestic as he thunders over  
the great waters!<sup>c</sup>

<sup>5</sup>His tympanic thunder topples the  
strongest of trees.<sup>d</sup>

His symphonic sound splinters the  
mighty forests.

<sup>6</sup>Now he moves Zion's<sup>e</sup> mountains by  
the might of his voice,  
shaking the snowy peaks with his  
earsplitting sound!

<sup>7</sup>The lightning-fire flashes, striking as  
he speaks.

<sup>8</sup>God reveals himself when he makes  
the fault lines quake,  
shaking deserts, speaking his voice.

<sup>9</sup>God's mighty voice makes the deer to  
give birth.<sup>f</sup>

*a* 29 The additional words of the inscription are found in the Septuagint. Ps. 29 is one of the loveliest poems ever written. It is pure and unrestrained praise. The name Yahweh is found eighteen times in eleven verses. David was a prophetic seer, and this psalm can properly be interpreted to speak of God's majesty revealed in the last days.

*b* 29:1 *Mighty sons of Yahweh* in Hebrew is *beni 'elim*. 'Elim is from the root word *elah*, which is the word for "God," "gods," "mighty warriors," "mighty men," "heroes," "angels," and "heavenly beings," and could be used to describe anyone who shows any strength or power.

*c* 29:3-4 The sea ("great waters") is a term often used in the Bible to symbolize the sea of humanity. See Isa. 57:20; Rev. 17:15.

*d* 29:5 Trees in the Bible are symbols used for men. The strongest of men are toppled and bowed down when the Glory-God speaks.

*e* 29:6 Or "Sirion" (Mount Hermon), an ancient term for Mount Zion. See Ps. 133.

*f* 29:9 Or "God's mighty voice makes the oaks to whirl."

His thunderbolt-voice lays the forest bare.

In his temple all fall before him with each one shouting,

“Glory, glory, the God of glory!”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Above the furious flood,<sup>b</sup> the

Enthroned One reigns,  
the King-God rules with eternity at his side.

<sup>11</sup>This is the one who gives his strength and might to his people.  
This is the Lord giving us his kiss of peace.<sup>c</sup>

## 30 HE HEALED ME

*King David's poetic praise to God  
A song for the Feast of Dedication  
of the dwelling place*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, I will exalt you and lift you high,  
for you have lifted me up on high!  
Over all my boasting, gloating enemies,  
you made me to triumph.

<sup>2</sup>O Lord, my healing God,  
I cried out for a miracle and you healed me!

<sup>3</sup>You brought me back from the brink of death,  
from the depths below.  
Now here I am, alive and well, fully restored!

<sup>4</sup>O sing and make melody, you steadfast lovers of God.  
Give thanks to him every time you reflect on his holiness!

<sup>5</sup>I've learned that his anger lasts for a moment,

but his loving favor lasts a lifetime!<sup>d</sup>  
We may weep through the night,  
but at daybreak it will turn into shouts of ecstatic joy.

<sup>6-7</sup>I remember boasting, “I've got it made!

Nothing can stop me now!  
I'm God's favored one; he's made me steady as a mountain!”  
But then suddenly, you hid your face from me.

I was panic-stricken and became depressed.

<sup>8</sup>Still I cried out to you, Lord God. I shouted out for mercy, saying,

<sup>9</sup>“What would you gain in my death, if I were to go down to the depths of darkness?

Will a grave sing your song?  
How could death's dust declare your faithfulness?”

<sup>10</sup>So hear me now, Lord; show me your famous mercy.

O God, be my Savior and rescue me!

<sup>11</sup>Then he broke through and transformed all my wailing into a whirling dance of ecstatic praise!

He has torn the veil and lifted from me the sad heaviness of mourning.  
He wrapped me in the glory-garments of gladness.

<sup>12</sup>How could I be silent when it's time to praise you?

<sup>a</sup> 29:9 The Septuagint reads “Those who give him glory he carries to his house.”

<sup>b</sup> 29:10 The Hebrew word for “flood” is found thirteen times in the Bible and is always used in connection to man's rebellion and turning away from God. Thirteen is the biblical number signifying apostasy. Sitting as King, he rules even over the dark flood of evil to make it end.

<sup>c</sup> 29:11 In Jewish synagogues this psalm is read on the first day of the Feast of Pentecost. The Christian church was born on Pentecost two thousand years ago when the mighty “storm” of the Spirit came into the upper room. See Acts 2. The last word of this psalm is “peace.” It begins with a storm, but God brings his people peace even in the midst of storms.

<sup>d</sup> 30:5 The Septuagint reads “There is wrath in his anger but life in his will [promise].”



Now my heart sings out, bursting  
with joy—  
a bliss inside that keeps me singing,  
“I can never thank you enough!”

## 31 HOW GREAT IS YOUR GOODNESS

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A song of poetic praise by King  
David*

<sup>1</sup>I trust you, Lord, to be my hiding  
place.  
Don't let me down.  
Don't let my enemies bring me to  
shame.  
Come and rescue me, for you are the  
only God  
who always does what is right.  
<sup>2</sup>Rescue me quickly when I cry out to  
you.  
At the sound of my prayer may your  
ear be turned to me.  
Be my strong shelter and hiding  
place on high.  
Pull me into victory and  
breakthrough.  
<sup>3-4</sup>For you are my high fortress, where  
I'm kept safe.  
You are to me a stronghold of  
salvation.  
When you deliver me out of this  
peril,  
it will bring glory to your name.  
As you guide me forth I'll be kept  
safe  
from the hidden snares of the  
enemy—  
the secret traps that lie before me—  
for you have become my rock of  
strength.

<sup>5</sup>Into your hands I now entrust my spirit.<sup>a</sup>  
O Lord, the God of faithfulness,  
you have rescued and redeemed me.  
<sup>6</sup>I despise these deceptive illusions,  
all this pretense and nonsense,  
for I worship only you.  
<sup>7</sup>In mercy you have seen my troubles,  
and you have cared for me;  
even during this crisis in my soul I  
will be radiant with joy,  
filled with praise for your love and  
mercy.  
<sup>8</sup>You have kept me from being con-  
quered by my enemy;  
you broke open the way to bring me  
to freedom,<sup>b</sup>  
into a beautiful, broad place.<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>9</sup>O Lord, help me again! Keep show-  
ing me such mercy.  
For I am in anguish, always in tears,  
and I'm worn out with weeping.  
I'm becoming old because of grief;  
my health is broken.  
<sup>10</sup>I'm exhausted! My life is spent with  
sorrow,  
my years with sighing and sadness.  
Because of all these troubles, I have  
no more strength.  
My inner being<sup>d</sup> is so weak and frail.  
<sup>11</sup>My enemies say, “You are nothing!”  
Even my friends and neighbors hold  
me in contempt!  
They dread seeing me,  
and they look the other way when I  
pass by.  
<sup>12</sup>I am totally forgotten, buried away  
like a dead man,  
discarded like a broken dish thrown  
in the trash.  
<sup>13</sup>I overheard their whispered threats,  
the slander of my enemies.

*a* 31:5 This was quoted by Jesus as he was dying on the cross. See Matt. 27:50.

*b* 31:8 This is a picture of the stone rolled away from the tomb of Jesus.

*c* 31:8 This could be the throne room where Jesus ascended after his death.

*d* 31:10 The Hebrew text reads “My bones grow weak.” Bones in the Bible are symbols of our inner being.

I'm terrified as they plot and scheme  
to take my life.

<sup>14</sup>I'm desperate, Lord! I throw myself  
upon you,  
for you alone are my God!

<sup>15</sup>My life, my every moment, my  
destiny—it's all in your hands.  
So I know you can deliver me  
from those who persecute me  
relentlessly.

<sup>16</sup>Smile<sup>a</sup> on me, your servant.  
Let your undying love and glorious  
grace  
save me from all this gloom.

<sup>17</sup>As I call upon you, let my shame  
and disgrace  
be replaced by your favor once again.  
But let shame and disgrace fall  
instead upon the wicked—  
those going to their own doom,  
drifting down in silence to the dust  
of death.

<sup>18</sup>At last their lying lips will be muted  
in their graves.  
For they are arrogant, filled with  
contempt and conceit  
as they speak against the godly.

<sup>19</sup>Lord, how wonderful you are!  
You have stored up so many good  
things for us,  
like a treasure chest heaped up and  
spilling over with blessings—  
all for those who honor and worship  
you!  
Everybody knows what you can do  
for those who turn and hide them-  
selves in you.

<sup>20</sup>So hide all your beloved ones  
in the sheltered, secret place before  
your face.

Overshadow them with your  
glory-presence.  
Keep them from these accusations,  
the brutal insults of evil men.  
Tuck them safely away in the taber-  
nacle where you dwell.

<sup>21</sup>The name of the Lord is blessed and  
lifted high!

For his marvelous miracle of mercy  
protected me  
when I was overwhelmed by my  
enemies.

<sup>22</sup>I spoke hastily when I said, "The  
Lord has deserted me."  
For in truth, you did hear my prayer  
and came to rescue me.

<sup>23</sup>Listen to me, all you godly ones:  
Love the Lord with passion!  
The Lord protects and preserves all  
those who are loyal to him.  
But he pays back in full all those  
who reject him in their pride.

<sup>24</sup>So cheer up! Take courage, all you  
who love him.  
Wait for him to break through for  
you, all who trust in him!

## 32 FORGIVEN

*A poem of insight and instruction  
by King David<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>What bliss belongs to the one  
whose rebellion has been forgiven,<sup>c</sup>  
those whose sins are covered by *blood*.

<sup>a</sup> 31:16 Or "Cause your face to shine."

<sup>b</sup> 32 David wrote this psalm after he seduced the wife of his most loyal soldier, then had him killed to try to keep her pregnancy a secret. This sin with Bathsheba brought great disgrace to David, yet he found complete forgiveness in God's mercy. The apostle Paul chose the first two verses of Ps. 32 to support the important doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. See Rom. 4:5–8. This was Augustine's favorite psalm. He had it written on the wall near his bed before he died so he could meditate on it.

<sup>c</sup> 32:1 The Hebrew word for "forgiven" means "lifted off." Sin's guilt is a burden that must be lifted off our souls. The Septuagint reads "because they have not hidden their sins."

<sup>2</sup>What bliss belongs to those  
who have confessed their corrup-  
tion<sup>a</sup> to God!

For he wipes their slates clean  
and removes hypocrisy from their  
hearts.

<sup>3</sup>Before I confessed my sins, I kept it  
all inside;

my dishonesty devastated my inner  
life,  
causing my life to be filled with  
frustration,  
irrepressible anguish, and misery.

<sup>4</sup>The pain never let up, for your hand  
of conviction  
was heavy on my heart.  
My strength was sapped, my inner  
life dried up  
like a spiritual drought within my soul.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5</sup>Then I finally admitted to you all my  
sins,  
refusing to hide them any longer.  
I said, “My life-giving God,  
I will openly acknowledge my evil  
actions.”

And you forgave me!  
All at once the guilt of my sin  
washed away  
and all my pain disappeared!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>6</sup>This is what I’ve learned through it all:  
All believers should confess their  
sins to God;

do it every time God has uncovered  
you

in the time of exposing.

For if you do this, when sudden  
storms of life overwhelm,  
you’ll be kept safe.

<sup>7</sup>Lord, you are my secret hiding place,  
protecting me from these troubles,  
surrounding me with songs of  
gladness!

Your joyous shouts of rescue release  
my breakthrough.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>8-9</sup>I hear the Lord saying, “I will stay  
close to you,  
instructing and guiding you along  
the pathway for your life.

I will advise you along the way  
and lead you forth with my eyes as  
your guide.

So don’t make it difficult; don’t be  
stubborn

when I take you where you’ve not  
been before.

Don’t make me tug you and pull you  
along.

Just come with me!”

<sup>10</sup>So my conclusion is this:

Many are the sorrows and  
frustrations  
of those who don’t come clean with  
God.

But when you trust in the Lord for  
forgiveness,  
his wraparound love will surround you.

<sup>11</sup>So celebrate the goodness of God!

He shows this kindness to everyone  
who is his.

Go ahead—shout for joy,  
all you upright ones who want to  
please him!

## 33 A SONG OF PRAISE

*Poetic praise by King David<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>It’s time to sing and shout for joy!

Go ahead, all you redeemed ones, do it!

<sup>a</sup> 32:2 David used three Hebrew words to describe sin in these first two verses: “rebellion,” “sins” (failures, falling short), and “corruption” (crookedness, the twisting of right standards).

<sup>b</sup> 33 Most manuscripts have no inscription for this psalm. However, ancient Qumran evidence suggests this is the original inscription that was later omitted.

Praise him with all you have,  
for praise looks lovely on the lips of  
God's devoted lovers.

<sup>2</sup>Play the guitar as you lift your  
praises loaded with thanksgiving.  
Sing and make joyous music with all  
you've got inside.

<sup>3</sup>Compose new melodies<sup>a</sup> that release  
new praises to the Lord.  
Play his praises on instruments  
with the anointing and skill he gives  
you.

Sing and shout with passion; make a  
spectacular sound of joy—

<sup>4</sup>For God's Word is something to sing  
about!

He is true to his promises, his word  
can be trusted,  
and everything he does is reliable  
and right.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord loves seeing justice on the  
earth.

Anywhere and everywhere you can  
find his faithful, unfailing love!

<sup>6</sup>All he had to do was speak by his  
Spirit-Wind command,  
and God created the heavenlies.  
Filled with galaxies and stars,  
the vast cosmos he wonderfully  
made.

<sup>7</sup>His voice scooped out the seas.  
The ocean depths he poured into  
vast reservoirs.

<sup>8</sup>With breathtaking wonder,  
let everyone worship Yahweh, this  
awe-inspiring Creator.

<sup>9</sup>He breathed words and worlds were  
birthed.

"Let there be," and there it was—  
springing forth the moment he  
spoke,  
no sooner said than done!

<sup>10</sup>With his breath he scatters the  
schemes of nations who oppose him;

they will never succeed.

<sup>11</sup>His destiny-plan for the earth stands  
sure.

His forever-plan remains in place  
and will never fail.

<sup>12</sup>Blessed and prosperous is that  
nation who has God as their Lord!  
They will be the people he has cho-  
sen for his own.

<sup>13-15</sup>The Lord looks over us from where  
he rules in heaven.

Gazing into every heart from his  
lofty dwelling place,  
he observes all the peoples of the  
earth.

The Creator of our hearts considers  
and examines everything we do.

<sup>16</sup>Even if a king had the best-equipped  
army,  
it would never be enough to save  
him.

Even if the best warrior went to  
battle,  
he could not be saved simply by his  
strength alone.

<sup>17</sup>Human strength and the weapons  
of man  
are false hopes for victory;  
they may seem mighty, but they will  
always disappoint.

<sup>18</sup>The eyes of the Lord are upon  
*even the weakest worshippers* who love  
him—

those who wait in hope and  
expectation  
for the strong, steady love of God.

<sup>19</sup>God will deliver them from death,  
even the certain death of famine,  
with no one to help.

<sup>20</sup>The Lord alone is our radiant hope  
and we trust in him with all our  
hearts.

His wraparound presence will  
strengthen us.

<sup>a</sup> 33:3 There are seven new songs mentioned in the Bible. Six are in the Psalms (33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1) and one is in Isaiah (42:10).



<sup>21</sup>As we trust, we rejoice with an  
uncontained joy  
flowing from Yahweh!  
<sup>22</sup>Let your love and steadfast kindness  
overshadow us continually,  
for we trust and we wait upon you!

## 34 GOD'S GOODNESS

*A song by King David composed  
after his escape from the king when  
he pretended to be insane*

<sup>1</sup>Lord! I'm bursting with joy over what  
you've done for me!  
My lips are full of perpetual praise.  
<sup>2</sup>I'm boasting of you and all your  
works,  
so let all who are discouraged take  
heart.  
<sup>3</sup>Join me, everyone! Let's praise the  
Lord together.  
Let's make him famous!  
Let's make his name glorious to all.  
<sup>4</sup>Listen to my testimony: I cried to God  
in my distress  
and he answered me. He freed me  
from all my fears!  
<sup>5</sup>Gaze upon him, join your life with  
his, and joy will come.  
Your faces will glisten with glory.  
You'll never wear that shame-face  
again.  
<sup>6</sup>When I had nothing, desperate and  
defeated,  
I cried out to the Lord and he heard  
me,

bringing his miracle-deliverance  
when I needed it most.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>7</sup>The angel of Yahweh stooped down  
to listen as I prayed,  
encircling me, empowering me, and  
showing me how to escape.  
He will do this for everyone who  
fears God.

<sup>8</sup>Drink deeply<sup>b</sup> of the pleasures of this  
God.

Experience for yourself the joyous  
mercies he gives  
to all who turn to hide themselves  
in him.

<sup>9</sup>Worship in awe and wonder, all you  
who've been made holy!  
For all who fear him will feast with  
plenty.

<sup>10</sup>Even the strong and the wealthy<sup>c</sup>  
grow weak and hungry,  
but those who passionately pursue  
the Lord  
will never lack any good thing.

<sup>11</sup>Come, children of God, and listen  
to me.

I'll share the lesson I've learned of  
fearing the Lord:

<sup>12-13</sup>Do you want to live a long, good  
life,  
enjoying the beauty that fills each  
day?

Then never speak a lie or allow  
wicked words  
to come from your mouth.

<sup>14</sup>Keep turning your back on every sin,  
and make "peace" your life motto.

<sup>a</sup> 34:6 David wrote this psalm at perhaps the lowest point in his life. He was alone. He had to part from Jonathan, his dearest friend. He was being chased by Saul and his paid assassins. He had run to hide in the cave of Adullam (meaning "their prey"). Yet the beautiful sounds of praise were heard echoing in his cavern. This is a lesson for all of us: we praise our way out of our difficulties into his light.

<sup>b</sup> 34:8 Many translations read "Taste and see." The Hebrew root word for "see" is taken from a word that means "to drink deeply."

<sup>c</sup> 34:10 Following the ancient versions (Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate), this phrase is translated "rich ones." Modern translations read "young lions."

Practice being at peace with everyone.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>15</sup>The Lord sees all we do;  
he watches over his friends day and night.

His godly ones receive the answers they seek  
whenever they cry out to him.

<sup>16</sup>But the Lord has made up his mind  
to oppose evildoers  
and to wipe out even the memory  
of them

from the face of the earth.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Yet when holy lovers of God cry out  
to him with all their hearts,  
the Lord will hear them and come to  
rescue them  
from all their troubles.

<sup>18</sup>The Lord is close to all whose hearts  
are crushed by pain,  
and he is always ready to restore the  
repentant one.

<sup>19</sup>Even when bad things happen to the  
good and godly ones,  
the Lord will save them and not let  
them be defeated  
by what they face.

<sup>20</sup>God will be your bodyguard to  
protect you  
when trouble is near.  
Not one bone will be broken.

<sup>21</sup>Evil will cause the death of the wicked,  
for they hate and persecute the  
devoted lovers of God.

Make no mistake about it:  
God will hold them guilty and punish them;  
they will pay the penalty!

<sup>22</sup>But the Lord has paid for the freedom of his servants,  
and he will freely pardon those who love him.  
He will declare them free and innocent  
when they turn to hide themselves  
in him.

## 35 RESCUE ME

*A poetic song by King David<sup>c</sup>*

**Part One – David, a Warrior**

<sup>1</sup>O Lord, fight for me! Harass the hecklers; accuse my accusers.  
Fight those who fight against me.

<sup>2-3</sup>Put on your armor, Lord; take up your shield and protect me.  
Rise up, mighty God! Grab your weapons of war  
and block the way of the wicked  
who come to fight me.

Stand for me when they stand  
against me!

Speak over my soul: “I am your strong Savior!”<sup>d</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Humiliate those who seek my harm.  
Defeat them all!  
Frustrate their plans to defeat me  
and drive them back.

*a* 34:14 Twice in this verse David used the Hebrew word *shalom*. This word means much more than “peace.” It means wholeness, wellness, well-being, safe, happy, friendly, favor, completeness, to make peace, peace offering, secure, to prosper, to be victorious, to be content, tranquil, quiet, and restful. So *shalom* is used to describe those of us who have been provided all that is needed to be whole and complete and break off all authority that would attempt to bind us to chaos.

*b* 34:16 See 1 Peter 3:10–12.

*c* 35 This is the first of seven Psalms in which David cried out for vengeance upon his enemies [see Pss. 52; 58; 59; 69; 109; 137].

*d* 35:2–3 The Aramaic word used here is found thirty-three times in the Psalms and clearly means “Savior.” Although a New Testament concept, David had a deep understanding almost one thousand years before the Savior was born that God would become his Savior. The Hebrew word for “Savior,” *Yasha*, is very similar to the name Jesus, *Yeshua*.

Disgrace them all as they have  
devised their plans to disgrace me.

<sup>5</sup>Blow them away like dust in the  
wind,  
with the angel of Almighty God driv-  
ing them back!

<sup>6</sup>Make the road in front of them noth-  
ing but slippery darkness,  
with the angel of Yahweh behind  
them, chasing them away!

<sup>7</sup>For though I did nothing wrong to  
them, they set a trap for me,  
wanting me to fail and fall.

<sup>8</sup>Surprise them with your ambush,  
Lord,  
and catch them in the very trap they  
set for me.

Let them be the ones to fail and fall  
into destruction!

<sup>9</sup>Then my fears will dissolve into  
limitless joy;  
my whole being will overflow with  
gladness  
because of your mighty deliverance.

<sup>10</sup>Everything inside of me will shout  
it out:

“There’s no one like you, Lord!”

For look at how you protect the  
weak and helpless  
from the strong and heartless who  
oppress them.

#### Part Two – David, a Witness

<sup>11</sup>They are malicious men, hostile  
witnesses of wrong.

They rise up against me, accusers  
appearing out of nowhere.

<sup>12</sup>When I show them mercy, they bring  
me misery.

I’m forsaken and forlorn, like a  
motherless child.

<sup>13</sup>I even prayed over them when they  
were sick.

I was burdened and bowed low with  
fasting

and interceded for their healing,  
and I didn’t stop praying.

<sup>14</sup>I grieved for them, heavyhearted,  
as though they were my dearest  
family members

or my good friends who were sick,  
nearing death, needing prayer.

<sup>15</sup>But when I was the one who tripped  
up and stumbled,  
they came together to slander me,  
rejoicing in my time of trouble, tear-  
ing me to shreds  
with their lies and betrayal.

<sup>16</sup>These nameless ruffians,  
mocking me like godless fools at a  
feast—  
how they delight in throwing mud  
on my name.

<sup>17</sup>God, how long can you just stand  
there doing nothing?

Now is the time to act.

Rescue me from these brutal men,  
for I am being torn to shreds by  
these beasts

who are out to get me.

Save me from their rage, their cruel  
grasp.

<sup>18</sup>Then I will praise you wherever I go.  
And when everyone gathers for  
worship,

I will lift up your praise with a shout  
in front of the largest crowd I can  
find!

#### Part Three – David, a Worshiper

<sup>19</sup>Don’t let those who fight me for no  
reason be victorious.

Don’t let them succeed, these heart-  
less haters  
who come against me with their  
gloating sneers.

<sup>20</sup>They are the ones who would never  
seek peace as friends,  
for they are ever devising deceit  
against the innocent ones

who mind their own business.

<sup>21</sup>They open their mouths with ugly  
grins,  
gloating with glee over my every fault.  
“Look,” they say, “we caught him  
red-handed!

We saw him fall with our own  
eyes!”

<sup>22</sup>Yahweh, my caring God, you have  
been there all along.

You have seen their hypocrisy.  
Yahweh, don’t let them get away  
with this.

Don’t walk away without doing  
something.

<sup>23</sup>Now is the time to awake! Rise up,  
Lord!

Vindicate me, my Lord and my God!

<sup>24</sup>You have every right to judge me,  
Lord,  
according to your righteousness,  
but don’t let them rejoice over me  
when I stumble.

<sup>25–26</sup>Let them all be ashamed of  
themselves,  
humiliated when they rejoice over  
my every blunder.  
Shame them, Lord, when they say,  
“We saw what he did.

Now we have him right where we  
want him.

Let’s get him while he’s down!”  
Make them look ridiculous when  
they exalt themselves over me.  
May they all be disgraced and  
dishonored!

<sup>27</sup>But let all my true friends shout for  
joy,  
all those who know and love what I  
do for you.

Let them all say, “The Lord is great,  
and he delights in the prosperity of  
his servant.”

<sup>28</sup>Then I won’t be able to hold it in—  
everyone will hear my joyous praises  
all day long!  
Your righteousness will be the theme  
of my glory-song of praise!

## 36 THE BLESSING OF THE WISE

*A poetic song by King David, the  
servant of the Lord*

<sup>1</sup>The rebellion of sin speaks as an  
oracle of God,  
speaking deeply to the conscience of  
wicked men.<sup>a</sup>

*Yet they are still eager to sin,*  
for the fear of God is not before their  
eyes.

<sup>2</sup>See how they flatter themselves,  
unable to detect and detest their sins.  
They are crooked and conceited,  
convinced they can get away with  
anything.

<sup>3</sup>Their wicked words are nothing but  
lies.  
Wisdom is far from them.  
Goodness is both forgotten and  
forsaken.

<sup>4</sup>They lie awake at night to hatch their  
evil plots,  
always planning their schemes of  
darkness,  
and never once do they consider the  
evil of their ways.

<sup>5</sup>But you, O Lord, your mercy-seat  
love is limitless,  
reaching higher than the highest  
heavens.

Your great faithfulness is infinite,  
stretching over the whole earth.

<sup>6</sup>Your righteousness is unmovable,  
just like the mighty mountains.

<sup>a</sup> 36:1 Or “The heart of the wicked is rebellious to the core.”



Your judgments are as full of wisdom  
as the oceans are full of water.

Your tender care and kindness leave  
no one forgotten,  
not a man or even a mouse.

<sup>7</sup>O God, how extravagant is your cher-  
ishing love!

All mankind can find a hiding place  
under the shadow of your wings.

<sup>8</sup>All may drink of the anointing from  
the abundance<sup>a</sup> of your house.<sup>b</sup>

All may drink their fill from the  
rivers of Eden.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>9</sup>The fountain of life flows from you<sup>d</sup>  
*to satisfy me.*

In your light of holiness we receive  
the light of revelation.

<sup>10</sup>Lord, keep pouring out your unfail-  
ing love

on those who are near you.

Release more of your blessings to  
those who are loyal to you.

<sup>11</sup>Don't let these proud boasters tram-  
ple me down;

don't let them push me around  
by the sheer strength of their  
wickedness.

<sup>12</sup>There they lie in the dirt, these evil  
ones,

thrown down to the ground, never to  
arise again!

## 37 A SONG OF WISDOM

*Poetic praise by King David<sup>e</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Don't follow after the wicked ones or  
be jealous of their wealth.

Don't think for a moment they're  
better off than you.

<sup>2</sup>They and their short-lived success  
will soon shrivel up and quickly fade  
away,

like grass clippings in the hot sun.

<sup>3</sup>Keep trusting in the Lord and do  
what is right in his eyes.

Fix your heart on the promises of  
God, and you will dwell in the land,  
feasting on his faithfulness.

<sup>4</sup>Find your delight<sup>f</sup> and true pleasure  
in Yahweh,

and he will give you what you desire  
the most.

<sup>5</sup>Give<sup>g</sup> God the right to direct your life,  
and as you trust him along the way,  
you'll find he pulled it off perfectly!

<sup>6</sup>He will appear<sup>h</sup> as your

righteousness,  
as sure as the dawning of a new day.

He will manifest as your justice,  
as sure and strong as the noonday sun.

<sup>7</sup>Quiet your heart in his presence  
and wait<sup>i</sup> patiently for Yahweh.

<sup>a</sup> 36:8 The Hebrew word translated "abundance" is literally "butterfat" or "oil." It is a symbol of the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>b</sup> 36:8 Or "They will be satisfied [or watered] in the abundance of your house."

<sup>c</sup> 36:8 Or "Eden's rivers of pleasure." The garden of Eden had flowing rivers of delight. Eden means "pleasure." The Hebrew word used here is the plural form of Eden.

<sup>d</sup> 36:9 See Prov. 10:11; 13:14; John 1:4.

<sup>e</sup> 37 Psalm 37 is an acrostic psalm, in which every other verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>f</sup> 37:4 The word *delight* means "to be soft or tender."

<sup>g</sup> 37:5 The Hebrew word used here can be translated "commit," which means "to roll over your burdens on the Lord."

<sup>h</sup> 37:6 The Hebrew verb found here is also used for giving birth. Perhaps this is a reference to the birth of Christ, our righteousness.

<sup>i</sup> 37:7 The root word of the word for "wait" can mean "to whirl" or "to be in labor [give birth]." What an unusual concept for waiting on God. We may feel like we're being *whirled* around by our circumstances, but in the end, our season of waiting *gives birth* to greater things.

And don't think for a moment that  
the wicked, in their prosperity,  
are better off than you.

<sup>8</sup>Stay away from anger and revenge.  
Keep envy far from you, for it only  
leads you into lies.

<sup>9</sup>For one day the wicked will be  
destroyed,  
but those who trust in the Lord  
will inherit the land.

<sup>10</sup>Just a little while longer and the  
ungodly will vanish;  
you will look for them in vain.

<sup>11</sup>But the humble of heart will inherit  
every promise<sup>a</sup>  
and enjoy abundant peace.

<sup>12</sup>Let the wicked keep plotting against  
the godly  
with all their sneers and arrogant jeers.

<sup>13</sup>God laughs at the wicked and their  
plans,  
for he knows their day is coming!

<sup>14</sup>Evil ones take aim at the poor and  
helpless;  
they are ready to slaughter those  
who do right.

<sup>15</sup>But the Lord will turn all their  
weapons of wickedness back on  
themselves,  
piercing their pride-filled hearts until  
they are helpless.

<sup>16</sup>It is much better to have little  
combined with much of God  
than to have the fabulous wealth of  
the wicked and nothing else.

<sup>17</sup>For the Lord takes care of all his  
forgiven ones  
while the strength of evil men will  
surely slip away.

<sup>18</sup>Day by day the Lord watches the  
good deeds of the godly,  
and he prepares for them his  
forever-reward.

<sup>19</sup>Even in a time of disaster he will  
watch over them,  
and they will always have more than  
enough  
no matter what happens.

<sup>20</sup>All the enemies of God will perish.  
For the wicked have only a  
momentary value, a fading  
glory.  
Then one day they vanish! Here  
today, gone tomorrow.

<sup>21</sup>They break their promises, borrow-  
ing money  
but never paying it back.  
The good man returns what he owes  
with some extra besides.

<sup>22</sup>Yahweh's blessed ones receive the  
land,  
but the cursed ones will be cut off  
with nothing to show for  
themselves.

<sup>23</sup>When Yahweh delights in how you  
live your life,  
he establishes your every step.

<sup>24</sup>If they stumble badly they will still  
survive,  
for the Lord lifts them up with his  
hands.

<sup>25</sup>I was once inexperienced,<sup>b</sup> but now  
I'm old.  
Not once have I found a lover of God  
forsaken by him,  
nor have any of their children gone  
hungry.

<sup>26</sup>Instead, I've found the godly ones  
to be the generous ones who give  
freely to others.  
Their children are blessed and  
become a blessing.

<sup>27</sup>If you truly want to dwell forever in  
God's presence,  
forsake evil and do what is right in  
his eyes.

<sup>a</sup> 37:11 See Matt. 5:5.

<sup>b</sup> 37:25 Or "immature." The Hebrew word *na'ar* has a homonym that means "to be driven out," which may be a reference to David being driven out of Jerusalem by Absalom.

<sup>28</sup>The Lord loves it when he sees us walking in his justice.  
 He will never desert his devoted lovers;  
 they will be kept forever in his faithful care,  
 but the descendants of the wicked will be banished.

<sup>29</sup>The faithful lovers of God will inherit the earth  
 and enjoy every promise of God's care,  
 dwelling in peace forever.

<sup>30</sup>God-lovers make the best counselors.  
 Their words possess wisdom and are right and trustworthy.

<sup>31</sup>The ways of God are in their hearts  
 and they won't swerve from the paths of steadfast righteousness.

<sup>32</sup>Evil ones spy on the godly ones,  
 stalking them  
 to find something they could use to accuse them.  
 They're out for the kill!

<sup>33</sup>But God will foil all their plots.  
 The godly will not stand condemned when brought to trial.

<sup>34</sup>So don't be impatient for Yahweh to act;  
 keep moving forward steadily in his ways,  
 and he will exalt you to possess the land.  
 You'll watch with your own eyes  
 and see the wicked lose everything.

<sup>35</sup>I've already seen this happen.  
 Once I saw a wicked and violent man overpower all who were around him,  
 a domineering tyrant with his pride-  
 ful and oppressive ways.

<sup>36</sup>Then he died and was forgotten.  
 Now no one cares that he is gone forever.

<sup>37</sup>But you can tell who are the blameless and spiritually mature.  
*What a different story with them!*  
 The godly ones will have a peaceful, prosperous future  
 with a happy ending.

<sup>38</sup>Every evil sinner will be destroyed, obliterated.  
 They'll be utter failures with no future!

<sup>39</sup>But the Lord will be the Savior of all who love him.  
 Even in their time of trouble, God will live in them as strength.

<sup>40</sup>Because of their faith in him, their daily portion will be  
 a Father's help and deliverance from evil.  
 This is true for all who turn to hide themselves in him!

## 38 A GROAN BEFORE THE THRONE

*A poetic lament to remember, by King David<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>O Lord, don't punish me angrily for what I've done.  
 Don't let my sin inflame your wrath against me.

<sup>2</sup>For the arrows of your conviction have pierced me deeply.  
 Your blows have struck my soul and crushed me.

<sup>3</sup>Now my body is sick.  
 My health is totally broken because of your anger,  
 and it's all due to my sins!

<sup>4</sup>I'm overwhelmed, swamped, and submerged  
 beneath the heavy burden of my guilt.  
 It clings to me and won't let me go.

<sup>5</sup>My rotting wounds are a witness against me.  
 They are severe and getting worse,

<sup>a</sup> 38 The Septuagint has in the inscription "To be remembered on the Sabbath."

reminding me of my failure and folly.

<sup>6</sup>I am completely broken because of what I've done.

Gloom is all around me.

My sins have bent me over to the ground.

<sup>7-8</sup>My inner being is shriveled up; my self-confidence crushed. Sick with fever, I'm left exhausted. Now I'm as cold as a corpse, and nothing is left inside me but great groaning filled with anguish.

<sup>9</sup>Lord, you know all my desires and deepest longings.

My tears are liquid words, and you can read them all.

<sup>10-11</sup>My heart beats wildly, my strength is sapped, and the light of my eyes is going out.

My friends stay far away from me, avoiding me like the plague.

Even my family wants nothing to do with me.

<sup>12</sup>Meanwhile my enemies are out to kill me, plotting my ruin, speaking of my doom as they spend every waking moment planning how to finish me off.

<sup>13-14</sup>I'm like a deaf man who no longer hears.

I can't even speak up, and words fail me;

I have no argument to counter their threats.

<sup>15</sup>Lord, the only thing I can do is wait and put my hope in you.

I wait for your help, my God.

<sup>16</sup>So hear my cry and put an end to their strutting in pride,

to those who gloat when I stumble in pain.

<sup>17</sup>I'm slipping away and on the verge of a breakdown, with nothing but sorrow and sighing.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>18</sup>I confess all my sin to you; I can't hold it in any longer.

My agonizing thoughts punish me for my wrongdoing;

I feel condemned as I consider all I've done.

<sup>19</sup>My enemies are many.

They hate me and persecute me, though I've done nothing against them to deserve it.

<sup>20</sup>I show goodness to them and get paid evil in return.

And they hate me even more when I stand for what is right.

<sup>21</sup>So don't forsake me now, Lord! Don't leave me in this condition.

<sup>22</sup>God, hurry to help me. Run to my rescue!

For you're my Savior and my only hope!

## 39 A CRY FOR HELP

*For the Pure and Shining One*

*A song of praising by King David<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>1-2</sup>Here's my life motto, the truth I live by:

I will guard my ways for all my days.

I will speak only what is right, guarding what I speak.

Like a watchman guards against an attack of the enemy,

I'll guard and muzzle my mouth when the wicked are around me.

I will remain silent and will not grumble

or speak out of my disappointment.

a 38:17 The Septuagint reads "I am prepared for all of their whips—prepared to suffer."

b 39 The Hebrew inscription includes the name Jeduthun, which can be translated "praising."



But the longer I'm silent, the more  
my pain grows worse!

<sup>3-4</sup>My heart burned with a fire within  
me,  
and my thoughts eventually boiled  
over  
until they finally came rolling out of  
my mouth:

"Lord, help me to know how fleeting  
my time on earth is.

Help me to know how limited is my  
life  
and that I'm only here but for a  
moment more.

<sup>5</sup>What a brief<sup>a</sup> time you've given me  
to live!

Compared to you my lifetime is  
nothing at all!

Nothing more than a puff of air—I'm  
gone so swiftly.

So too are the grandest of men;  
they are nothing but a fleeting  
shadow!"

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>6</sup>We live our lives like those living in  
shadows.<sup>b</sup>

All our activities and energies are  
spent for things that pass away.

We gather, we hoard, we cling to our  
things,  
only to leave them all behind for  
who knows who.

<sup>7</sup>And now, God,<sup>c</sup> I'm left with one  
conclusion:

my only hope is to hope in you alone!

<sup>8</sup>Save me from being overpowered by  
my sin;  
don't make me a disgrace before the  
degenerate.

<sup>9</sup>Lord, I'm left speechless and I have  
no excuse,

so I'll not complain any longer.

Now I know you're the one who is  
behind it all.

<sup>10</sup>But I can't take it much longer.

Spare me these blows from your  
discipline-rod.

For if you are against me, I will  
waste away to nothing.

<sup>11</sup>No one endures when you rebuke  
and discipline us for our sins.

Like a cobweb is swept away with a  
wave of the hand,

you sweep away all that we once  
called dear.

How fleeting and frail our lives!

We're nothing more than a puff of  
air.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>12</sup>Lord, listen to all my tender cries.

Read my every tear, like liquid  
words that plead for your help.

I feel all alone at times, like a  
stranger to you,

passing through this life just like all  
those before me.

<sup>13</sup>Don't let me die without restoring  
joy and gladness to my soul.

May your frown over my failure  
become a smile over my success.

## 40 A JOYFUL SALVATION

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A song of poetic praise by King  
David*

<sup>1</sup>I waited and waited and waited some  
more,  
patiently, knowing God would come  
through for me.

Then, at last, he bent down and  
listened to my cry.

<sup>a</sup> 39:5 Interestingly, the Hebrew word for "brief" in this verse is "a handbreadth," or the span of a man's hand. Our life's duration is compared to a mere six-inch span!

<sup>b</sup> 39:6 Or "like phantoms going to and fro."

<sup>c</sup> 39:7 The Aramaic is *Maryah*, the Aramaic form of YHWH or Lord Yahweh.

<sup>2</sup>He stooped down to lift me out of danger  
from the desolate pit I was in,  
out of the muddy mess I had fallen  
into.

Now he's lifted me up into a firm,  
secure place  
and steadied me while I walk along  
his ascending path.

<sup>3</sup>A new song for a new day rises up  
in me  
every time I think about how he  
breaks through for me!  
Ecstatic praise pours out of my  
mouth until  
everyone hears how God has set me  
free.

Many will see his miracles;  
they'll stand in awe of God and fall  
in love with him!

<sup>4</sup>Blessing after blessing comes to  
those who love and trust the Lord.  
They will not fall away,  
for they refuse to listen to the lies of  
the proud.

<sup>5</sup>O Lord, our God, no one can com-  
pare with you.  
Such wonderful works and miracles  
are all found with you!  
And you think of us all the time  
with your countless expressions of  
love—  
far exceeding our expectations!

<sup>6</sup>It's not sacrifices that really move  
your heart.  
Burnt offerings, sin offerings—those  
aren't what bring you joy.  
But when you open my ears and  
speak to me,  
I become your willing servant, your  
prisoner of love for life.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>7</sup>So I said, "Here I am! I'm coming *to  
you as a sacrifice*,<sup>b</sup>

for in the prophetic scrolls of your  
book  
you have written about me.

<sup>8</sup>I delight to fulfill your will, my God,  
for your living words are written  
upon the pages of my heart."

<sup>9</sup>I tell everyone everywhere the truth  
of your righteousness.  
And you know I haven't held back in  
telling the message to all.

<sup>10</sup>I don't keep it a secret or hide the  
truth.  
I preach of your faithfulness and  
kindness,  
proclaiming your extravagant love to  
the largest crowd I can find!

<sup>11</sup>So Lord, don't hold back your love  
or withhold  
your tender mercies from me.  
Keep me in your truth and let your  
compassion overflow to me  
no matter what I face.

<sup>12</sup>Evil surrounds me; problems greater  
than I can solve  
come one after another.  
Without you, I know I can't make it.  
My sins are so many!  
I'm so ashamed to lift my face to  
you.

For my guilt grabs me and stings  
my soul  
until I am weakened and spent.

<sup>13</sup>Please, Lord! Come quickly and  
rescue me!  
Take pleasure in showing me your  
favor and restore me.

<sup>14</sup>Let all who seek my life be humiliated!  
Let them be confused and ashamed,  
God.

<sup>a</sup> 40:6 The Septuagint is "a body you have prepared for me." The Hebrew reads "You have pierced my ear." This is a Hebraic reference to being a bond servant whose ear has been pierced by his master to signify the servant's desire to serve for life. See Ex. 21:1–6; Isa. 50:5; Heb. 10:5.

<sup>b</sup> 40:7 Implied in the context. See Heb. 10:5–7.

Scatter those who wish me evil; they  
just want me dead.

<sup>15</sup>Scoff at every scoffer and cause  
them all to be utter failures.

Let them be ashamed and horrified  
by their complete defeat.

<sup>16</sup>But let all who passionately seek you  
erupt with excitement and joy over  
what you've done!

Let all your devoted lovers rejoice  
continually in the Savior,<sup>a</sup> saying,  
"How great and glorious is our  
God!"

<sup>17</sup>Lord, in my place of weakness and  
need, I ask again:  
Will you come and help me?  
I know I'm always in your thoughts.  
You are my true Savior and hero,  
so don't delay to deliver me now, for  
you are my God.

## 41 I NEED YOU, LORD

*King David's poetic song for the  
Pure and Shining One*

<sup>1</sup>God always blesses those who are  
kind to the poor and helpless.  
They're the first ones God helps  
when they find themselves in any  
trouble.

<sup>2</sup>The Lord will preserve and protect  
them.  
They'll be honored and esteemed<sup>b</sup>  
while their enemies are defeated.

<sup>3</sup>When they are sick, lying upon their  
bed of suffering,  
God will restore them.

He will raise them up again and  
restore them back to health.

<sup>4</sup>So *in my sickness* I say to you,  
"Lord, be my kind healer.  
Heal my body and soul; heal me,  
God!

For I have confessed my sins to  
you."<sup>c</sup>

<sup>5</sup>But those who hate me wish the  
worst for me, saying,  
"When will he die and be forgotten?"

<sup>6</sup>And when these "friends" come to  
visit me  
with their pious sympathy and their  
hollow words  
and with hypocrisy hidden in their  
hearts,  
I can see right through it all.  
For they come merely to gather  
gossip about me,  
using all they find to mock me with  
malicious hearts of slander.

<sup>7</sup>They are wicked whisperers who  
imagine the worst for me,  
repeating their rumors, saying,

<sup>8</sup>"He got what he deserved; it's over  
for him!

The spirit of infirmity<sup>d</sup> is upon him,  
and he'll never get over this illness."

<sup>9</sup>Even my ally, my friend, has turned  
against me.

He was one I totally trusted with my  
life,

sharing supper with him,<sup>e</sup>

and now he shows me nothing but  
betrayal and treachery.

He has sold me as an enemy.<sup>f</sup>

a 40:16 This verse contains the root word for Yeshua in Hebrew.

b 41:2 Or "They will be blessed in the land."

c 41:4 Or "For I have sinned against you."

d 41:8 Or "A thing of Belial" or "An affliction from the abandoned one."

e 41:9 In the ancient Near Eastern culture, sharing a meal together was a sign of covenant friendship.

f 41:9 The Hebrew literally reads "He lifted up his heel against me." This is a powerful figure of speech meaning he was sold as an enemy and was treated treacherously. This verse was quoted, in part, by Jesus at the Last Supper (see John 13:18 and footnote).

<sup>10</sup>So Lord, please don't desert me  
when I need you!  
Give me grace and get me back on  
my feet  
so I can triumph over them all.  
<sup>11</sup>Then I'll know you're pleased with me  
when you allow me to taste victory  
over all my foes.  
<sup>12</sup>Now stand up for me and don't let  
me fall,

for I've walked with integrity.  
Keep me before your face  
forever.  
<sup>13</sup>Everyone praise the Lord God of  
Israel, always and forever!  
For he is from eternity past  
and will remain for the eternity to  
come.  
That's the way it will be forever.  
Faithful is our King! Amen!<sup>a</sup>

## BOOK 2

### THE EXODUS PSALMS

*Psalms of suffering and redemption*

## 42 A CRY FOR REVIVAL<sup>b</sup>

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A contemplative poem for  
instruction by the prophetic singers  
of Korah's clan<sup>c</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>I long to drink of you, O God,  
*to drink deeply from the streams of  
pleasure*  
flowing from your presence.  
My longings overwhelm me for more  
of you!<sup>d</sup>

<sup>2</sup>My soul thirsts, pants, and longs for  
the living God.  
I want to come and see the face of God.

<sup>3</sup>Day and night my tears keep falling  
and my heart keeps crying for your  
help,

while my enemies mock me over  
and over, saying,  
"Where is this God of yours? *Why  
doesn't he help you?*"

<sup>4</sup>So I speak over my heartbroken soul,  
"Take courage. Remember when you  
used to be  
right out front leading the proces-  
sion of praise  
when the great crowd of  
worshippers  
gathered to go into the presence of  
the Lord?  
You shouted with joy as the sound of  
passionate celebration  
filled the air and the joyous multi-  
tude of lovers  
honored the feast of the Lord!"

<sup>a</sup> 41:13 Some scholars believe this last verse was added as a "doxology of praise," marking the end of the first book of Psalms. The word *amen* could be translated as "Faithful is our King!"

<sup>b</sup> 42 Psalms 42 and 43 were originally composed as one psalm and later made into two.

<sup>c</sup> 42 Korah was the great-grandson of Levi. The sons of Korah (translated here as the "prophetic singers of Korah's clan") were Levitical singers. David chose them to preside over the music of the tabernacle-tent on Mount Zion.

<sup>d</sup> 42:1 The literal Hebrew is "as the deer pants for the riverbank [water's edge]." This translation takes the metaphor of a hunted deer and puts it into terms that transfer the meaning into today's context. David was describing the passion and longing he had that was yet unfulfilled.



<sup>5</sup>So then, my soul, why would you be depressed?

Why would you sink into despair?  
Just keep hoping and waiting on  
God, your Savior.

For no matter what, I will still sing  
with praise,  
for you are my saving grace!

<sup>6</sup>Here I am depressed and downcast.  
Yet I will still remember you as I  
ponder the place

where your glory streams down from  
the mighty mountaintops, lofty and  
majestic—the mountains of your  
*awesome presence.*<sup>a</sup>

<sup>7</sup>My deep need calls out to the deep  
kindness of your love.

Your waterfall of weeping sent  
waves of sorrow  
over my soul, carrying me away,  
cascading over me like a thundering  
cataract.

<sup>8</sup>All through the day Yahweh has  
commanded his endless love to  
pour over me.

Through the night I sing his songs  
and my praises<sup>b</sup> to the living God.

<sup>9</sup>I will say to God, “You are my moun-  
tain of strength;  
how could you forget me?

Why must I suffer this vile oppres-  
sion of my enemies—  
these heartless tormentors who are  
out to kill me?”

<sup>10</sup>Their wounding words pierce my  
heart

over and over while they say,  
“Where is this God of yours?”

<sup>11</sup>So I say to my soul,  
“Don’t be discouraged. Don’t be  
disturbed.

For I know my God will break  
through for me.”

Then I’ll have plenty of reasons to  
praise him all over again.  
Yes, he is my saving grace!

## 43 LIGHT AND TRUTH

*For the Pure and Shining One by the  
prophetic singers of Korah’s clan<sup>c</sup>  
A contemplative poem for instruction*

<sup>1</sup>God, clear my name.

Plead my case against the unjust  
charges  
of these ungodly workers of  
wickedness.

Deliver me from these lying  
degenerates.

<sup>2</sup>For you are where my strength  
comes from<sup>d</sup> and my protector,  
so why would you leave me now?  
Must I be covered with gloom  
while the enemy comes after me,  
gloating with glee?

<sup>3</sup>Pour into me the brightness of your  
daybreak!

Pour into me your rays of  
revelation-truth!

Let them comfort and gently lead me  
onto the shining path,  
showing the way into your burning  
presence,  
into your many sanctuaries of  
holiness.

<sup>4</sup>Then I will come closer to your very  
altar

until I come before you, the God of  
my ecstatic joy!

I will praise you with the harp that  
plays in my heart to you,  
my God, my magnificent God!

a 42:6 The Hebrew text contains “Mount Hermon” and “Mount Mizar,” considered to be sacred mountains in the Hebrew culture. *Hermon* means “lofty and majestic.” *Mizar* means “littleness.”

b 42:8 Or “my prayer.”

c 43 Originally there was no inscription for this psalm as it was part of Ps. 42.

d 43:2 Or “God of my strength.”

<sup>5</sup>Then I will say to my soul,  
 “Don’t be discouraged; don’t be  
 disturbed,  
 for I fully expect my Savior-God to  
 break through for me.  
 Then I’ll have plenty of reasons to  
 praise him all over again.”  
 Yes, he is my saving grace!

## 44 WAKE UP, LORD, WE’RE IN TROUBLE

*For the Pure and Shining One by the  
 prophetic singers of Korah’s clan  
 A contemplative poem for  
 instruction*

### The Past

<sup>1-2</sup>God, we’ve heard about all the glorious  
 miracles  
 you’ve done for our ancestors in  
 days gone by.  
 They told us about the ancient times,  
 how by your power  
 you drove out the ungodly nations  
 from this land,  
 crushing all their strongholds and  
 giving the land to us.  
 Now the people of Israel cover the  
 land  
 from one end to the other,  
*all because of your grace and power!*  
<sup>3</sup>Our forefathers didn’t take the land  
 by their own strength  
 or their own skill or strategy.  
 But it was through the shining forth  
 of your radiant presence  
 and the display of your mighty  
 power.  
 You loved to give them victory,  
 for you took great delight in them.  
<sup>4</sup>You are my God, my King!  
 It’s now time to decree majesties for  
 Jacob!

<sup>5</sup>Through your glorious name and  
 your awesome power,  
 we can push through to any victory  
 and defeat every enemy.

<sup>6</sup>For I will not trust in the weapons of  
 the world;<sup>a</sup>

I know they will never save me.

<sup>7</sup>Only you will be our Savior from all  
 our enemies.

All those who hate us you have  
 brought to shame.

<sup>8</sup>So now I constantly boast in you.

I can never thank you enough!

*Pause in his presence*

### The Present

<sup>9</sup>But you have turned your back on us;  
 you walked off and left us!

You’ve rejected us, tossing us aside  
 in humiliating shame.

You don’t go before us anymore in  
 our battles.

<sup>10</sup>We retreat before our enemies in  
 defeat,

for you are no longer helping us.

Those who hate us have invaded our  
 land

and plundered our people.

<sup>11</sup>You have treated us like sheep in the  
 slaughter pen,

ready to be butchered.

You’ve scattered us to the four winds.

<sup>12</sup>You have sold us as slaves for  
 nothing!

You have counted us, your precious  
 ones, as worthless.

<sup>13</sup>You have caused our neighbors to  
 despise and scorn us.

All those around us mock and curse  
 us.

<sup>14</sup>You have made us the butt of their  
 jokes.

Disliked by all, we are the laughing-  
 stock of the people.

<sup>a</sup> 44:6 Or “bow and sword.”

<sup>15-16</sup>There's no escape from this constant curse, this humiliation!  
We are despised, jeered, overwhelmed by shame,  
and overcome at every turn  
by our hateful and heartless enemies.

<sup>17</sup>Despite all of this, we have not forgotten you;  
we have not broken covenant with you.

<sup>18</sup>We have not betrayed you; our hearts are still yours.  
Our steps have not strayed from your path.

<sup>19</sup>Yet you have crushed us,  
leaving us in this wilderness place  
*of misery and desperation.*<sup>a</sup>  
With nowhere else to turn,  
death's dark door seems to be the only way out.

<sup>20-21</sup>If we had forsaken your holy name, wouldn't you know it?  
You'd be right in leaving us.  
If we had worshiped before other gods,  
no one would blame you for punishing us.  
God, you know our every heart-secret.  
*You know we still want you!*

<sup>22</sup>Because of you we face death threats every day.  
Like martyrs we are dying daily.  
We are seen as lambs lined up to be slaughtered as sacrifices.

### The Future

<sup>23</sup>So wake up, Lord God!

Why would you sleep when we're in trouble?

Are you forsaking us forever?

<sup>24</sup>You can't hide your face any longer from us!

How could you forget our agonizing sorrow?

<sup>25</sup>Now we lay facedown, sinking into the dust of death,  
the quicksand of the grave.

<sup>26</sup>Arise, awake, and come to help us,  
O Lord.

Let your unfailing love save us from this sorrow!

## 45 THE WEDDING SONG

*For the Pure and Shining One by the prophetic singers of Korah's clan*

*A contemplative song of instruction for the Loved One*

*To the melody of "Lilies"*<sup>b</sup>

<sup>1</sup>My heart is on fire, boiling over with passion.

Bubbling up within me are these beautiful lyrics

as a lovely poem to be sung for the King.

Like a river bursting its banks, I'm overflowing with words,  
spilling out into this sacred story.<sup>c</sup>

### His Royal Majesty

<sup>2</sup>Beautiful! Beautiful! Beyond the sons of men!<sup>d</sup>

Elegant grace pours out through every word you speak.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 44:19 Or "in this place of jackals."

<sup>b</sup> 45 Lilies in the Bible are metaphors of God's precious people. See Song. 2:1-2; Hos. 14:5; Luke 12:27-28. Many believe this was the wedding song composed for Solomon as he married the princess of Egypt. But the language is so lofty and glorious that we see One greater than Solomon in its verses. This is a song of the wedding of Jesus and his bride, the church.

<sup>c</sup> 45:1 The Hebrew is literally "My tongue is the pen of a skillful [inspired] scribe."

<sup>d</sup> 45:2 Or "You are the most wonderful and winsome of all men."

<sup>e</sup> 45:2 See John 6:68; 7:46.



Truly God has anointed you, his  
 favored one, for eternity!

<sup>3</sup>Now strap your lightning-sword of  
 judgment upon your side,  
 O mighty warrior, so majestic!  
 You are full of beauty and splendor  
 as you go out to war!

<sup>4</sup>In your glory and grandeur go forth  
 in victory!  
 Through your faithfulness and  
 meekness  
 the cause of truth and justice will  
 stand.

Awe-inspiring miracles are accom-  
 plished by your power,  
 leaving everyone dazed and  
 astonished!

<sup>5</sup>Your wounding leaves men's hearts  
 defeated  
 as they fall before you broken.

<sup>6</sup>Your glory-kingdom, O God, endures  
 forever,  
 for you are enthroned to rule with a  
 justice-scepter in your hand!

<sup>7</sup>You are passionate for righteousness,  
 and you hate lawlessness.  
 This is why God, your God,  
 crowns you with bliss above your  
 fellow kings.

He has anointed you, more than any  
 other,  
 with his oil of fervent joy,  
 the very fragrance of heaven's  
 gladness.

<sup>8</sup>Your royal robes release the scent of  
 suffering love<sup>a</sup> for your bride;

the odor of aromatic incense<sup>b</sup> is  
 upon you.  
 From the pure and shining place,<sup>c</sup>  
 lovely music  
 that makes you glad is played for  
 your pleasure.

### Her Royal Majesty

<sup>9</sup>The daughters of kings, women of  
 honor,  
 are maidens in your courts.  
 And standing beside you,  
 glistening in your pure and golden  
 glory,  
 is the beautiful bride-to-be!<sup>d</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Now listen, daughter, pay attention,  
 and forget about your past.  
 Put behind you every attachment to  
 the familiar,  
 even those who once were close to  
 you!

<sup>11</sup>For your royal Bridegroom is  
 ravished by your beautiful  
 brightness.  
 Bow in reverence before him, for he  
 is your Lord!

<sup>12</sup>Wedding presents pour in from  
 those of great wealth.<sup>e</sup>  
 The royal friends of the Bridegroom  
 shower you with gifts.

<sup>13</sup>As the princess-bride enters the  
 palace,  
 how glorious she appears within the  
 holy chamber,  
 robed with a wedding dress embroi-  
 dered with pure gold!

<sup>a</sup> 45:8 The Hebrew word *myrrh* is taken from a root word that means "suffering." Jewish rabbis refer to myrrh as "tears from a tree," a symbol of suffering love.

<sup>b</sup> 45:8 The Hebrew text reads "aloes and cassia." Both are equated with the anointing spice, the incense burned in the Holy Place.

<sup>c</sup> 45:8 Or "from the ivory palaces." This is an obvious reference to the Holy Place, as our High Priest comes from the chamber of glory to be with us. The word *ivory* is taken from a Hebrew word for "white and glistening."

<sup>d</sup> 45:9 Or "queen."

<sup>e</sup> 45:12 The Hebrew text is literally "the daughter of Tyre." This was symbolic of the merchants of the earth, those possessing great wealth.

<sup>14</sup>Lovely and stunning, she leads  
the procession with all her  
bridesmaids<sup>a</sup>  
as they come before you, her  
Bridegroom-King.

<sup>15</sup>What a grand, majestic entrance!  
A joyful, glad procession as they  
enter the palace gates!

<sup>16</sup>Your many sons will one day be  
kings, just like their Father.  
They will sit on royal thrones all  
around the world.

<sup>17</sup>I will make sure the fame of your  
name  
is honored in every generation, as  
all the people praise you,  
giving you thanks forever and ever!

## 46 GOD ON OUR SIDE

*For the Pure and Shining One by the  
prophetic singers of Korah's clan  
A poetic song to the melody of  
"Hidden Things"*<sup>b</sup>

<sup>1</sup>God, you're such a safe and powerful  
place to find refuge!  
You're a proven help in time of  
trouble—  
*more than enough* and always avail-  
able whenever I need you.

<sup>2</sup>So we will never fear  
even if every structure of support<sup>c</sup>  
were to crumble away.  
We will not fear even when the earth  
quakes and shakes,  
moving mountains and casting them  
into the sea.

<sup>3</sup>For the raging roar of stormy winds  
and crashing waves  
cannot erode our faith in you.  
*Pause in his presence*

<sup>4</sup>God has a constantly flowing river  
whose sparkling streams  
bring joy and delight to his people.  
His river flows right through the city  
of God Most High,  
into his holy dwelling places.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>5</sup>God is in the midst of his city,<sup>e</sup> secure  
and never shaken.

At daybreak his help will be seen  
with the appearing of the dawn.

<sup>6</sup>When the nations are in uproar with  
their tottering kingdoms,  
God simply raises his voice,  
and the earth begins to disintegrate  
before him.

<sup>7</sup>*Here he comes!*

The Commander!

The mighty Lord of Angel Armies is  
on our side!

The God of Jacob fights for us!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>8-9</sup>Everyone look!  
Come and see the breathtaking won-  
ders of our God.  
For he brings *both* ruin *and* revival.  
He's the one who makes conflicts end  
throughout the earth,  
breaking and burning every weapon  
of war.

<sup>10</sup>Surrender your anxiety!<sup>f</sup>  
Be still and realize that I am God.  
I am God above all the nations,

<sup>a</sup> 45:14 Or "virgins." (See Rev. 14:1-4; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2.)

<sup>b</sup> 46 As translated in the Septuagint. Other versions read "for the maidens." Ps. 46 is known as one of the Songs of Zion. The others are Pss. 48; 76; 84; 87; 122. These are psalms that praise Jerusalem as God's dwelling place.

<sup>c</sup> 46:2 Or "earth itself."

<sup>d</sup> 46:4 The plural "dwelling places" points to believers today. Each believer is now the holy dwelling place of God. God's river flows into us and through us.

<sup>e</sup> 46:5 This is a reference to Jerusalem, but today God calls his church a "city" on a hill.

<sup>f</sup> 46:10 Or "Let go!" The Septuagint reads "relax."

and I am exalted throughout the  
whole earth.

<sup>11</sup>Here he stands!

The Commander!

The mighty Lord of Angel Armies is  
on our side!

The God of Jacob fights for us!

*Pause in his presence*

## 47 THE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH

*For the Pure and Shining One by the  
prophetic singers of Korah's clan  
A poetic song*

<sup>1</sup>Go ahead and celebrate!

Come on and clap your hands,  
everyone!

Shout to God with the raucous  
sounds of joy!

<sup>2</sup>The Lord God Most High is astonish-  
ing, awesome beyond words!  
He's the formidable and powerful  
King over all the earth.

<sup>3</sup>He's the one who conquered the  
nations before us  
and placed them all under our feet.

<sup>4</sup>He's marked out our inheritance  
ahead of time,  
putting us in the front of the line,  
honoring Jacob, the one he loves.<sup>a</sup>

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5</sup>God arises with the earsplitting shout  
of his people!

God goes up with a trumpet blast!

<sup>6</sup>Sing and celebrate! Sing some more,  
celebrate some more!  
Sing your highest song of praise to  
our King!

<sup>7</sup>For God is the triumphant King; all  
the powers of the earth are his.

So sing your celebration songs of  
highest praise

to the glorious Enlightened One!

<sup>8</sup>Our God reigns over every nation.  
He reigns on his holy throne over all.

<sup>9</sup>All the nobles and princes,  
the loving servants of the God of  
Abraham,  
they all gather to worship.

Every warrior's shield is now  
lowered

as surrendered trophies before this  
King.

He has taken his throne, high and  
lofty, exalted over all!

## 48 BEAUTIFUL ZION

*A poetic song by the prophetic  
singers of Korah's clan*

<sup>1</sup>There are so many reasons to  
describe God as wonderful!  
So many reasons to praise him with  
unlimited praise!<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Zion-City is his home; he lives on his  
holy mountain—  
high and glorious, joy-filled and  
favored.

Zion-Mountain looms in the farthest  
reaches of the north,<sup>c</sup>  
the city of our incomparable King!

<sup>3</sup>This is his divine abode, an impene-  
trable citadel,  
for he is known to dwell in the high-  
est place.

<sup>4-6</sup>See how the mighty kings united to  
come against Zion,  
yet when they saw God manifest in  
front of their eyes,  
they were stunned.

Trembling, they all fled away,  
gripped with fear.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 47:4 Or "the pride of Jacob." The Septuagint reads "the beauty of Jacob."

<sup>b</sup> 48:1 This psalm was written to commemorate the defeat of the Assyrian army in the days of King Hezekiah.

<sup>c</sup> 48:2 Or "the sides of the north," a metaphor to describe God's heavenly home. See Isa. 14:13.

Seized with panic, they doubled up  
in frightful anguish,  
like a woman in the labor pains of  
childbirth.

<sup>7</sup>Like a hurricane blowing and break-  
ing the invading ships,<sup>b</sup>  
God blows upon them and breaks  
them to pieces.

<sup>8</sup>We have heard about these wonders,  
and then we saw them with our own  
eyes.

For this is the city of the Com-  
mander of Angel Armies,  
the city of our God, safe and secure  
forever!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>9</sup>Lord, as we worship you in your  
temple,  
we recall over and over your kind-  
ness to us  
and your unending love.

<sup>10</sup>The fame of your name echoes  
throughout the entire world,  
accompanied with praises.  
Your right hand is full of victory.

<sup>11</sup>So let the people of Zion rejoice with  
gladness;  
let the daughters of praise<sup>c</sup> leap for  
joy!  
For God will see to it that you are  
judged fairly.

<sup>12-13</sup>Circle Zion; count her towers.  
Consider her walls, climb her  
palaces,  
and then go and tell the coming  
generation  
of the care and compassion of our  
God.

<sup>14</sup>Yes, this is our God, our great God  
forever.

He will lead us onward until the end,  
through all time, beyond death,  
and into eternity!

## 49 WISDOM BETTER THAN WEALTH

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A poetic song by the prophetic  
singers of Korah's clan*

<sup>1-2</sup>Listen, one and all!  
Both rich and poor together, all over  
the world—  
everyone listen to what I have to  
say!

<sup>3</sup>For wisdom will come from my  
mouth;  
words of insight and understanding  
will be heard  
from the musings of my heart.

<sup>4</sup>I will break open mysteries with my  
music,  
and my song will release riddles  
solved.

<sup>5</sup>There's no reason to fear when trou-  
bling times come,  
even when you're surrounded with  
problems  
and persecutors who chase at your  
heels.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>6-7</sup>They trust in their treasures and  
boast in their riches,  
yet not one of them, though rich as  
a king,  
could rescue his own brother from  
the guilt of his sins.  
No one could give God the ransom  
price  
for the soul of another, let alone for  
himself.

<sup>a</sup> 48:4-6 This no doubt refers to the night the angel of the Lord descended into the ranks of the Assyrians and killed 185,000 men. See Isa. 37:36.

<sup>b</sup> 48:7 Or "ships of Tarshish."

<sup>c</sup> 48:11 Or "the daughters of Judah."

<sup>d</sup> 49:5 This phrase contains a variant form of the name Jacob, which means "heel grabber."



<sup>8-9</sup>A soul's redemption is too costly  
and precious  
for anyone to pay with earthly  
wealth.  
The price to pay is never enough  
to purchase eternal life for even one,  
to keep them out of hell.

<sup>10-11</sup>The brightest and best, along with  
the foolish and senseless,  
God sees that they all will die one day,  
leaving their houses and wealth to  
others.  
Even though they name streets and  
lands after themselves,<sup>a</sup>  
hoping to have their memory endure  
beyond the grave,  
becoming legends in their own minds,  
their home address is now the  
cemetery!

<sup>12</sup>The honor of man is short-lived and  
fleeting.  
There's little difference between man  
and beast,  
for both will one day perish.

<sup>13</sup>Such is the path of foolish men  
and those who quote everything  
they say,  
for they are here today and gone  
tomorrow!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>14</sup>A shepherd called "Death" herds  
them,  
leading them straight to hell like  
mindless sheep.  
Yet at daybreak you will find the  
righteous ruling in their place.  
Every trace of them will be gone  
forever,  
with all their "glory" lost in the dark-  
ness of their doom.

<sup>15</sup>But I know the loving God will  
redeem my soul,  
raising me up from the dark power  
of death,  
taking me as his bridal partner.<sup>b</sup>  
*Pause in his presence*

<sup>16</sup>So don't be disturbed when you see  
the rich  
surround you with the "glory" of  
their wealth on full display.

<sup>17</sup>For when they die, they will carry  
nothing with them,  
and their riches will not follow them  
beyond the grave.

<sup>18-19</sup>Though they have the greatest  
rewards of this world  
and all applaud them for their  
accomplishments,  
they will follow those who have  
gone before them  
and go straight into the realm of  
darkness,  
where they will never ever see the  
light again.

<sup>20</sup>So this is the way of mortal man—  
honored for a moment, yet without  
eternal insight,  
like a beast that will one day perish.

## 50 GOD HAS SPOKEN

*A poetic song of Asaph, the  
gatherer<sup>c</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>The God of gods, the mighty Lord  
himself, has spoken!  
He shouts out over all the people of  
the earth  
in every brilliant sunrise and every  
beautiful sunset,  
*saying, "Listen to me!"*

a 49:10-11 Or "They read their names in the ground."

b 49:15 Or "he will offer his hand to me in marriage."

c 50 Asaph's name means "gatherer" or "fulfilled prophecy." Like David, Asaph was anointed with the spirit of prophecy and wrote twelve psalms (Pss. 50; 73-83).

d 50:2 The Aramaic text can be translated "Out of Zion God has shown a glorious crown."

<sup>2</sup>God's glory-light shines out of the  
Zion-realm<sup>d</sup>  
with the radiance of perfect beauty.

<sup>3</sup>With the rumble of thunder he  
approaches;  
he will not be silent, for he comes  
with an earsplitting sound!  
All around him are furious flames  
of fire,  
and preceding him is the dazzling  
blaze of his glory.

<sup>4</sup>Here he comes to judge his people!  
He summons his court with heaven  
and earth as his jury, saying,

<sup>5a</sup>"Gather all my devoted lovers,  
my godly ones whose hearts are one  
with me—  
those who have entered into my holy  
covenant  
by sacrifices upon the altar."

<sup>6</sup>And the heavens declare his justice:  
"God himself will be their judge,  
and he will judge them with  
righteousness!"

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>7a</sup>"Listen to me, O my people! Listen  
well, for I am your God!  
I am bringing you to trial, and here  
are my charges."<sup>a</sup>

<sup>8</sup>I do not rebuke you for your  
sacrifices,  
which you continually bring to my  
altar.

<sup>9</sup>Do I need your young bulls or goats  
from your fields  
*as if I were hungry?*

<sup>10-11</sup>Every animal of field and forest  
belongs to me, the Creator.  
I know every movement of the birds  
in the sky,  
and every animal of the field is in  
my thoughts.

The entire world and everything it  
contains is mine.

<sup>12-13</sup>If I were hungry, do you think I  
would tell you?  
For all that I have created, the full-  
ness of the earth, is mine.  
Am I fed by your sacrifices? Of  
course not!

<sup>14</sup>Why don't you bring me the sacri-  
fices I desire?  
Bring me your true and sincere  
thanks,  
and show your gratitude by keeping  
your promises to me,  
the Most High.

<sup>15</sup>Honor me by trusting in me in your  
day of trouble.  
Cry aloud to me, and I will be there  
to rescue you.

<sup>16</sup>And now I speak to the wicked. Lis-  
ten to what I have to say to you!  
What right do you have to presume  
to speak for me  
and claim my covenant promises as  
yours?

<sup>17</sup>For you have hated my instruction  
and disregarded my words,  
throwing them away as worthless!

<sup>18</sup>You forget to condemn the thief or  
adulterer.  
You are their friend, running along-  
side them into darkness.

<sup>19-20</sup>The sins of your mouth multiply  
evil.

You have a lifestyle of lies;  
you are devoted to deceit as you  
speak against others,  
even slanderer those of your own  
household!

<sup>21</sup>All this you have done and I kept  
silent,  
so you thought that I was just like  
you, sanctioning evil.

<sup>a</sup> 50:7 This summons to judgment is not against the heathen nations but against God's people.  
See 1 Peter 4:17.

But now I will bring you to my  
courtroom  
and spell out clearly my charges  
before you.

<sup>22</sup>This is your last chance, my final  
warning. Your time is up!  
Turn away from all this evil, or *the  
next time you hear from me  
will be when I am coming to pass  
judgment upon you.*

I will snatch you away, and no one  
will be there  
to help you escape my judgment.

<sup>23</sup>The life that pleases me is a life  
lived in the gratitude of grace,  
always choosing to walk with me in  
what is right.  
This is the sacrifice I desire from you.  
If you do this, more of my salvation  
will unfold for you.”

## 51 PARDON AND PURITY

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A prayer of confession when the  
prophet Nathan exposed King  
David's adultery with Bathsheba<sup>a</sup>*

### David's Confession

<sup>1-2</sup>God, give me mercy from your foun-  
tain of forgiveness!  
I know your abundant love is  
enough to wash away my guilt.

Because your compassion is so  
great,  
take away this shameful guilt of sin.  
Forgive the full extent of my rebel-  
lious ways,  
and erase this deep stain on my  
conscience.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>3-4</sup>For I'm so ashamed.

I feel such pain and anguish within  
me.

I can't get away from the sting of my  
sin against you, Lord!

Everything I did, I did right in front  
of you, for you saw it all.

Against you, and you above all, have  
I sinned.

Everything you say to me is infallibly  
true

and your judgment conquers me.

<sup>5</sup>Lord, I have been a sinner from birth,  
from the moment my mother con-  
ceived me.

<sup>6</sup>I know that you delight to set your  
truth deep in my spirit.<sup>c</sup>

So come into the hidden places of  
my heart  
and teach me wisdom.

### David's Cleansing

<sup>7</sup>Purify my conscience! Make this  
leper clean again!<sup>d</sup>  
Wash me in your love until I am  
pure in heart.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 51 This psalm is based on the incident that is recorded in 2 Sam. 12–13. This is a psalm of confession that has been sung for ages. Imagine composing a song about your failure and making it public for all time. David was not so much concerned about what the people thought but about what God thought. He wanted to be clean before God.

<sup>b</sup> 51:1–2 Or “wash me.” David used the Hebrew word *kabas*, which was used for washing clothes, not for bathing. David was asking for his royal robes to be cleansed from the stains of his actions and publicly restored.

<sup>c</sup> 51:6 The Hebrew word *bat-tûchâh*, although difficult to translate, can mean “something that is covered over, hidden, or concealed.” This could be paraphrased as “you desire light in my darkness” or “you want truth to expose my secrets.”

<sup>d</sup> 51:7 The Hebrew text contains the word *hyssop*. This was a bushy plant used for sprinkling blood on a healed leper to ceremonially cleanse him for the worship of God. See Lev. 14:3–7; Num. 19.

<sup>e</sup> 51:7 Or “Wash me with the snow from above so I can be whitened.”



<sup>8</sup>Satisfy me in your sweetness, and my song of joy will return.

The places you have crushed within me  
will rejoice in your healing touch.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Hide my sins from your face;<sup>b</sup>  
erase all my guilt by your saving grace.

<sup>10</sup>Keep creating in me a clean heart.<sup>c</sup>  
Fill me with pure thoughts and holy desires, ready to please you.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>11</sup>May you never reject me!  
May you never take from me your sacred Spirit!

### David's Consecration

<sup>12</sup>Let my passion for life be restored,  
tasting joy<sup>e</sup> in every breakthrough  
you bring to me.

Hold me close to you with a willing spirit  
that obeys whatever you say.

<sup>13</sup>Then I can show other guilty ones  
how loving and merciful you are.  
They will find their way back home  
to you,  
knowing that you will forgive them.

<sup>14</sup>O God, my saving God,

deliver me fully from every sin,  
even the sin that brought bloodguilt.<sup>f</sup>  
Then my heart will once again be  
thrilled to sing  
the passionate songs of joy and  
deliverance!

<sup>15</sup>Lord God, unlock my heart, unlock  
my lips,  
and I will overcome with my joyous  
praise!

<sup>16</sup>For the source of your pleasure is  
not in my performance  
or the sacrifices I might offer to you.

<sup>17</sup>The fountain of your pleasure is  
found  
in the sacrifice of my shattered heart  
before you.

You will not despise my tenderness  
as I bow down humbly at your feet.

<sup>18</sup>Because you favor Zion, do what is  
good for her.

Be the protecting wall around  
Jerusalem.

<sup>19</sup>And when we are fully restored,  
you will rejoice and take delight  
in every offering of our lives  
as we bring our sacrifices of righ-  
teousness before you in love!<sup>g</sup>

*a* 51:8 In this beautiful verse, the broken places ("places you have crushed") are literally "broken bones." Our bones speak allegorically of our inner being, our emotional strength.

*b* 51:9 David was ashamed not just of what others would think but also that he had been seen by God. A truly remorseful person has no thought for reputation but only for righteousness.

*c* 51:10 The word used for "create" takes us back to Gen. 1, and it means to create from nothing. David knew he had no goodness without God placing it within him. David wanted a new creation heart, not just the old one changed.

*d* 51:10 Or "Renew a reliable spirit in my inner being."

*e* 51:12 The Hebrew word for "joy" comes from two Hebrew roots: one means "bright" and the other means "lily [whiteness]." David wanted to taste a joy that was bright, pure, and as beautiful as a lily.

*f* 51:14 Or simply "blood." David could have been asking God to spare his life from death (that is, deliverance from death because of his sin).

*g* 51:19 Or "then they will offer up bulls on your altar."

# 52 THE FATE OF CYNICS

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A song of instruction by King  
David composed when Doeg the  
Edomite betrayed David to Saul,  
saying, “David has come to the  
house of Ahimilech!”<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>You call yourself a mighty man, a big  
shot?

Why do you boast in the evil you  
have done?

Yet God’s loyal love will protect me  
and carry the day!

<sup>2</sup>Listen, O deceiver, trickster of others:  
Your words are wicked, harming and  
hurting all who hear them.

<sup>3</sup>You love evil and hate what is good  
and right.

You would rather lie than tell the  
truth.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>4</sup>You love to distort, devour, and  
deceive,  
using your sly tongue to spin the  
truth.

<sup>5</sup>But the Almighty will strike you  
down forever!  
He will pull you up by your roots  
and drag you away to the darkness  
of death.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>6</sup>The godly will see all this and will be  
awestruck.

Then they will laugh at the wicked,  
saying,

<sup>7</sup>“See what happens to those great in  
their own eyes  
who don’t trust in the Most High to  
save them!

Look how they trusted only in their  
wealth  
and made their living from  
wickedness.”<sup>b</sup>

<sup>8</sup>But I am like a flourishing olive tree,  
*anointed* in the house of God.<sup>c</sup>  
I trust in the unending love of God;  
his passion toward me is forever and  
ever.

<sup>9</sup>Because it is finished,<sup>d</sup>  
I will praise you forever and give  
you thanks.

Before all your godly lovers I will  
proclaim your beautiful name!

<sup>a</sup> 52 For this episode in David’s life, see 1 Sam. 21:1–9; 22:9–23. The Edomites, although close relatives to the Hebrews, were bitter enemies to God’s people. In spite of Doeg’s lineage, he became a high-ranking official in Saul’s kingdom. Herod the Great, who slaughtered the babies of Bethlehem, was an Edomite. At the time David wrote this psalm, Saul had already attempted to kill him sixteen times. Ahimilech, the caretaker of the sword of Goliath, was a descendant of Eli.

<sup>b</sup> 52:7 Or “and [was] strong in [his] destruction.”

<sup>c</sup> 52:8 The olive tree was the source of the sacred anointing oil.

<sup>d</sup> 52:9 Or “You have acted [finished it].” The words “It is finished” were the last words of Jesus on the cross.

## 53 THE WICKEDNESS OF THE WORLD

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A contemplative song of instruction  
To the tune of “The Dancings of Mourning”<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Only the withering soul<sup>b</sup> would say to himself,  
“There’s no God for me!”  
Anyone who thinks like that is corrupt and callous;  
depraved and detestable, they are devoid of what is good.

<sup>2</sup>The Lord looks down in love, bending over heaven’s balcony.  
God looks over all of Adam’s sons and daughters,  
looking to see if there are any who are wise with insight—  
any who search for him, wanting to please him.

<sup>3</sup>But no, all have wandered astray, walking stubbornly toward evil.  
Not one is good; he can’t even find one!

<sup>4</sup>Look how they live in luxury while exploiting my people.  
Won’t these workers of wickedness ever learn!  
They never even think of praying to God.

<sup>5</sup>Soon, unheard-of terror will seize them while in their sins.  
God himself will one day scatter the bones  
of those who rose up against you.<sup>c</sup>  
Doomed and rejected, they will be put to shame,  
for God has despised them.

<sup>6</sup>Oh, I wish our time of rescue were already here.  
Oh, that God would come forth now<sup>d</sup>—  
arising from the midst of his Zion-people  
to save and restore his very own.  
When God fully restores his people,  
Jacob will rejoice, and Israel will be filled with gladness!

## 54 DEFEND ME

*For the Pure and Shining One  
David’s contemplative song of instruction  
A song of derision<sup>e</sup> when the  
Ziphites betrayed David to Saul,  
saying, “David is hiding among us;  
come and get him!”*

<sup>1</sup>God, deliver me by your mighty name!  
Come with your glorious power and save me!

<sup>a</sup> 53 Or “The Dance of Mourning.” This could have been a footnote to Ps. 52 instead of an inscription for Ps. 53. If so, read Ps. 52 and imagine the dancing that broke loose when David and his mighty men knew that Doeg had been judged by God for his murderous betrayal.

<sup>b</sup> 53:1 The word often translated as “fool” comes from a Hebrew word meaning “withering.” If we make no room for God, we have withered hearts (or souls), our moral sense of righteousness is put to sleep, and the noble aspirations of the heart shrivel up and die. Ps. 53 clearly speaks of the downfall of those who oppose Israel. Ps. 14 and Ps. 53 are very similar psalms. Ps. 14 deals with God’s verdict, while Ps. 53 speaks of God’s vengeance. If God says it once, it is to be believed. If he says it twice, it demands our utmost attention!

<sup>c</sup> 53:5 This could refer to the scattering of the armies of Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah. See 2 Kings 18–19.

<sup>d</sup> 53:6 This is considered to be an ecphronesis, a rhetorical literary device that amplifies the emotion of the text. It is equivalent to an emotional outburst. Clearly, this is a passionate psalm.

<sup>e</sup> 54 The Hebrew word used here and translated in some versions as “stringed instrument” can also be rendered “a song of mocking.” This is a psalm for anyone who feels betrayed, rejected, and stuck in a difficult situation with no one at his or her side.

<sup>2</sup>Listen to my prayer; turn your ears to my cry!

<sup>3</sup>These violent men have risen up against me;  
heartless, ruthless men<sup>a</sup> who care nothing about God  
seek to take my life.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>4</sup>But the Lord God has become my divine helper.  
He leans into my heart and lays his hands upon<sup>b</sup> me!

<sup>5</sup>God will see to it that those who sow evil will reap evil.

So Lord, in your great faithfulness,  
destroy them once and for all!

<sup>6</sup>Lord, I will offer myself freely, and everything I am I give to you.  
I will worship and praise your name,  
O Lord,  
for it is precious to me.

<sup>7</sup>Through you I'm saved—rescued from every trouble.

I've seen with my eyes the defeat of my enemies.

I've triumphed over them all!

## 55 BETRAYED

*To the Pure and Shining One  
King David's song of derision for instruction*

<sup>1</sup>God, listen to my prayer!

Don't hide your heart from me when I cry out to you!

<sup>2-3</sup>Come close to me and give me your answer.

Here I am, moaning and restless.

I'm preoccupied with the threats of my enemies

and crushed by the pressure of their opposition.

They surround me with trouble and terror.

In their fury they rise up against me in an angry uproar.

<sup>4</sup>My heart is trembling inside my chest as the terror of death seizes me.

<sup>5</sup>Fear and dread overwhelm me. I shudder before the horror I face.

<sup>6</sup>I say to myself, "If only I could fly away from all of this!

If only I could run away to the place of rest and peace.

<sup>7</sup>I would run far away where no one could find me,  
escaping to a wilderness retreat."

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>8</sup>I will hurry off to hide in the higher place,  
into my shelter, safe from this raging storm and tempest.

<sup>9</sup>God, confuse them until they quarrel with themselves.

Destroy them with their own violent strife and slander.

They have divided the city with their discord.

<sup>10</sup>Though they patrol the walls night and day against invaders,  
the real danger is within the city—the misery and strife in the hearts of its people.

<sup>11</sup>Murder is in their midst.

Wherever you turn, you find trouble and ruin.

<sup>12</sup>It wasn't an enemy who taunted me.  
If it was my enemy, filled with pride and hatred,  
then I could have endured it. I would have just run away.

<sup>a</sup> 54:3 Or "foreigners."

<sup>b</sup> 54:4 The word used here can be translated "uphold" or "sustain." It comes from a root word that means "to lean upon" or "to lay hands upon." This translation includes both concepts in this verse.

<sup>13</sup>But it was you, my intimate friend—  
one like a brother to me.

It was you, my adviser,<sup>a</sup> the  
companion

I walked with and worked with!

<sup>14</sup>We once had sweet fellowship with  
each other.

We worshiped in unity as one,  
celebrating together with God's  
people.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Now desolation and darkness has  
come upon you.

May you and all those like you  
descend into the pit of destruction!  
Since evil has been your home, may  
evil now bury you alive!

<sup>16</sup>But as for me, I will call upon the  
Lord to save me, and I know he  
will!

<sup>17</sup>Every evening I will explain my  
need to him.

Every morning I will move my soul  
toward him.

Every waking hour I will worship  
only him,  
and he will hear and respond to my  
cry.

<sup>18</sup>Though many wish to fight and the  
tide of battle turns against me,  
by your power I will be safe and  
secure;

peace will be my portion.

<sup>19</sup>God himself will hear me!

God-Enthroned through everlasting  
ages,  
the God of unchanging  
faithfulness—

he will put them in their place,  
all those who refuse to love and  
revere him!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>20</sup>I was betrayed by my friend, though  
I lived in peace with him.

While he was stretching out his hand  
of friendship,

he was secretly breaking every  
promise he had ever made to me!

<sup>21</sup>His words were smooth and  
charming.

Yet his heart was disloyal and full of  
hatred—

his words soft as silk while all the  
time scheming my demise.

<sup>22</sup>So here's what I've learned through  
it all:

Leave all your cares and anxieties at  
the feet of the Lord,  
and measureless grace will  
strengthen you.

<sup>23</sup>He will watch over his devoted  
lovers,

never letting them slip or be  
overthrown.

He will send all my enemies to the  
pit of destruction.

Murderers, liars, and betrayers will  
face an untimely death.

My life's hope and trust is in you,  
and you'll never fail to rescue me!

## 56 TRUSTING IN GOD

*For the Pure and Shining One  
King David's golden song of  
instruction composed when the  
Philistines captured him in Gath  
To the tune of "The Oppression of  
the Princes to Come"*<sup>c</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lord, show me your kindness and  
mercy,  
for these men oppose and oppress  
me all day long.

<sup>a</sup> 55:13 The Greek word in the Septuagint can be translated as "a seer [prophet]."

<sup>b</sup> 55:14 David was speaking of Ahithophel, who had once been his friend and adviser, only to betray him. This is foreshadowing of what would happen between Jesus and Judas.

<sup>c</sup> 56 Or "the distant dove of silence." David was no more than twenty-two years old when he composed this psalm.



<sup>2</sup>Not a day goes by without somebody harassing me.

So many in their pride trample me under their feet.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>3</sup>But in the day that I'm afraid, I lay all my fears before you and trust in you with all my heart.

<sup>4</sup>What harm could a man bring to me? With God on my side, I will not be afraid of what comes.

The roaring praises of God fill my heart as I trust his promises.

<sup>5</sup>Day after day cruel critics distort my words; constantly they plot my collapse.

<sup>6</sup>They lurk in the dark, waiting, spying on my movements in secret to take me by surprise, ready to take my life.

<sup>7</sup>They don't deserve to get away with this! Look at their wickedness, their injustice, Lord.

In your fierce anger cast them down to defeat.

<sup>8</sup>You've kept track of all my wandering and my weeping. You've stored my many tears in your bottle—not one will be lost. For they are all recorded in your book of remembrance.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>9</sup>The very moment I call to you for a father's help the tide of battle turns and my enemies flee.

This one thing I know: God is on my side!

<sup>10</sup>I trust in the Lord. And I praise him!

I trust in the Word of God. And I praise him!

<sup>11</sup>What harm could man do to me? With God on my side, I will not be afraid of what comes.

My heart overflows with praise to God and for his promises. I will always trust in him.

<sup>12</sup>So I'm thanking you with all my heart, with gratitude for all you've done. I will do everything I've promised you, Lord.

<sup>13</sup>For you have saved my soul from death and my feet from stumbling so that I can walk before the Lord bathed in his life-giving light.<sup>c</sup>

## 57 TRIUMPHANT FAITH

*To the Pure and Shining One  
King David's golden song of  
instruction composed when he hid  
from Saul in a cave<sup>d</sup>*

*To the tune of "Do Not Destroy"*

<sup>1</sup>Please, God, show me mercy!  
Open your grace-fountain for me,  
for you are my soul's true shelter.  
I will hide beneath the shadow of  
your embrace,  
under the wings of your cherubim,  
until this terrible trouble is past.

<sup>2</sup>I will cry out to you, the God of the  
highest heaven,  
the mighty God, who performs all  
these wonders for me.

<sup>3</sup>From heaven he will send a father's  
help to save me.  
He will trample down those who  
trample me.

*Pause in his presence*

He will always show me love  
by his gracious and constant care.

a 56:2 The Septuagint reads "They war with me in the high places."

b 56:8 See Mal. 3:16.

c 56:13 Or "in his fields of life."

d 57 This incident is recorded in 1 Sam. 24.

<sup>4</sup>I am surrounded by these fierce and brutal men.

They are like lions just wanting to tear me to shreds.

Why must I continue to live among these seething terrorists, breathing out their angry threats and insults against me?

<sup>5</sup>Lord God, be exalted as you soar throughout the heavens.

May your shining glory be seen in the skies!

Let it be seen high above over all the earth!

<sup>6</sup>For they have set a trap for me.<sup>a</sup>

Frantic fear has me overwhelmed.

But look! The very trap they set for me has sprung shut upon themselves instead of me!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>7</sup>My heart, O God, is quiet and confident.

Now I can sing with passion your wonderful praises!

<sup>8</sup>Awake, O my soul, with the music of his splendor-song!

Arise, my soul, and sing his praises!

My worship will awaken the dawn, greeting the daybreak with my songs of praise!

<sup>9</sup>Wherever I go, I will thank you, my God. Among all the nations they will hear my praise songs to you.

<sup>10</sup>Your love is so extravagant it reaches to the heavens; your faithfulness so astonishing it stretches to the sky!

<sup>11</sup>Lord God, be exalted as you soar throughout the heavens.

May your shining glory be shown in the skies!

Let it be seen high above all the earth!

## 58 JUDGE OF THE JUDGES

*For the Pure and Shining One*

*King David's golden song of instruction*

*To the tune of "Do Not Destroy"*

<sup>1-2</sup>God's justice? You high and mighty politicians

know nothing about it!

Which one of you has walked in justice toward others?

Which one of you has treated everyone right and fair?

Not one! You only give "justice" in exchange for a bribe.

For the right price you let others get away with murder.

<sup>3-4</sup>Wicked wanderers even from the womb—that's who you are!

You lie with your words, and your teaching is poison.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Like cobras closing their ears to the most expert of the charmers, you strike out against all who are near.

<sup>6</sup>O God, break their fangs; shatter the teeth of these ravenous lions!

<sup>7</sup>Let them disappear like water falling on thirsty ground.

Let all their weapons be useless.

<sup>8</sup>Let them be like snails dissolving into the slime.

Let them be cut off, never seeing the light of day!

<sup>9</sup>God will sweep them away so fast that they'll never know what hit them.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>10</sup>The godly will celebrate in the triumph of good over evil,

<sup>a</sup> 57:6 The Septuagint reads "They have dug a cesspool in front of me."

<sup>b</sup> 58:3-4 The Hebrew reads "venom of a serpent," which is a clear metaphor for wrong teaching.

<sup>c</sup> 58:9 The Hebrew here is recognized by nearly every scholar to be one of the most difficult verses in the Psalms to translate.



and the lovers of God will trample  
the wickedness of the wicked under  
their feet!

<sup>11</sup>Then everyone will say, “There is a  
God who judges the judges”  
and “There is a great reward in  
loving God!”

## 59 PROTECT ME

*For the Pure and Shining One  
King David's song of instruction  
composed when Saul set an  
ambush for him at his home<sup>a</sup>  
To the tune of “Do Not Destroy”*

<sup>1</sup>My God, protect me!  
Keep me safe from all my enemies,  
for they're coming to kill me.  
Put me in a high place out of their  
reach—  
a place so high that these assassins  
will never find me.

<sup>2</sup>Save me from these murdering men,  
these bloodthirsty killers.

<sup>3</sup>See how they set an ambush for my  
life.

They're fierce men ready to launch  
their attack against me.

O Lord, I'm innocent; *protect me!*

<sup>4</sup>I've done nothing to deserve this,  
yet they are already plotting together  
to kill me.

Arise, Lord, see what they're schem-  
ing, and come and meet with me.

<sup>5</sup>Awaken, O God of Israel!  
Commander of Angel Armies,  
arise to punish these treacherous  
people who oppose you!  
Don't go soft on these hard-core  
killers!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>6</sup>After dark they came to spy, sneaking  
around the city,

snarling, prowling like a pack of  
stray dogs in the night—

<sup>7</sup>boiling over with rage, shouting out  
their curses,  
convinced that they'll never get  
caught.

<sup>8</sup>But you, Lord, break out laughing at  
their plans,  
amused by their arrogance, scoffing  
at their sinful ways.

<sup>9</sup>My strength is found when I wait  
upon you.

Watch over me, God, for you are my  
mountain fortress;  
you set me on high!

<sup>10</sup>The God of passionate love will meet  
with me.

My God will empower me to rise in  
triumph over my foes.

<sup>11</sup>Don't kill them; stagger them  
all with a vivid display of  
power

and scatter them with your armies  
of angels,

O mighty God, our protector!  
Use your awesome power to make  
them wanderers and vagabonds  
and then bring them down.

<sup>12</sup>They are nothing but proud, cursing  
liars.

They sin in every word they speak,  
boasting in their blasphemies!

<sup>13</sup>May your wrath be kindled to  
destroy them; finish them off!

Make an end of them and their  
deeds until they are no more!

Let them all know and learn  
that God is the ruler over Jacob,  
the God-King over all the earth!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>14</sup>Here they come again—  
prowling, growling like a pack of  
stray dogs in the city.

<sup>a</sup> 59 This incident is recorded in 1 Sam. 19:11–18.

<sup>15</sup>Drifting, devouring, and coming in  
for the kill,  
they refuse to sleep until they've  
eaten their fill.  
<sup>16</sup>But as for me, your strength shall be  
my song of joy.  
At each and every sunrise, my lyrics  
of your love will fill the air!  
For you have been my glory-fortress,  
a stronghold in my day of distress.  
<sup>17</sup>O my strength, I sing with joy your  
praises.  
O my stronghold, I sing with joy  
your song!  
O my Savior, I sing with joy the lyrics  
of your faithful love for me!

## 60 HAS GOD FORGOTTEN US?

*To the Pure and Shining One  
King David's poem for instruction<sup>a</sup>  
composed when he fought against  
the Syrians with the outcome still  
uncertain and Joab turned back to  
kill twelve thousand descendants of  
Esau in the Valley of Salt  
To the tune of "Lily of the  
Covenant"*

<sup>1</sup>God, it seems like you walked off and  
left us!  
Why have you turned against us?  
You have been angry with us.  
O Lord, we plead, come back and  
help us *as a father*.  
<sup>2</sup>The earth quivers and quakes before  
you,  
splitting open and breaking apart.  
Now come and heal it, for it is  
shaken to its depths.  
<sup>3</sup>You have taught us hard lessons

and made us drink the wine of  
bewilderment.

<sup>4</sup>You have given miraculous signs to  
those who love you.  
As we follow you, we fly the flag of  
truth,  
and all who love the truth will rally  
to it.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5</sup>Come to your beloved ones and  
gently draw us out.  
For Lord, you save those whom you  
love.  
Come with your might and strength!  
<sup>6-7</sup>Then I heard the Lord speak in his  
holy splendor.  
From his sanctuary I heard the Lord  
promise:  
"In my triumph I will be the one to  
measure out  
the portion of my inheritance to my  
people,  
and I will secure the land as I prom-  
ised you.  
Shechem, Succoth, Gilead, Manasseh,  
they are all still mine!" he says.  
"Judah will continue to produce  
kings and lawgivers,  
and Ephraim will produce great  
warriors.  
<sup>8</sup>Moab will become my lowly servant.  
Edom will likewise serve my  
purposes.  
I will lift up a shout of victory over  
the land of Philistia!  
<sup>9</sup>But who will bring my triumph into  
the strong city?  
Who will lead me into Edom's<sup>b</sup>  
fortresses?"  
<sup>10</sup>Have you really rejected us, refusing  
to fight our battles?

<sup>a</sup> 60 Or "According to Shushan Eduth. A Mikhtam of David, to teach." There is no scholarly consensus about what *Shushan Eduth* means. Some have concluded it refers to a specific tune or possibly an instrument, but it remains a mystery.

<sup>b</sup> 60:9 Edom is a variant form of the name Adam.

<sup>11</sup>Give us a father's help when we face  
our enemies.

For to trust in any man is an empty  
hope.

<sup>12</sup>With God's help we will fight like  
heroes,  
and he will trample down our every  
foe!

## 61 PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

*To the Pure and Shining One*

*A song for the guitar by King David*

<sup>1</sup>O God, hear my prayer. Listen to my  
heart's cry.

<sup>2</sup>For no matter where I am, even  
when I'm far from home,  
I will cry out to you for a father's help.  
When I'm feeble and overwhelmed  
by life,  
guide me into your glory, where I  
am safe and sheltered.

<sup>3</sup>Lord, you are a paradise of protec-  
tion to me.  
You lift me high above the fray.  
None of my foes can touch me  
when I'm held firmly in your wrap-  
around presence!

<sup>4</sup>Keep me in this glory.  
Let me live continually under your  
splendor-shadow,  
hiding my life in you forever.  
*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5</sup>You have heard my sweet resolutions  
to love and serve you, for I am your  
beloved.  
And you have given me an inheri-  
tance of rich treasures,  
which you give to all your devoted  
lovers.

<sup>6</sup>You treat me like a king, giving me a  
full and abundant life,

years and years of reigning,<sup>a</sup>  
like many generations rolled into one.

<sup>7</sup>I will live enthroned with you forever!  
Guard me, God, with your unending,  
unfailing love.

Let me live my days walking in  
grace and truth before you.

<sup>8</sup>And my praises will fill the heavens  
forever,  
fulfilling my vow to make every day  
a love-gift to you!

## 62 UNSHAKABLE FAITH

*To the Pure and Shining One*

*By David, for the one who praises<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>I stand silently to listen for the one  
I love,  
waiting as long as it takes for the  
Lord to rescue me.

For God alone has become my Savior.  
<sup>2</sup>He alone is my safe place;  
his wraparound presence always  
protects me.

For he is my champion defender;  
there's no risk of failure with God.  
So why would I let worry paralyze me,  
even when troubles multiply around  
me?

<sup>3</sup>But look at these who want me dead,  
shouting their vicious threats at me!  
The moment they discover my  
weakness,  
they all begin plotting to take me  
down.

<sup>4</sup>Liar, hypocrites, with nothing good  
to say—  
all their energies are spent  
on moving me from this exalted place.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5</sup>I am standing in absolute stillness,  
silent before the one I love,

<sup>a</sup> 61:6 Or "add to the days of the king."

<sup>b</sup> 62 The inscription includes the name Jeduthun, which means "one who praises."

waiting as long as it takes for him to rescue me.

Only God is my Savior, and he will not fail me.

<sup>6</sup>For he alone is my safe place.

His wraparound presence always protects me

as my champion defender.

There's no risk of failure with God!

So why would I let worry paralyze me, even when troubles multiply around me?

<sup>7</sup>God's glory is all around me!

His wraparound presence is all I need, for the Lord is my Savior, my hero, and my life-giving strength.

<sup>8</sup>Trust only in God every moment!

Tell him all your troubles and pour out your heart-longings to him.

Believe me when I tell you—he will help you!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>9</sup>Before God all the people of the earth, high or low, are like smoke that disappears, like a vapor that quickly vanishes away.

Compared to God they're nothing but vanity, nothing at all!

<sup>10</sup>The wealth of the world is nothing to God.

So if your wealth increases, don't be boastful or

put your trust in your money.

And don't you think for a moment that

you can get away with stealing by overcharging others

just to get more for yourself!

<sup>11</sup>God said to me once and for all,

"All the strength and power you need flows from me!"

And again I heard it clearly said,

<sup>12</sup>"All the love you need is found in me!"

*And it's true that you repay people for what they do.*

## 63 THIRSTING FOR GOD

*For the Pure and Shining One King David's song when he was exiled in the Judean wilderness*

<sup>1</sup>O God of my life, I'm lovesick for you in this weary wilderness.

I thirst with the deepest longings to love you more,

with cravings in my heart that can't be described.

Such yearning grips my soul for you, my God!

<sup>2</sup>I'm energized every time I enter your heavenly sanctuary to seek more of your power and drink in more of your glory.

<sup>3</sup>For your tender mercies mean more to me than life itself.

How I love and praise you, God!

<sup>4</sup>Daily I will worship you passionately and with all my heart.

My arms will wave to you like banners of praise.

<sup>5</sup>I overflow with praise when I come before you,

for the anointing of your presence satisfies me like nothing else.

You are such a rich banquet of pleasure to my soul.

<sup>6</sup>I lie awake each night thinking of you

and reflecting on how you help me like a father.

I sing through the night under your splendor-shadow,

offering up to you my songs of delight and joy!

<sup>8</sup>With passion I pursue and cling to you.

Because I feel your grip on my life, I keep my soul close to your heart.



<sup>9</sup>Those who plot to destroy me shall  
descend into the darkness of hell.

<sup>10</sup>They will be consumed by their own  
evil  
and become nothing more than dust  
under our feet.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>11</sup>These liars will be silenced forever!  
But with the anointing of a king I  
will dance and rejoice  
along with all his devoted lovers  
who trust in him.

## 64 VICTORY OVER EVILDOERS

*For the Pure and Shining One  
King David's song*

<sup>1-2</sup>Lord, can't you hear my cry, my  
bitter complaint?  
Keep me safe from this band of  
criminals and  
from the conspiracy of these wicked  
men.

They gather in their secret counsel  
to destroy me.

<sup>3-4</sup>Can't you hear their slander, their lies?  
Their words are like poison-tipped  
arrows  
shot from the shadows.

They are unafraid and have no fear  
of consequences.

<sup>5</sup>They persist with their evil plans  
and plot together to hide their traps.  
They boast, "No one can see us or  
stop us!"

<sup>6</sup>They search out opportunities to  
pervert justice

as they plan the "perfect crime."  
How unsearchable is their endless  
evil!

They try desperately to hide the  
deep darkness of their hearts.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>7</sup>But all the while God has his own  
fire-tipped arrows!  
Suddenly, without warning,  
they will be pierced and struck down.

<sup>8</sup>Staggering backward, they will be  
destroyed  
by the very ones they spoke against.  
All who see this will view them with  
scorn.

<sup>9</sup>Then all will stand awestruck over  
what God has done,  
seeing how he vindicated the victims  
of these crimes.

<sup>10</sup>The lovers of God will be glad,  
rejoicing in the Lord.  
They will be found in his glorious  
wraparound presence,  
singing songs of praise to God!

## 65 WHAT A SAVIOR

*For the Pure and Shining One  
King David's poetic song*

<sup>1-2</sup>O God in Zion, to you even silence  
is praise!

You who answers prayer,<sup>c</sup>  
all of humanity comes before you  
*with their requests.*

<sup>3</sup>Though we are overcome by our  
many sins,  
your sacrifice covers over them all.

<sup>4</sup>How blessed is the one you choose  
to live near you in your courts.

<sup>a</sup> 63:10 Or "food for foxes."

<sup>b</sup> 64:6 Scholars are unanimous in agreement that the meaning of the Hebrew text of this verse is uncertain.

<sup>c</sup> 65:1-2 The root of the Hebrew word for "prayer" is *palal*, which also means "tent peg." Jewish tradition views *palal* prayer (intercession) as a means of attaching yourself to God. In the same way a tent peg establishes a tent and fastens it securely, so *palal* prayer fastens the soul to God. *Palal* prayer is when you grab hold of God and attach yourself to him in surrender and humility. Hold on to God like a tent peg holds on to a tent.

The beauty of your house, your holy temple, satisfies us.

<sup>5</sup>You answer our prayers with amazing wonders  
and with awe-inspiring displays of power.

You are the righteous God who helps us like a father.

Everyone everywhere looks to you,  
for you are the confidence of all the earth,  
even to the farthest islands of the sea.

<sup>6</sup>What jaw-dropping, astounding power is yours!

You are the mountain maker who sets them all in place.

<sup>7</sup>You muzzle the roar of the mighty seas  
and the rage of mobs with their noisy riots.

<sup>8</sup>O God, to the farthest corners of the planet  
people will stand in awe,  
startled and stunned by your signs and wonders.

Sunrise brilliance and sunset beauty  
both take turns singing their songs of joy to you.

<sup>9</sup>Your visitations of glory bless the earth;<sup>a</sup>  
the rivers of God overflow and enrich it.  
You paint the wheat fields golden as  
you provide rich harvests.

<sup>10</sup>Every field is watered with the abundance of rain—  
showers soaking the earth and softening its clods,  
causing seeds to sprout throughout the land.

<sup>11</sup>You crown the earth with the fruits of your goodness.  
Wherever you go, the tracks of your chariot wheels drip with oil.

<sup>12</sup>Luxuriant green pastures boast of your bounty  
as you make every hillside blossom with joy.

<sup>13</sup>The grazing meadows are covered with flocks,  
and the fertile valleys are clothed with grain,  
each one dancing and shouting for joy, creation's celebration!  
They're all singing their songs of praise to you!

## 66 THANK YOU, LORD

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A song of awakening<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Everyone everywhere, lift up your joyful shout to God!

<sup>2</sup>Sing your songs tuned to his glory!  
Tell the world how wonderful he is.

<sup>3</sup>For he's the awe-inspiring God, great and glorious in power!

*We've never seen anything like him!*

Mighty in miracles, you cause your enemies to tremble.

No wonder they all surrender and bow before you!

<sup>4</sup>All the earth will bow down to worship;  
all the earth will sing your glories forever!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5</sup>Everyone will say, "Come and see the incredible things God has done;  
it will take your breath away!

He multiplies miracles for his people!"<sup>c</sup>

<sup>6</sup>He made a highway going right through the Red Sea  
as the Hebrews passed through on dry ground,

<sup>a</sup> 65:9 The Septuagint reads "You've made the earth drunk with your visitations."

<sup>b</sup> 66 As translated from the inscription found in the Septuagint.

<sup>c</sup> 66:5 The Septuagint reads "His works are more to be feared than the decisions of men."

exploding with joyous excitement  
over the miracles of God.

<sup>7</sup>In his great and mighty power he  
rules forever,  
watching over every movement of  
every nation.

So beware, rebel lands; he knows  
how to humble you!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>8</sup>Praise God, all you peoples.

Praise him everywhere and let  
everyone know you love him!

<sup>9</sup>There's no doubt about it: God holds  
our lives safely in his hands.  
He's the one who keeps us faithfully  
following him.

<sup>10</sup>O Lord, we have passed through  
your fire;  
like precious metal made pure,  
you've proved us, perfected us, and  
made us holy.

<sup>11</sup>You've captured us, ensnared us in  
your net.  
Then, like prisoners, you *placed*  
*chains around our necks.*<sup>a</sup>

<sup>12</sup>You've allowed our enemies to pre-  
vail against us.  
We've passed through fire and flood,  
yet in the end you always bring us  
out better than we were before,  
saturated with your goodness.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>13</sup>I come before your presence with  
my sacrifice.  
I'll give you all that I've promised,  
everything I have.

<sup>14</sup>When I was overcome in my anguish,  
I promised to give you my sacrifice.  
Here it is! All that I said I would offer  
you is yours.

<sup>15</sup>I'll throw it all—the best I have to  
bring—into the fire  
as the fragrance of my sacrifice  
ascends unto you.<sup>c</sup>

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>16</sup>All you lovers of God who want to  
please him,  
come and listen, and I'll tell you  
what he did for me.

<sup>17</sup>I cried aloud to him with all my  
heart, and he answered me!  
Now my mouth overflows with the  
highest praise.

<sup>18</sup>Yet if I had closed my eyes to my  
sin,<sup>d</sup>  
the Lord God would have closed his  
ears to my prayer.

<sup>19</sup>But praises rise to God,  
for he paid attention to my prayer  
and answered my cry to him!

<sup>20</sup>I will forever praise this God who  
didn't close his heart when I prayed  
and never said no when I asked him  
for help.  
He never once refused to show me  
his tender love.

**67** IT'S TIME TO PRAISE HIM  
*For the Pure and Shining One*  
*A poetic song of praise for guitar*

<sup>1</sup>God, keep us near your mercy-  
fountain and bless us!  
And when you look down on us,  
may your face beam with joy!<sup>e</sup>

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>2</sup>Send us out all over the world so that  
everyone everywhere

<sup>a</sup> 66:11 Or "you attached suffering to our hips."

<sup>b</sup> 66:12 Or "you brought us out into a wide-open space [a place of rest]."

<sup>c</sup> 66:15 The literal Hebrew describes the sacrifice as "burnt offerings of fat beasts and the smoke of rams, bulls, and male goats."

<sup>d</sup> 66:18 Or "If I had cherished iniquity in my heart."

<sup>e</sup> 67:1 Or "May he cause his face to shine with us" or "May he smile on us."



will discover your ways and know  
who you are  
and see your power to save.

<sup>3</sup>Let all the nations burst forth with  
praise;  
let everyone everywhere love and  
enjoy you!

<sup>4</sup>Then how glad the nations will be  
when you are their King.  
They will sing, they will shout, for  
you give true justice to the people.  
Yes! You, Lord, are the shepherd of  
the nations!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5</sup>No wonder the peoples praise you!  
Let all the people praise you more!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The harvest of the earth is here!  
God, the very God we worship,  
keeps us satisfied at his banquet of  
blessings.

<sup>7</sup>And the blessings keep coming!  
All the ends of the earth will give him  
the honor he deserves and be in awe  
of him!

## 68 A SONG OF TRIUMPH

*For the Pure and Shining One  
David's poetic song of praise*

<sup>1</sup>God! Arise with awesome power,  
and every one of your enemies will  
scatter in fear!

<sup>2</sup>Chase them away—all these  
God-haters.  
Blow them away as a puff of smoke.  
Melt them away like wax in the fire.

One good look at you and the  
wicked vanish.

<sup>3</sup>But let all the righteous be glad!  
Yes, let them all rejoice in your  
presence  
and be carried away with gladness.<sup>b</sup>  
Let them laugh and be radiant with  
joy!

<sup>4</sup>Let them sing their celebration-songs  
for the coming of the cloud rider  
whose name is Yah!<sup>c</sup>

<sup>5-6</sup>To the fatherless he is a father.  
To the widow he is a champion  
friend.

The lonely he makes part of a family.  
The prisoners<sup>d</sup> he leads into pros-  
perity until they sing for joy.  
This is our Holy God in his Holy  
Place!

But for the rebels there is heartache  
and despair.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>7</sup>O Lord, it was you who marched in  
front of your people,  
leading them through the wasteland.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>8</sup>The earth shook beneath your feet;  
the heavens filled with clouds  
before the presence of the God of  
Sinai.

The sacred mountain shook at the  
sight of the face of Israel's God.

<sup>9</sup>You, O God, sent the reviving rain  
upon your weary inheritance,  
showers of blessing to refresh it.

<sup>10</sup>So there your people settled!<sup>f</sup>  
And in your kindness you provided<sup>g</sup>  
the poor with abundance.

<sup>a</sup> 67:5 The Septuagint reads "Let all the people come to know you."

<sup>b</sup> 68:3 As translated from the Septuagint. The Aramaic is "they rejoice in his sweetness."

<sup>c</sup> 68:4 More than an abbreviation, the name Yah is associated with the God of heaven, the God of highest glory and power.

<sup>d</sup> 68:5-6 The Septuagint reads "the bitter ones."

<sup>e</sup> 68:5-6 Or "they will live in a sun-scorched land."

<sup>f</sup> 68:10 Or "For you live among them [in community]." The Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>g</sup> 68:10 Or "sustain." God anticipates our needs and has gone before us to provide for and sustain us in our journey.

<sup>11</sup>God Almighty declares the word of  
the gospel with power,<sup>a</sup>  
and the warring women of Zion  
deliver its message:<sup>b</sup>

<sup>12a</sup>"The conquering legions have them-  
selves been conquered.  
Look at them flee!"  
Now Zion's women are left to gather  
the spoils.

<sup>13</sup>When you sleep between sharpened  
stakes,<sup>c</sup>  
I see you sparkling like silver and  
glistening like gold,  
covered by the beautiful wings of a  
dove!<sup>d</sup>

<sup>14</sup>When the Almighty found a king for  
himself,  
it became white as snow in his  
shade.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>15-16</sup>O huge, magnificent mountain,  
you are the mighty kingdom of God!<sup>f</sup>  
All the other peaks, though impres-  
sive and imposing,  
look with envy on you, Mount Zion!  
For Zion is the mountain where God  
has chosen to live forever.

<sup>17</sup>Look! The mighty chariots of God!  
Ten thousands upon ten thousands,  
more than anyone could ever  
number.  
God is at the front,

leading them all from Mount Sinai  
into his sanctuary  
with the radiance of holiness upon  
him.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>18</sup>He ascends into the heavenly  
heights,  
taking his many captured ones with  
him,  
leading them in triumphal  
procession.

And gifts were given to men, even  
the once rebellious,  
so that they may dwell with Yah.

<sup>19</sup>What a glorious God!<sup>h</sup>  
He gives us salvation over and over,<sup>i</sup>  
then daily he carries our burdens!<sup>j</sup>

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>20</sup>Our God is a mighty God who saves  
us over and over!

For the Lord, Yahweh, rescues us  
from the ways of death many times.

<sup>21</sup>But he will crush every enemy, shat-  
tering their strength.

He will make heads roll  
for they refuse to repent of their  
stubborn, sinful ways.

<sup>22</sup>I hear the Lord God saying to all the  
enemies of his people,  
"You'd better come out of your hid-  
ing places,

*a* 68:11 As translated from the Aramaic.

*b* 68:11 As translated from the Masoretic Text.

*c* 68:13 The Aramaic word *shaphya* can be translated "sharpened stakes" or "thorns." This is an obvious prophecy of the cross and our union with Christ as he was crucified.

*d* 68:13 As translated from the Aramaic text, this verse contains prophetic hints of Calvary, where Jesus "slept" the sleep of death between the "sharpened stakes" of the cross. The word *you* is plural and points us to our co-crucifixion with Christ.

*e* 68:14 Every scholar consulted concludes that this verse is difficult, if not impossible, to interpret properly and translate accurately. The last words are literally "Snow fell in Zalmon." Zalmon (or Salmon) was a wooded area and means "shady."

*f* 68:15-16 The Septuagint reads "mountain of provision."

*g* 68:17 The Septuagint reads "The Lord sends his provisions from his Holy Place on Mount Sinai."

*h* 68:19 The Aramaic is *Maryah*, the Aramaic form of YHWH or Lord Yahweh.

*i* 68:19 *Salvation* is in the plural form in the Hebrew text ("salvations").

*j* 68:19 Or "daily loads us with benefits."

all of you who are doing your best to stay far away from me.<sup>a</sup>  
Don't you know there's no place to hide?

<sup>23</sup>For my people will be the conquerors;  
they will soon have you under their feet.  
They will crush you until there is nothing left!<sup>b</sup>

<sup>24</sup>O God, my King, your triumphal processions  
keep moving onward in holiness;  
you're moving onward toward the Holy Place!

<sup>25</sup>Leaders in front,<sup>c</sup> then musicians,  
with young maidens in between,  
striking their tambourines.

<sup>26</sup>And they sing, "Let all God's princely people rejoice!  
Let all the congregations bring their blessing to God, saying,  
'The Lord of the fountain! The Lord of the fountain of life!  
The Lord of the fountain of Israel!'"

<sup>27</sup>Astonishingly, it's the favored youth leading the way:<sup>d</sup>  
princes of praise in their royal robes and exalted princes are among them,  
along with princes who have wrestled with God.

<sup>28-29</sup>Display your strength, God, and we'll be strong!<sup>e</sup>

For your miracles have made us who we are.

Lord, do it again  
and parade from your temple your mighty power.

By your command even kings will bring gifts to you.

<sup>30</sup>God, rebuke the beast-life that hides within us!<sup>f</sup>

Rebuke those who claim to be "strong ones,"<sup>g</sup>

who lurk within the congregation and abuse the people out of their love for money.

God scatters the people who are spoiling for a fight.

<sup>31</sup>Africa will send her noble envoys to you, O God.

They will come running, stretching out their hands in love to you.

<sup>32</sup>Let all the nations of the earth sing songs of praise to Almighty God!

Go ahead, all you nations—sing your praise to the Lord!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>33</sup>Make music for the one who strides the ancient skies.

Listen to his thunderous voice of might split open the heavens.

<sup>34</sup>Give it up for God, for he alone has all the strength and power!

a 68:22 The Hebrew text makes reference to Bashan (a high mountain) and to the depths of the sea. In other words, there's no place to hide.

b 68:23 The Hebrew text is literally "Your enemies will be food for the dogs."

c 68:25 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is "Singers in front."

d 68:27 The Hebrew includes the names of four sons of Jacob, representing four tribes. Benjamin, the youngest son, means "son of my right hand" or "the favored one." Judah means "praise." Zebulun's name is the word for "exalted." Naphtali means "obtained by wrestling." Each name speaks of a princely group and is used here poetically not only for Israel but for all of God's "princely people" in this holy procession of worship.

e 68:28-29 The Great Bible translated by Miles Coverdale (1488-1569) translates this as "Your God has sent forth strength for you."

f 68:30 Literal Hebrew is "rebuke the beasts in the reeds."

g 68:30 This verse has puzzled scholars, and many conclude that the Hebrew text is nearly incomprehensible, with tremendous variations in the translation.

Proclaim his majesty! For his glory  
shines down on Israel.

His mighty strength soars in the  
clouds of glory.

<sup>35</sup>God, we are consumed with awe,  
trembling before you  
as your glory streams from your  
Holy Place.

The God of power shares his mighty  
strength with Israel

and with all his people.

God, we give our highest praise to you!

## 69 A CRY OF DISTRESS<sup>a</sup>

*To the Pure and Shining One*

*David's poetic song of praise*

*To the tune of "Lilies"*

<sup>1-2</sup>God, my God, come and save me!

These floods of trouble have risen  
higher and higher.

The water is up to my neck!<sup>b</sup>

I'm sinking into the mud with no  
place to stand,  
and I'm about to drown in this storm.

<sup>3</sup>I'm weary, exhausted with weeping.

My throat is dry, my voice is gone,  
my eyes are swollen with sorrow,  
and I'm waiting for you, God, *to  
come through for me.*

<sup>4</sup>I can't even count all those who hate  
me for no reason.

Many influential men want me  
silenced,

yet I've done nothing against them.  
Must I restore what I never took away?

<sup>5</sup>God, my life is an open book to you.

You know every sin I've ever done.  
For nothing within me is hidden  
from your sight!

<sup>6</sup>Lord Yahweh of Angel Armies,

keep me from ever being a stum-  
bling block to others,  
to those who love you.

Lord God of Israel, don't let what  
happens to me

be the source of confusion to those  
who are passionate for you.

<sup>7</sup>Because of my love for you, Lord,  
I have been mocked, cursed, and  
disgraced.

<sup>8</sup>Even my own brothers, those of my  
family,  
act as though they don't want any-  
thing to do with me.

<sup>9</sup>My love for you has my heart on fire!

My passion for your house con-  
sumes me!

Nothing will turn me away,  
even though I endure all the insults  
of those who insult you.

<sup>10</sup>When they see me seeking for more  
of you with weeping<sup>c</sup> and fasting,  
they all just scoff and scorn at my  
passion.

<sup>11</sup>When I humble myself with sorrow  
over my sin,  
it gives them a reason to mock me  
even more.

<sup>12</sup>The leaders, the influential ones—  
how they scorn my passion for you!  
I've become the talk of the town, the  
theme of drunkards' songs.

<sup>13</sup>But I keep calling out to you,  
Yahweh!

I know you will bend down to listen  
to me,  
for now is the season of favor.  
Because of your faithful love for me,  
your answer to my prayer will be my  
sure salvation.

<sup>14</sup>Pull me out of this mess! Don't let  
me sink!

<sup>a</sup> 69 Psalm 69 is considered one of the most outstanding messianic psalms, with obvious prophetic references to the sufferings and cross of Jesus Christ.

<sup>b</sup> 69:1-2 Or "throat."

<sup>c</sup> 69:10 Or "When I pour out my soul" or "When I weep soul-tears."



Rescue me from those who hate me  
and from all this trouble I'm in!  
<sup>15</sup>Don't let this flood drown me.  
Save me from these deep waters  
or I'll go down to the pit of  
destruction.  
<sup>16-17</sup>Oh, Lord God, answer my prayers!  
I need to see your tender kindness,  
your grace,  
your compassion, and your constant  
love.  
Just let me see your face, and turn  
your heart toward me.  
Come running quickly to your servant.  
In this deep distress, come and  
answer my prayer.  
<sup>18</sup>Come closer as a friend and redeem  
me.  
Set me free so my enemies cannot  
say that you are powerless.  
<sup>19</sup>See how they dishonor me in shame  
and disgrace?  
You know, Lord, what I'm going  
through, and you see it all.  
<sup>20</sup>I'm heartsick and heartbroken by it  
all.  
Their contempt has crushed my soul.  
I looked for sympathy and  
compassion  
but found only empty stares.  
<sup>21</sup>I was hungry and they gave me  
bitter food.  
I was thirsty and they offered me  
vinegar.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>22</sup>Let their "feasts" turn to ashes.  
Let their "peace and security"  
become their downfall.  
<sup>23</sup>Make them blind as bats, groping in  
the dark.  
Let them be feeble, trembling  
continually.  
<sup>24-25</sup>Pour out your fury on them all!  
Consume them with the fire of your  
anger!

Burn down the walled palace where  
they live!  
Leave them homeless and desolate!  
<sup>26</sup>For they come against the one you  
yourself have struck,  
and they scorn the pain of those  
you've pierced.  
<sup>27</sup>Pile on them the guilt of their sins.  
Don't let them ever go free.  
<sup>28</sup>Leave them out of your list of the  
living!  
Blot them out of your Book of Life!  
Never name them as your own!  
<sup>29</sup>I am burdened and broken by this  
pain.  
When your miracle rescue comes to  
me,  
it will lift me to the highest place.  
<sup>30</sup>Then my song will be a burst of  
praise to you.  
My glory-shouts will make your  
fame even more glorious  
to all who hear my praises!  
<sup>31</sup>For I know, Yahweh, that my praises  
mean more to you  
than all my gifts and sacrifices.  
<sup>32</sup>All who seek you will see God do  
this for them,  
and they'll overflow with gladness.  
Let this revive your hearts, all you  
lovers of God!  
<sup>33</sup>For Yahweh does listen to the poor  
and needy  
and will not abandon his prisoners  
of love.<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>34</sup>Let all the universe praise him!  
The high heavens and everyone on  
earth, praise him!  
Let the oceans deep, with everything  
in them, keep it up!  
<sup>35</sup>God will come to save his  
Zion-people.  
God will build up his cities of Judah,  
for there his people will live in peace.

<sup>a</sup> 69:21 This was fulfilled with Jesus being offered vinegar on the cross. See Luke 23:36.

<sup>b</sup> 69:33 Or "those wearing shackles."

<sup>36</sup>All their children will inherit the land,  
and the lovers of his name will live  
there safe and secure.

## 70 A CRY FOR HELP

*To the Pure and Shining One  
David's poetic lament to always  
remember*

<sup>1</sup>Please, Lord! Come quickly and  
rescue me!  
God, show me your favor and restore  
me.

<sup>2</sup>Let all who seek my life be humili-  
ated and confused.  
God, send them sprawling, all who  
wish me evil;  
they just want me dead.

<sup>3</sup>Scoff at every scoffer and cause them  
all to be utter failures!  
Let them be ashamed and horrified  
over their complete defeat.

<sup>4</sup>But let all who passionately seek you  
erupt with excitement and joy  
over what you've done!  
Let all your devoted lovers, who con-  
tinually rejoice in the Savior,<sup>a</sup>  
say aloud, "How great and glorious  
is our God!"

<sup>5</sup>Lord, in my place of weakness and  
need,  
won't you turn your heart toward me  
and hurry to help me?  
For you are my Savior, and I'm  
always in your thoughts.  
So don't delay to deliver me now, for  
you are my God.

## 71 THE PSALM OF OLD AGE

<sup>1</sup>Lord, you are my secure shelter.  
Don't ever let me down!

<sup>2</sup>Let your justice be my breakthrough.  
Bend low to my whispered cry

and save me from all my enemies!

<sup>3</sup>You're the only place of protection  
for me.

I keep coming back to hide myself  
in you,  
for you are like a mountain-cliff  
fortress where I'm kept safe.

<sup>4</sup>Let me escape from these cruel and  
wicked men,  
and save me from the hands of the  
evil one.

<sup>5</sup>For you are my only hope, Lord!  
I've hung on to you, trusting in you  
all my life.

<sup>6-7</sup>It was you who supported me from  
the day I was born,  
loving me, helping me through my  
life's journey.

You've made me into a miracle;  
no wonder I trust you and praise you  
forever!

Many marvel at my success,  
but I know it is all because of you,  
my mighty protector!

<sup>8</sup>I'm overflowing with your praise for  
all you've done,  
and your splendor thrills me all day  
long.

<sup>9</sup>Now that I'm old, don't set me  
aside.

Don't let go of me when my strength  
is spent.

<sup>10-11</sup>For all my enemies whisper  
behind my back.

They're waiting for me to fall so they  
can finish me off.

They're convinced you've left me  
and that you'll never come to my  
rescue.

They're saying, "Let's get him now!  
He has no savior!"

<sup>12</sup>O God, stay close to me!

Don't just watch from a distance!  
Hurry to help me, my God!

<sup>a</sup> 70:4 This verse contains the Hebrew root word for Yeshua.

<sup>13</sup>Cover these accusers of mine with  
shame and failure!  
Destroy them all, for they only want  
to kill me!

<sup>14</sup>No matter what, I'll trust in you to  
help me.  
Nothing will stop me from praising  
you to magnify your glory!

<sup>15</sup>I couldn't begin to count the times  
you've been there for me.  
With the skill of a poet I'll never run  
out of things to say  
about how you faithfully kept me  
from danger.

<sup>16</sup>I will come forth in your mighty  
strength, O my Lord God.<sup>a</sup>  
I'll tell everyone that you alone are  
the perfect one.

<sup>17</sup>From my childhood you've been my  
teacher,  
and I'm still telling everyone of your  
miracle-wonders!

<sup>18</sup>God, now that I'm old and gray,  
don't walk away.  
Give me grace to demonstrate to the  
next generation  
all your mighty miracles and your  
excitement,  
to show them your magnificent  
power!

<sup>19</sup>For your glorious righteousness  
reaches up to the high heavens.  
No one could ever be compared to  
you!  
Who is your equal, O God of marvels  
and wonders?

<sup>20</sup>Even though you've let us sink down  
with trials and troubles,  
I know you will revive us again,  
lifting us up from the dust of death.

<sup>21</sup>Give us even more greatness than  
before.

Turn and comfort us once again.

<sup>22</sup>My loving God, the harp in my heart  
will praise you.

Your faithful heart toward us will be  
the theme of my song.

Melodies and music will rise to you,  
the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>23</sup>I will shout and sing your praises for  
all you are to me—  
Savior, lover of my soul!

<sup>24</sup>I'll never stop telling others how  
perfect you are,  
while all those who seek my harm  
slink away ashamed and defeated!

## 72 THE RIGHTEOUS KING

*Solomon's psalm<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>O God, make the king a godly judge  
like you  
and give the king's son the gift of  
justice too.

<sup>2</sup>Help him to give true justice to your  
people,  
honorably and equally to all.

<sup>3</sup>Then the mountains of influence will  
be fruitful,  
and from your righteousness  
prosperity and peace will flow to all  
the people.

<sup>4</sup>May the poor and humble have an  
advocate with the king.  
May he consider the children of the  
poor  
and crush the cruel oppressor.

<sup>5</sup>The sun and moon will stop shining  
before your devoted lovers will stop  
worshiping;

<sup>a</sup> 71:16 Or "I will enter into the manliness of Lord Yahweh."

<sup>b</sup> 72 The Septuagint indicates this could be a psalm written by David for his son Solomon. This royal psalm is a prayer for the king. Read through it as though it is referring to King Jesus—One who is greater than Solomon.



for ages upon ages the people will  
 love and adore you!  
<sup>6</sup>Your favor will fall like rain upon our  
 surrendered lives,<sup>a</sup>  
 like showers reviving the earth.  
<sup>7</sup>In the days of his reign the righteous  
 will spring forth  
 with the abundance of peace and  
 prosperity forevermore.  
<sup>8</sup>May he subdue and take dominion  
 from sea to sea;  
 may he rule from the river to the  
 rim.  
<sup>9</sup>Desert nomads are bowing at his  
 feet;  
 every enemy is falling facedown,  
 biting the dust!  
<sup>10</sup>Distant kings<sup>b</sup> will surrender and  
 come with their gifts  
 from every continent and  
 coastland;  
 they will offer their tribute to you.  
<sup>11</sup>O King of kings, they will all bow  
 before you.  
 O King of kings, every nation will  
 one day serve you.  
<sup>12-13</sup>He will care for the needy and  
 neglected  
 when they cry to him for help.  
 The humble and helpless will know  
 his kindness,  
 for with a father's compassion he  
 will save their souls.  
<sup>14</sup>They will be rescued from tyranny  
 and torture,

for their lifeblood is precious in his  
 eyes.  
<sup>15</sup>Long live this King!  
 May the wealth of the world<sup>c</sup> be laid  
 before him.  
 May there be ceaseless praise and  
 prayer to him.  
 May all the blessing be brought to  
 him.  
<sup>16</sup>Bless us with a bountiful harvest,  
 with golden grain swaying on the  
 mountain fields!  
 May the cities be full of praising  
 people, fruitful and filled—  
<sup>17</sup>so that his name may be honored  
 forever!  
 May the fame of his name spring  
 forth!  
 May it shine on, like the sunshine!  
 In him all will be blessed to bless  
 others,  
 and may all the people bless the One  
 who blessed them.  
<sup>18</sup>Praise Yahweh forever, the God of  
 Israel!  
 He is the one and only God of  
 wonders,  
 surpassing every expectation.  
<sup>19</sup>The blazing glory of his name will  
 be praised forever!  
 May all the earth overflow with his  
 glory!  
 Faithful is our King! Amen!  
<sup>20</sup>This concludes the poetry sung by  
 David, Jesse's son.

a 72:6 Or "like rain on mown grass."

b 72:10 Included in the Hebrew text are kings of Tarshish (Spain) and kings of Sheba and Seba (Ethiopia).

c 72:15 Or "the gold of Sheba."

# BOOK 3

## THE LEVITICUS PSALMS

*Psalms of worship and God's house*

### 73 GOD'S JUSTICE

*Asaph's psalm<sup>a</sup>*

- <sup>1</sup>No one can deny it—God is really good to Israel and to all those with pure hearts.  
*But I nearly missed seeing it for myself.*
- <sup>2</sup>Here's my story: I narrowly missed losing it all.
- <sup>3</sup>I was stumbling over what I saw the wicked doing.  
For when I saw the boasters with such wealth and prosperity,  
I became jealous over their smug security.
- <sup>4-5</sup>Indulging in whatever they wanted, going where they wanted, doing what they wanted, and with no care in the world,  
no pain, no problems—they seemed to have it made.  
They lived as though life would never end.
- <sup>6</sup>They didn't even try to hide their pride and opulence.  
Cruelty and violence are parts of their lifestyle.
- <sup>7</sup>Pampered and pompous, vice oozes from their souls;  
they overflow with vanity.
- <sup>8</sup>They're such snobs—looking down their noses.  
They even scoff at God!  
They are nothing but bullies threatening God's people.
- <sup>9</sup>They are loudmouths with no fear of God, pretending to know it all—  
windbags full of hot air, impressing only themselves.
- <sup>10</sup>Yet the people keep coming back to listen to more of their nonsense.
- <sup>11</sup>They tell their cohorts, "God will never know.  
See, he has no clue of what we're doing."
- <sup>12</sup>These are the wicked ones I'm talking about!  
They never have to lift a finger, living a life of ease while their riches multiply.
- <sup>13</sup>Have I been foolish to play by the rules and keep my life pure?
- <sup>14</sup>Here I am suffering under your discipline day after day.  
I feel like I'm being punished all day long.
- <sup>15</sup>If I had given in to my pain and spoken of what I was really feeling, it would have sounded like unfaithfulness to the next generation.
- <sup>16</sup>When I tried to understand it all, I just couldn't.  
It was too puzzling—too much of a riddle to me.
- <sup>17</sup>But then one day I was brought into the sanctuaries of God,  
and in the light of glory, my distorted perspective vanished.

<sup>a</sup> 73 Asaph was one of three Levites that David set over the worship of Yahweh. However, it is possible that Asaph was an office not an individual—Asaphites who were part of a prophetic company of composers. The name Asaph means "a harvest" or "fulfilled prophecy." Asaph possibly comes from a Semitic root word for "portal." Perhaps the Asaphites were named such because their music opened a portal into the heavenly realm.

Then I understood that the destiny  
of the wicked was near!

<sup>18</sup>They're the ones who are on the  
slippery path,  
and God will suddenly let them slide  
off into destruction  
to be consumed with terrors forever!

<sup>19</sup>It will be an instant end to all their  
life of ease;  
a blink of the eye and they're swept  
away by sudden calamity!  
They're all nothing more than  
momentary monarchs—

<sup>20</sup>soon to disappear like a dream when  
one awakes.

When the rooster crows,  
Lord God, you'll despise their life of  
fantasies.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>21</sup>When I saw all of this, what turmoil  
filled my heart,  
piercing my opinions with your  
truth.

<sup>22</sup>I was so stupid. I was senseless and  
ignorant,  
acting like a brute beast before you,  
Lord.

<sup>23</sup>Yet, in spite of all this, I still belong  
to you;  
you hold me by my right hand.

<sup>24</sup>You lead me with your secret wisdom.  
And following you brings me into  
your brightness and glory!

<sup>25</sup>Whom have I in heaven but you?  
You're all I want!  
No one on earth means as much to  
me as you.

<sup>26</sup>Lord, so many times I fail; I fall into  
disgrace.

But when I trust in you, I have a  
strong and glorious presence  
protecting and anointing me. For-  
ever you're all I need!

<sup>27</sup>Those who abandon the worship of  
God will perish.

The false and unfaithful will be  
silenced, never heard from again.

<sup>28</sup>But I'll keep coming closer and  
closer to you, Lord Yahweh,  
for your name is good to me. I'll  
keep telling the world of  
your awesome works, my faithful  
and glorious God!

## 74 WE NEED YOU NOW

*Asaph's poem of instruction*

<sup>1</sup>Are you really going to leave us,  
God?

Would you turn your back on us,  
rejecting your people?

We are yours, your very own.<sup>b</sup>  
Will your anger smolder against us  
forever?

<sup>2</sup>Don't forget that we are your beloved  
ones.

Wrap us back into your heart again,  
for you chose us.

You brought us out of our slavery  
and bondage  
and made us your favored ones,  
your Zion-people,  
your home on earth.

<sup>3</sup>Turn your steps toward this  
devastation.

Come running to bring your restor-  
ing grace to these ruins,<sup>c</sup>  
to what the enemy has done to dev-  
astate your Holy Place.

<sup>4</sup>They have come into the very midst  
of your dwelling place,  
roaring like beasts, setting up their  
banners to flaunt their conquest.

<sup>5</sup>Now everything is in shambles!  
They've totally destroyed it.

<sup>a</sup> 73:20 Or "shadows."

<sup>b</sup> 74:1 Or "the sheep of your pasture."

<sup>c</sup> 74:3 This verse reads differently in the Aramaic: "Lift up your servants with your might above those who take them captive, for those who oppress us are enemies to your holiness."

- Like a forest chopped down to the ground,  
there's nothing left.
- <sup>6</sup>All of the beauty of the craftsmanship  
of the inner place has been ruined,  
smashed, broken, and shattered.<sup>a</sup>
- <sup>7</sup>They've burned it all to the ground.  
They've violated your sanctuary,  
the very dwelling place of your glory  
and your name.
- <sup>8</sup>They boasted, "Let's completely  
crush them!  
Let's wipe out every trace of this  
God.  
Let's burn up every sacred place  
where they worship this God."
- <sup>9</sup>We don't see any miraculous signs  
anymore.  
There's no longer a prophet  
among us  
who can tell us how long this devas-  
tation will continue.
- <sup>10</sup>God, how much longer will you let  
this go on  
and allow these barbarians to blas-  
pheme your name?  
Will you stand back and watch them  
get away with this forever?
- <sup>11</sup>Why don't you do something?  
You have the power to break in,  
so why would you hide your great  
power from us?  
Don't hold back! Unleash your might  
and give them a final blow.
- <sup>12</sup>You have always been, and always  
will be, my King.  
You are the mighty conqueror, work-  
ing wonders all over the world.
- <sup>13</sup>It was you who split the sea in two  
by your glorious strength.  
You smashed the power of Tannin,  
the sea monster.
- <sup>14</sup>You crushed the might of Levia-  
than,<sup>b</sup> the great dragon,  
then you took the crumbs and fed  
them to the sharks.
- <sup>15</sup>With your glory you opened up  
springs and fountains,  
then you spoke, and the ever-  
flowing springs of Jordan  
dried up so we could cross over.
- <sup>16</sup>You own the day and the night.  
Sunlight and starlight call you Creator.
- <sup>17</sup>The four corners of the earth were  
formed by your hands,  
and every changing season owes its  
beauty to you.
- <sup>18</sup>O Yahweh, don't ever forget how  
these arrogant enemies,  
like fools, have mocked your name.
- <sup>19</sup>Lord, aren't we your beloved dove  
that praises you?<sup>c</sup>  
Protect us from these wild beasts  
who want to harm us.  
Don't leave us as lambs among  
wolves!  
You can't abandon us after all we've  
been through!
- <sup>20</sup>Remember your promises to us,  
for darkness covers the land,  
giving the violent ones a hiding place.
- <sup>21</sup>Don't let these insults continue.  
Can't you see that we are your  
downtrodden  
and oppressed people?  
Make the poor and needy into a  
choir of praise to you!

<sup>a</sup> 74:6 This psalm describes physical destruction as well as what the enemy of our souls has done spiritually to mar the image of God in the "inner place" of man's spirit. God will fully restore all things, including his image within us, as our hearts become his Holy Place on the earth.

<sup>b</sup> 74:14 Leviathan is mentioned six times in Job 41. Leviathan means "twisted" or "coiled" and is considered to be a sea monster. See Gen. 1:21.

<sup>c</sup> 74:19 As translated from the Septuagint, Syriac, and one Hebrew manuscript.

<sup>22</sup>Don't ignore these ignorant words,  
this continual mocking.  
Rise up, God; it's time to defend  
yourself from all this.  
<sup>23</sup>Never forget what your adversaries  
are saying.  
For their rage and uproar rise con-  
tinually against you.  
*It's time to stand up to them!*

## 75 A CUP IN GOD'S HAND

*To the Pure and Shining One  
Asaph's poetic song  
To the tune of "Do Not Destroy"*

<sup>1</sup>God, our hearts spill over with praise  
to you!  
We overflow with thanks, for your  
name is the "Near One."  
All we want to talk about is your  
wonderful works!  
And we hear your reply:  
<sup>2</sup>"When the time is ripe I will arise,  
and I will judge the world with per-  
fect righteousness.  
<sup>3</sup>Though I have set the earth firmly on  
its pillars,  
I will shake it until it totters,  
and everyone's hearts will  
tremble."

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>4</sup>God warns the proud, "Stop your  
arrogant boasting!"  
And he warns the wicked,  
"Don't think for a moment you can  
resist me!"  
<sup>5</sup>Why would you speak with such  
stubborn pride?  
Don't you dare raise your fist against  
me!"  
<sup>6-7</sup>This I know:  
the favor that brings promotion and  
power

doesn't come from anywhere on  
earth,  
for no one exalts a person but God,  
the true judge of all.  
He alone determines where favor  
rests.  
He anoints one for greatness  
and brings another down to his  
knees.

<sup>8</sup>A foaming cup filled with judgment  
mixed with fury  
is in the hands of the Lord Yahweh,  
full to the brim and ready to run  
over.  
He filled it up for the wicked, and  
they will drink it  
down to the very last drop!  
<sup>9</sup>But I will proclaim the victory of the  
God of Jacob.  
My melodies of praise will make him  
known.  
<sup>10</sup>My praises will break the powers of  
wickedness,  
while the righteous will be promoted  
and become powerful!

## 76 AWE-INSPIRING POWER

*To the Pure and Shining One  
Asaph's poetic tune, a song of  
smiting*

<sup>1</sup>God is well known in the land of  
Judah.  
He is famous throughout Israel,  
<sup>2</sup>making his home in Jerusalem,<sup>a</sup>  
living here on Mount Zion.  
<sup>3</sup>That's where he smashes every  
weapon of war  
that comes against him.  
That's where he uses the broken  
arrows  
as kindling for his mighty bonfire.  
*Pause in his presence*

<sup>a</sup> 76:2 Or "Salem," the ancient name of Jerusalem.



<sup>4</sup>God, you are so resplendent and radiant!<sup>a</sup>

Your majesty shines from your everlasting mountain.

Nothing could be compared to you in glory!

<sup>5</sup>Even the mightiest of men have been paralyzed by your presence.

They were so stunned and lifeless, not even the strongest one could lift a hand.

<sup>6</sup>When Jacob's God roared his rebuke, soldiers and their steeds all fell to the ground, stunned and lying still.

<sup>7</sup>No wonder you are greatly feared!

You are the awe-inspiring God!

For who could ever stand before your face when your fierce anger burns and live to tell about it.

<sup>8</sup>As the earth itself holds its breath in awe before you, judgment is decreed from heaven.

<sup>9</sup>You arise to punish evil and defend the gentle upon the earth.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>10</sup>You have power to transform man's futile anger into praise.<sup>b</sup>

The fury of your enemies only causes your fame to increase.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>11</sup>So you'd better keep every promise you've ever made

to the Awesome One, Yahweh!

Let all people bring their extravagant gifts to him alone.

<sup>12</sup>He is famous for breaking the spirit of the powers that be.

And the kings of the earth will know him as the Fearsome One!

## 77 A CRY TO GOD

*To the Pure and Shining One*

*Asaph's song of love's celebration*

<sup>1</sup>I poured out my complaint to you, God. I lifted up my voice, shouting out for your help.

<sup>2</sup>When I was in deep distress, in my day of trouble,

I reached out for you with hands stretched out to heaven.

Over and over I kept looking for you, God,

but your comforting grace was nowhere to be found.

<sup>3</sup>As I thought of you I moaned, "God, where are you?"<sup>d</sup>

I'm overwhelmed with despair as I wait for your help to arrive.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>4</sup>I can't get a wink of sleep until you come and comfort me.

Now I'm too burdened to even pray!

<sup>5</sup>My mind wandered, thinking of days gone by—the years long since passed.

<sup>6</sup>Then I remembered the worship songs I used to sing

in the night seasons,

and my heart began to fill again with thoughts of you.

So my spirit went out once more in search of you.

<sup>7</sup>Would you really walk off and leave me forever, my Lord God?

Won't you show me your kind favor, delighting in me again?

<sup>8</sup>Has your well of sweet mercy dried up?

<sup>a</sup> 76:4 The word used here is often translated as "anointed" when taken from either the Hebrew or the Aramaic.

<sup>b</sup> 76:10 Or "The counsel of men will praise you."

<sup>c</sup> 76:10 The Septuagint reads "Survivors of your wrath keep your festivals."

<sup>d</sup> 77:3 Or "When I am in heaviness [depressed], I will think upon God."

Will your promises never come true?

<sup>9</sup>Have you somehow forgotten to  
show me love?

Are you so angry that you've closed  
your heart of compassion toward me?

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>10</sup>Lord, what wounds me most is that  
it's somehow my fault that  
you've changed your heart toward  
me

and I no longer see the years of the  
Mighty One  
or your right hand of power.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Yet I could never forget all your  
miracles, my God,  
as I remember all your wonders of  
old.

<sup>12</sup>I ponder all you've done, Lord, mus-  
ing on all your miracles.

<sup>13</sup>It's here in your presence, in your  
sanctuary,  
where I learn more of your ways,<sup>b</sup>  
for holiness is revealed in everything  
you do.

Lord, you're the one and only, the  
great and glorious God!

<sup>14</sup>Your display of wonders, miracles,  
and power  
makes the nations acknowledge you.

<sup>15</sup>By your glory-bursts you've rescued  
us over and over.

Just ask the sons of Jacob or  
the sons of Joseph, and they will tell  
you!

And all of us, your beloved ones,  
know that it's true!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>16</sup>When the many waters of the Red  
Sea took one look at you,<sup>c</sup>  
they were afraid and ran away to  
hide—

trembling to its depths!

<sup>17</sup>Storm clouds filled with water high  
in the skies;  
cloudbursts and thunderclaps  
announced your approach.  
Lightning-flashes lit up the  
landscape.

<sup>18</sup>Rolling whirlwinds exploded with  
sonic booms of thunder,  
rumbling as the skies shouted out  
your story  
with light and sound and wind.  
Everything on earth shook and trem-  
bled as you drew near.

<sup>19</sup>Your steps formed a highway  
through the seas  
with footprints on a pathway no one  
even knew was there.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>20</sup>You led your people forward by your  
loving hand,  
blessed by the leadership of Moses  
and Aaron.

## 78 LESSONS FROM HISTORY

*Asaph's poetic song of instruction*

<sup>1</sup>Beloved ones, listen to this  
instruction.  
Open your heart to the revelation  
of this mystery that I share with you.

<sup>2</sup>A parable and a proverb are hidden  
in what I say—  
an intriguing riddle<sup>e</sup> from the past.

<sup>a</sup> 77:10 This difficult verse has a number of alternate translations, including "Your right hand has changed [or withered]." The implication is that God's power and protection are no longer being seen.

<sup>b</sup> 77:13 This is an alternative translation.

<sup>c</sup> 77:16 Although the Red Sea is not mentioned in the verse, it is implied in the context.

<sup>d</sup> 77:19 This could be a prophecy of Jesus one day walking on water.

<sup>e</sup> 78:2 The Hebrew word for "riddle" (*chidoth*) comes from the verb meaning "to tie a knot." It is something that must be untied and unraveled by the Spirit of God. One of these riddles or wordplays is the name of Jesus hidden in plain sight (see v. 22 and footnote).



<sup>3-4</sup>We've heard true stories from our fathers about our rich heritage. We will continue to tell our children and not hide from the rising generation the great marvels of our God—his miracles and power that have brought us all this far.

<sup>5</sup>The story of Israel is a lesson in God's ways. He established decrees for Jacob and established the law in Israel, and he commanded our forefathers to teach them to their children.

<sup>6</sup>For perpetuity God's ways will be passed down from one generation to the next, even to those not yet born.

<sup>7</sup>In this way, *every generation* will set its hope in God and not forget his *wonderful* works but keep his commandments.

<sup>8</sup>By following his ways they will break the past bondage of their fickle fathers, who were a stubborn, rebellious generation and whose spirits strayed from the eternal God. They refused to love him with all their hearts.

<sup>9</sup>Take, for example, the sons of Ephraim. Though they were all equipped warriors, each with weapons, when the battle began they retreated and ran away in fear.

<sup>10</sup>They didn't really believe the promises of God; they refused to trust him and move forward in faith.

<sup>11</sup>They forgot his wonderful works and the miracles of the past,

<sup>12</sup>even their exodus from Egypt, the epic miracle of his might.

They forgot the glories of his power at the place of passing over.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>13</sup>God split the sea wide open, and the waters stood at attention on either side

as the people passed on through!

<sup>14</sup>By day the moving glory-cloud led them forward.

And all through the night the fire-cloud stood as a sentry of light.

<sup>15-16</sup>In the days of desert dryness, he split open the mighty rock, and the waters flowed like a river before their very eyes.

He gave them all they wanted to drink from his living springs.

<sup>17</sup>Yet they kept their rebellion alive against God Most High, and their sins against God continued to be counted.

<sup>18</sup>In their hearts they tested God just to get what they wanted, asking for the food their hearts craved.

<sup>19-20</sup>Like spoiled children they grumbled against God, *demanding he prove his love* by saying,

"Can't God provide for us in this barren wilderness?

Will he give us food, or will he only give us water?

Where's our meal?"

<sup>21</sup>Then God heard all their complaining and was furious!

His anger flared up against his people.

<sup>22</sup>For they turned away from faith and walked away in fear; they failed to trust in his power to save<sup>b</sup> them when he was near.

<sup>23-24</sup>Still he spoke on their behalf, and the skies opened up; the windows of heaven poured out food, the mercy bread-manna.

a 78:12 Or "the fields of Zoan." *Zoan* means "crossing place" or "place of departure." (See v. 43.)

b 78:22 The word for "save" looks and sounds like Yeshua (Jesus).

The grain of grace fell from the clouds.

<sup>25</sup>Humans ate angels' food—the meal  
of the mighty ones.<sup>a</sup>

His grace gave them more than  
enough!

<sup>26–27</sup>The heavenly winds of miracle  
power blew in their favor,  
and food rained down upon them;  
succulent quail quieted their hunger  
as they ate all they wanted.

<sup>28</sup>Food fell from the skies, thick as  
clouds;  
their provision floated down right in  
front of their eyes!

<sup>29</sup>He gave them all they desired, and  
they ate to their fill.

<sup>30–31</sup>But before they had even finished,  
even with their food still in their  
mouths,  
God's fiery anger arose against them,  
killing the finest of their mighty men.

<sup>32</sup>Yet in spite of all this, they kept right  
on sinning.

Even when they saw God's marvels,  
they refused to believe God could  
care for them.

<sup>33</sup>So God cut their lives short with  
sudden disaster,  
with nothing to show for their lives  
but fear and failure.

<sup>34</sup>*When he cared for them they ignored  
him,*  
but when he began to kill them, end-  
ing their lives in a moment,  
they came running back to God,  
pleading for mercy.

<sup>35</sup>They remembered that God, the  
Mighty One,  
was their strong protector,  
the Hero-God who would come to  
their rescue.

<sup>36–37</sup>But their repentance lasted only as  
long as they were in danger;  
they lied through their teeth to the  
true God of the Covenant.

So quickly they wandered away from  
his promises,

following God with their words and  
not their hearts!

Their worship was only flattery.

<sup>38</sup>But amazingly, God—so full of  
compassion—still forgave them.  
He covered over their sins with his  
love,

refusing to destroy them all.

Over and over he held back his  
anger,

restraining wrath to show them  
mercy.

<sup>39</sup>He knew that they were made from  
mere dust—  
frail, fragile, and short-lived, here  
today and gone tomorrow.

<sup>40</sup>How many times they rebelled in  
their desert days!

How they grieved him with their  
grumbings.

<sup>41</sup>Again and again they limited God,  
preventing him from blessing them.  
Continually they turned back from him  
and provoked<sup>b</sup> the Holy One of  
Israel!

<sup>42</sup>They forgot his great love, how he  
took them by his hand,  
and *with redemption's kiss* he deliv-  
ered them from their enemies.

<sup>43</sup>They disregarded all the epic signs  
and marvels they saw  
when they escaped from Egypt's  
bondage.

They forgot the judgment of the  
plagues that set them free.

<sup>a</sup> 78:25 The word for "angels" is *'abirim* which means "brave," "noble," or "strong." The psalmist was saying that God gave them the best, most delicious food imaginable, a meal eaten by the mighty ones, and yet the people grew tired of it and began to complain and demanded some variety.

<sup>b</sup> 78:41 The Hebrew verb for "provoked" is a hapax legomenon and comes from a root word for "marked." It is as though Israel's behavior wounded the heart of God.

<sup>44</sup>God turned their rivers into blood,  
leaving the people thirsty.

<sup>45</sup>He sent them vast swarms of filthy  
flies that sucked their blood.  
He sent hordes of frogs, ruining  
their lives.

<sup>46</sup>Grasshoppers consumed all their  
crops.

<sup>47</sup>Every garden and every orchard  
was flattened with blasts of  
hailstones,  
their fruit trees ruined by a killing  
frost.

<sup>48</sup>Even their cattle fell prey, pounded  
by the falling hail;  
their livestock were struck with bolts  
of lightning.

<sup>49</sup>Finally, he unleashed upon them the  
fierceness of his anger.

Such fury!

He sent them sorrow and devastat-  
ing trouble

by his mighty band of destroying  
angels;

messengers of death were dis-  
patched against them.

<sup>50-51</sup>He lifted his mercy and let loose  
his fearful anger  
and did not spare their lives.  
He released the judgment-plagues to  
rage through their land.

God struck down in death all the  
firstborn sons of Egypt—  
the pride and joy of each family.

<sup>52</sup>Then, like a shepherd leading his  
sheep, God led his people  
out of tyranny, guiding them  
through the wilderness like a flock.

<sup>53</sup>Safely and carefully God led them  
out, with nothing to fear.

But their enemies he led into the  
sea.

He took care of them there once and  
for all!

<sup>54</sup>Eventually God brought his people  
to the Holy Land,  
to a land of hills that he had pre-  
pared for them.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>55</sup>He drove out and scattered all the  
peoples occupying the land,  
staking out an inheritance, a portion  
for each of Israel's tribes.

<sup>56</sup>Yet for all of this, they still rebelled  
and refused to follow his ways,  
provoking to anger the God Most High.

<sup>57-58</sup>Like traitors turning back, they  
forsook him.

They were even worse than their  
fathers!

They became treacherous deceivers,  
crooked and corrupt,

and worshiped false gods in the  
high places,

bringing low the name of God with  
every idol they erected.

No wonder he was filled with jeal-  
ousy and furious with anger!

<sup>59</sup>Enraged with anger, God turned his  
wrath on them,  
and he rejected his people with  
disgust.

<sup>60</sup>God walked away from them and left  
his dwelling place at Shiloh,  
abandoning the place where he had  
lived among them,

<sup>61</sup>allowing his emblem of strength, his  
glory-ark, to be captured.

Enemies stole the very source of  
Israel's power.

<sup>62</sup>God vented his rage, allowing his  
people to be butchered  
when they went out to battle,  
for his anger was intense against his  
very own.

<sup>63</sup>Their young men fell on the battle-  
field and never came back.

Their daughters never heard their  
wedding songs,

<sup>a</sup> 78:54 The Aramaic reads "He brought them to the border of his holiness, the mountain pos-  
sessed by his right hand."

since there was no one left to marry!  
<sup>64</sup>Their priests were slaughtered and  
 their widows were killed  
 before they had time to weep.  
<sup>65</sup>Then all at once the Almighty  
 awakened  
 as though he had been asleep.  
 Like a mighty man he arose, roaring  
 into action!  
<sup>66</sup>He blasted into battle, driving back  
 every foe,  
 defeating them and disgracing them  
 for time and eternity.  
<sup>67</sup>He rejected Joseph's family, the tribe  
 of Ephraim.  
<sup>68</sup>He chose instead the tribe of Judah<sup>a</sup>  
 and Mount Zion, which he loves.  
<sup>69</sup>There he built his towering temple,  
 strong and enduring as the earth  
 itself.  
<sup>70</sup>God also chose his beloved one,  
 David.  
 He promoted him from caring for  
 sheep  
 and made him his prophetic servant.  
<sup>71-72</sup>God prepared David and took this  
 gentle shepherd-king  
 and presented him before the people  
 as the one who would love and care  
 for them  
 with integrity, a pure heart, and the  
 anointing  
 to lead Israel, his holy inheritance.

## 79 PRAYER IN A TIME OF NATIONAL DISASTER

*Asaph's poetic song*

<sup>1</sup>God, won't you do something?  
 Barbarians have invaded your  
 inheritance.  
 Your temple of holiness has been  
 violated,

and Jerusalem has been left in ruins.  
<sup>2</sup>The corpses of your loving people  
 are lying in the open—  
 food for the beasts and the birds.  
<sup>3</sup>The shed blood of your servants has  
 soaked the city,  
 with no one left to bury the dead.  
<sup>4</sup>Now the nearby nations heap their  
 scorn upon us,  
 scoffing, mocking us incessantly.  
<sup>5</sup>How much longer, O Yahweh, must  
 we endure this?  
 Does your anger have no end?  
 Will your jealousy burn like a raging  
 fire?  
<sup>6</sup>If you're going to pour out your  
 anger,  
 pour it out on all these nations  
 around us, not on us!  
 They're the ones who do not love  
 you like we do!  
<sup>7</sup>See how they've attacked us, con-  
 suming the land,  
 leaving it desolate.  
<sup>8</sup>Please, God, don't hold the sins of  
 our fathers against us.  
 Don't make us pay for their sins.  
 Hurry to our side, and let your ten-  
 derhearted mercy  
 meet us in our need, for we are  
 devastated beyond belief.  
<sup>9</sup>Our hero, come and rescue us!  
 O God of the breakthrough, for the  
 glory of your name,  
 come and help us!  
 Forgive and restore us; heal us and  
 cover us in your love.  
<sup>10</sup>Why should all the nations sneer at  
 us, saying,  
 "Where is this God of yours?"  
 Now is the time, Lord.  
 Show your people and all the world  
 that

<sup>a</sup> 78:68 The place of God's dwelling was moved from the land of Ephraim (Shiloh) to the land of Judah (Jerusalem).



you will avenge this slaughter and bloodshed once and for all!

<sup>11</sup>Listen, Lord! Hear the sighing of all the prisoners of war, all those doomed to die. Demonstrate your glory-power, and come and rescue your condemned children!

<sup>12</sup>Lord God, take what these mocking masses have done to us and pay it all back to them seven times over.

<sup>13</sup>Then we, your devoted lovers, will forever thank you, praising your name from generation to generation!

## 80 RESCUE AND RESTORE

*For the Pure and Shining One*

*Asaph's poetic song*

*To the tune of "Your Decrees Are like Lilies"*

<sup>1</sup>God-Enthroned, be revealed in splendor as you ride upon the cherubim! How perfectly you lead us, a people set free.<sup>a</sup> Loving shepherd of Israel—listen to our hearts' cry! Shine forth from your throne of dazzling light.

<sup>2</sup>In the sight of Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh,<sup>b</sup> stir up your mighty power in full display before our eyes. Break through and reveal yourself by coming to our rescue.

<sup>3</sup>Revive us, O God! Let your beaming face shine upon us with the sunrise rays of glory; then nothing will be able to stop us.

<sup>4</sup>O God, the mighty Commander of Angel Armies, how much longer will you smolder in anger?

How much longer will you be disgusted with your people even when they pray?

<sup>5</sup>You have fed us with sorrow and grief and made us drink our tears by the bowlful.

<sup>6</sup>You've made us a thorn in the side of all the neighboring lands, and now they just laugh at us with their mocking scorn.

<sup>7</sup>Come back, come back, O God, and restore us!

You are the Commander of Angel Armies.

Let your beaming face shine upon us with the sunrise rays of glory, and then nothing will be able to stop us!

<sup>8-9</sup>Remember how you transplanted us here

like a tender vine from Egypt.

You cleared the land for your vineyard,

evicting the nations from your land and planting us here.

The roots of your vineyard went deep into the soil and filled the land with fruit.

<sup>10-11</sup>Because of your favor on your vineyard,

a 80:1 Or "You lead Joseph like a flock." Joseph, as a metaphor, becomes a picture of the saga of God's people once imprisoned and now set free to rule and reign.

b 80:2 The Hebrew text includes the names Ephraim ("doubly fruitful"), Benjamin ("son of my right hand"), and Manasseh ("you made me forget"). These three sons of Rachel marched together behind the ark of glory (see Num. 2:17-24) and became representatives of all who follow the glory of God. They will be "doubly fruitful," "sons of his right hand," and those who have "forgotten" their lives in Adam.

blessing extended to every mountain  
 of influence.

Through this flourishing vineyard  
 mighty ones were raised up.

The nations were blessed by your  
 fruitful vineyard of Israel,  
 all the way from the Mediterranean  
 Sea<sup>a</sup> to the Euphrates.

<sup>12-13</sup> So Lord, why have you broken down  
 your fence of favor around us?

Trespassers can steal the fruit from  
 off our vines,  
 and now every wild beast comes  
 breaking through our wall to ravage  
 us.

You've left us without protection!

<sup>14</sup> Come back, come back, O God to  
 restore us!

You are the Commander of Angel  
 Armies.

Look down from heaven and see our  
 crisis.

Come down and care for your lovely  
 vineyard once again.

<sup>15</sup> Nurture our root and our fruit with  
 your loving care.

Raise up the Branch-Man, the Son  
 whom you've made strong.

<sup>16</sup> Enemies chopped down our vine  
 and set it on fire;  
 now show them your anger and let  
 them perish by your frown.

<sup>17</sup> Strengthen this Branch-Man, the Son  
 of your love,  
 the Son of Man who dwells at your  
 right hand.

<sup>18</sup> Then we will never turn back from  
 you.

Revive us again, that we may trust  
 in you.

<sup>19</sup> O God, the mighty Commander of  
 Angel Armies,  
 come back and rescue us!  
 Let your beaming face shine upon us  
 with the sunrise rays of glory.  
 Then nothing will ever stop us  
 again!

## 81 FOR THE FEAST OF HARVEST

*For the Pure and Shining One  
 Asaph's poetic song set to the  
 melody of "For the Feast of Harvest"*

<sup>1</sup> Lord, just singing about you makes  
 me strong!

So I'll keep shouting for joy to  
 Jacob's God, my champion.

<sup>2</sup> Let the celebration begin!

I will sing with drum accompani-  
 ment and with the sweet sound  
 of the harp and guitar strumming.

<sup>3</sup> Go ahead! Blow the jubilee trumpet  
 to begin the feast!

Blow it before every joyous celebra-  
 tion and festival.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For God has given us these seasons  
 of joy,  
 days that the God of Jacob decreed  
 for us to celebrate and rejoice.

<sup>5</sup> He has given these feasts to remind  
 us of his triumph over Egypt,  
 when he went out to wage war  
 against them.

I heard the message in an unknown  
 tongue as he said to me,

<sup>6</sup> "I have removed your backbreaking  
 burdens  
 and have freed your hands from the  
 hard labor and toil."<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 80:10–11 This translation makes explicit the symbols in the text. The "vineyard" is Israel, the mountains are the high places of influence in culture, the cedars ("mighty ones") are the mighty and powerful of men, and the "Sea" speaks of the nations (sea of humanity).

<sup>b</sup> 81:3 Or "on the day of the new moon and the day of the full moon."

<sup>c</sup> 81:6 Or "from holding the baskets," which alludes to the Hebrews carrying basket loads of burdens for their Egyptian masters.

<sup>7</sup>You called out to me in your time of trouble, and I rescued you.  
 I came down from the realm of the secret place of thunder, where mysteries hide.  
 I came down to save you.  
 I tested your hearts at the place where there was no water to drink, the place of your bitter argument with me.”<sup>a</sup>

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>8a</sup>“Listen to me, my dear people.  
 For I’m warning you, and you’d better listen well!  
 For I hold something against you.  
<sup>9</sup>Don’t ever be guilty of worshipping any other god but me.  
<sup>10</sup>I am your only God, the living God.  
 Wasn’t I the one who broke the strongholds over you and raised you up out of bondage? Open your mouth with a mighty decree;  
 I will fulfill it now, you’ll see!  
 The words that you speak, so shall it be!  
<sup>11</sup>But my people still wouldn’t listen; my princely people would not yield to me.  
<sup>12</sup>So I lifted my grace from off of their lives, and I surrendered them to the stubbornness of their hearts. For they were living according to their own selfish fantasies.  
<sup>13</sup>O that my people would once and for all listen to me and walk faithfully in my footsteps, following my ways.  
<sup>14</sup>Then and only then will I conquer your every foe and tell every one of them, ‘You must go!’

<sup>15</sup>Those who hate my ways will cringe before me and their punishment will be eternal.  
<sup>16</sup>But I will feed you with my spiritual bread.  
 You will feast and be satisfied with me, feeding on my revelation-truth like honey dripping from the cliffs of the high place.”

## 82 TRUE JUSTICE

*Asaph’s poetic song*

<sup>1</sup>All rise! For God now comes to judge as he convenes heaven’s courtroom.<sup>b</sup>  
 He judges every judge and rules in the midst of the gods, saying,  
<sup>2a</sup>“How long will you judges refuse to listen to the voice of true justice and continue to corrupt what is right by judging in favor of the wrong?”

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>3a</sup>“Defend the defenseless, the fatherless and the forgotten, the disenfranchised and the destitute.  
<sup>4</sup>Your duty is to deliver the poor and the powerless; liberate them from the grasp of the wicked.  
<sup>5</sup>But you continue in your darkness and ignorance while the foundations of society are shaken to the core!  
<sup>6</sup>Didn’t I commission you as judges, saying, ‘You are all like gods, since you judge on my behalf. You are all like sons of the Most High, my representatives.’

<sup>a</sup> 81:7 The Hebrew includes the word *Meribah*, which means “the place of strife and contention.”

<sup>b</sup> 82:1 Or “the council of El.” The Aramaic reads “God now stands in the assembly of the angels, and he will judge in their midst.”



<sup>7</sup>Nevertheless, in death you are nothing but mere men!

You will be laid in the ground like any prince and you will die.”

<sup>8</sup>All rise! For God now takes his place as judge of all the earth.

Don't you know that everything and everyone belongs to him?

The nations will be sifted in his hands!

## 83 GOD, DON'T BE SILENT<sup>a</sup>

*Asaph's poetic song*

<sup>1</sup>God, you have to do something!<sup>b</sup>

Don't be silent and just sit idly by.

<sup>2-3</sup>Can't you see what they're doing?

All your enemies are stirred up in an uproar!

They despise you, Lord.

In their defiant arrogance they rise up

to host their secret council against your people.

They conspire together to come and harm

your cherished ones—your hidden ones.

<sup>4</sup>Our enemies keep saying,

“Now is the time to wipe Israel off the map.

We'll destroy even the memory of her existence!”

<sup>5</sup>They've made their pact, consulting and conspiring,

aligning together in their covenant against God.

<sup>6-8</sup>All the sons of Ishmael, the desert sheiks and the nomadic tribes, Amalekites, Canaanites, Moabites, and all the nations that surround us, Philistines, Phoenicians, Gadarenes, and Samaritans;<sup>c</sup>

allied together they're ready to attack!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>9</sup>Do to them all what you did to the Midianites

who were defeated by Gideon.

Or what you did to Sisera and Jabin

when Deborah and Barak defeated them by the Kishon River.

<sup>10</sup>Do to your enemies what you did at Endor, whose rotting corpses fertilized the land.

<sup>11-12</sup>Repeat history, God! Make all their “noble ones”

die like Oreb, Zebah, and Zalmunna, who said in their pride,

“We will seize God's people along with all their pleasant lands!”

<sup>13</sup>Blow them away, God, like straw in the wind, like a tumbleweed in the wilderness!

<sup>14</sup>Burn them up like a raging fire roaring down the mountainside; consume them all until only charred sticks remain!

<sup>15</sup>Chase them away like before a mighty storm and terrifying tempest.

<sup>16</sup>O Lord, disgrace them until their faces fill with shame,

<sup>a</sup> 83 The historical background to this psalm may be found in 2 Chron. 20:14–36.

<sup>b</sup> 83:1 Both the Aramaic and the Septuagint add a line in verse 1: “God, who is like you?”

<sup>c</sup> 83:6–8 As translated from the Aramaic. The Greek is “It includes the tents of Edom and Ishmael [Palestinians and those of southern Jordan], Moab [Palestinians and those of central Jordan] and Hagrites [Egyptians or possibly northern Jordanians], Gebal [Byblos and northern Lebanon], Ammon [Palestinians and northern Jordanians] and Amalek [Arabs of the Sinai Peninsula], Philistia [Gaza], and the inhabitants of Tyre [southern Lebanese]. Even Assyria [Syrians and northern Iraqis] has become their ally as an arm [military might] for the sons of Lot.” This comprises virtually every neighbor surrounding Israel.

and make them acknowledge the glory of your name.

<sup>17</sup>Make them utter failures in everything they do until they perish in total disgrace and humiliation,

<sup>18</sup>so they will know that you, and you alone, are Yahweh, the only Most High God exalted over all the earth!

## 84 LONGING FOR GOD

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A prophetic song written by the  
prophetic singers of Korah's clan  
Set to the melody of "For the Feast  
of Harvest"*<sup>a</sup>

<sup>1</sup>God of Heaven's Armies, you find so much beauty in your people!  
They're like lovely<sup>b</sup> sanctuaries of your presence.

<sup>2</sup>Deep within me are these lovesick longings,  
desires and daydreams of living in union with you.  
When I'm near you, my heart and my soul  
will sing and worship with my joyful songs of you,  
my true source and spring of life!

<sup>3</sup>O Lord of Heaven's Armies, my King and my God,  
even the sparrows and swallows are welcome to build a nest  
among your altars to raise their young.

<sup>4</sup>What pleasure fills those who live every day in your temple,  
enjoying you as they worship in your presence!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5</sup>How enriched are they who find their strength in the Lord;<sup>c</sup>  
within their hearts are the highways of holiness!<sup>d</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Even when their paths wind through the dark valley of tears,  
they dig deep to find a pleasant pool where others find only pain.

He gives to them a brook of blessing filled from the rain of an outpouring.

<sup>7</sup>They grow stronger and stronger with every step forward,  
and the God of all gods will appear before them in Zion.

<sup>8</sup>Hear my cry, O God of Heaven's Armies!  
God of Jacob, listen to my loving prayer.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>9</sup>God, your wraparound presence is our defense.  
In your kindness look upon the faces of your anointed ones.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>10</sup>For just one day of intimacy with you<sup>f</sup> is like  
a thousand days of joy rolled into one!

I'd rather stand at the threshold in front of the Gate Beautiful,  
ready to go in and worship my God,  
than to live my life without you

<sup>a</sup> 84 The Septuagint reads "For the wine vats."

<sup>b</sup> 84:1 The Hebrew word for "lovely" used here can also mean "beloved." This translation includes both of these concepts in this verse.

<sup>c</sup> 84:5 The Aramaic reads "How blessed is the Son of Man with you as his helper."

<sup>d</sup> 84:5 The Hebrew is literally "Roads are in their hearts." It implies the ways [roads or "highways"] that lead us to God's holy presence.

<sup>e</sup> 84:9 Or "the face of your Anointed [Christ]."

<sup>f</sup> 84:10 Or "in your [temple] courts."

in the most beautiful palace of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup>For the Lord God is brighter than the brilliance of a sunrise!

Wrapping himself around me like a shield,

he is so generous with his gifts of grace and glory.

Those who walk along his paths with integrity

will never lack one thing they need, for he provides it all!

<sup>12</sup>O Lord of Heaven's Armies, what euphoria fills those who forever trust in you!

## 85 MERCY AND TRUTH

*For the Pure and Shining One  
A prophetic song composed by the  
prophetic singers of Korah's clan*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, your love has poured out so many amazing blessings on our land!

You've restored Jacob's destiny from captivity.

<sup>2</sup>You've forgiven our many sins and covered every one of them in your love.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>3</sup>So now it's obvious that your blazing anger has ended and the furious fire of wrath has been extinguished *by your mercy*.

<sup>4</sup>So bring us back to loving you, God our Savior.

Restore our hearts so that we'll never again feel your anger rise against us.

<sup>5</sup>Will you forever hold a grudge?

Will your anger endure for all time?

<sup>6</sup>Revive us again, O God! I know you will! Give us a fresh start!

Then all your people will taste your joy and gladness.

<sup>7</sup>Pour out even more of your love on us!

Reveal more of your kindness and restore us back to you!

<sup>8</sup>Now I'll listen carefully for your voice and wait to hear whatever you say.

Let me hear your promise of peace—the message every one of your godly lovers longs to hear.

Don't let us in our ignorance turn back from following you.

<sup>9</sup>For I know your power and presence shines on all your devoted lovers.

Your glory always hovers over all who bow low before you.

<sup>10</sup>Your mercy and your truth have married each other.

Your righteousness and peace have kissed.

<sup>11</sup>Flowers of your faithfulness are blooming on the earth.

Righteousness shines down from the sky.

<sup>12</sup>Yes, the Lord keeps raining down blessing after blessing, and prosperity will drench the land with a bountiful harvest.

<sup>13</sup>For deliverance<sup>a</sup> goes before him, preparing a path for his steps.

## 86 A PRAYER OF FAITH

*King David's prayer*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, bend down to listen to my prayer.

I am in deep trouble. I'm broken and humbled, and I desperately need your help.

<sup>2</sup>Guard my life, for I'm your faithful friend, your loyal servant for life.

I turn to you in faith, my God, my hero; come and rescue me!

<sup>3</sup>Lord God, hear my constant cry for help;  
show me your favor and bring me to  
your fountain of grace!

<sup>4</sup>Restore joy to your loving servant  
once again,  
for all I am is yours, O God.

<sup>5</sup>Lord, you are so good to me, so kind  
in every way<sup>a</sup>  
and ready to forgive,  
for your grace-fountain keeps  
overflowing,  
drenching all your devoted lovers  
who pray to you.

<sup>6</sup>God, won't you pay attention to this  
urgent cry?  
Lord, bend down to listen to my  
prayer.

<sup>7</sup>Whenever trouble strikes, I will keep  
crying out to you,  
for I know your help is on the way.

<sup>8</sup>God, there's no one like you;  
there's no other god as famous as you.  
You outshine all others, and your  
miracles make it easy to know you.

<sup>9</sup>Lord Almighty, you are the one who  
created all the nations.  
Look at them—they're all on their  
way!  
Yes, the day will come when they all  
will worship you  
and put your glory on display.

<sup>10</sup>You are the one and only God.  
What miracles! What wonders! What  
greatness belongs to you!

<sup>11</sup>Teach me more about you, how you  
work and how you move,  
so that I can walk onward in your  
truth  
until everything within me brings  
honor to your name.

<sup>12</sup>With all my heart and passion I will  
thank you, my God!  
I will give glory to your name,  
always and forever!

<sup>13</sup>You love me so much, and you have  
placed your greatness upon me.<sup>b</sup>  
You rescued me from the deepest  
place of darkness,  
and you have delivered me from a  
certain death.

<sup>14</sup>God, look at how these arrogant  
ones have defied me.  
Like a vicious band of violent men,  
they have tried to kill me.  
They wouldn't worry for a moment  
that they were sinning against you!

<sup>15</sup>But Lord, your nurturing love is  
tender and gentle.  
You are slow to get angry yet so  
swift to show your faithful love.  
You are full of abounding grace and  
truth.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Bring me to your grace-fountain  
so that your strength becomes mine.  
Be my hero and come rescue your  
servant once again!

<sup>17</sup>Send me a miraculous sign to show  
me how much you love me,  
so that those who hate me will see it  
and be ashamed.  
Don't they know that you, Lord, are  
my comforter,  
the one who comes to help me?

**87** FOUNTAINS OF DELIGHT  
*A prophetic song composed by the  
prophetic singers of Korah's clan*

<sup>1</sup>High upon his hills of holiness  
stands God's city.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 86:5 The Septuagint reads "You're my provider."

<sup>b</sup> 86:13 As translated from the Aramaic.

<sup>c</sup> 86:15 As translated from the Aramaic and the Septuagint.

<sup>d</sup> 87:1 The Aramaic reads "His foundations are in his holy mountains."



<sup>2</sup>How God loves the gates of Zion, his favorite place on earth.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>3</sup>So many glorious things have been proclaimed over Zion, God's holy city!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>4</sup>For the Lord says, "Here are the nations

who will acknowledge me as God.<sup>b</sup>

Egypt,<sup>c</sup> Iraq,<sup>d</sup> Palestine,<sup>e</sup> and the Mediterranean people,<sup>f</sup>

even distant Ethiopia.

They will all boast, 'I was born in Zion!' "

<sup>5</sup>But over Zion it will be said,

"The mighty Man was born there, and he will establish it."<sup>g</sup>

For the God Most High will truly bless Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup>And when he counts her citizens, recording them in his registry, he will write by their names: "This one was born again here!"

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>7</sup>And the princes of God's feasts will sing and dance,<sup>h</sup> singing,

"Every fountain of delight springs up from your life within me!"

## 88 SAVE ME FROM THIS SORROW<sup>i</sup>

*To the Pure and Shining One*

*A song, a psalm<sup>j</sup> by the prophetic singers of Korah's clan*

*To the tune of "Pierced," for instruction by Heman the Ezrahite<sup>k</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh is the God who continually saves me.

I weep before you night and day.

<sup>2</sup>Please bend down and listen to my sobbing,

for my life is riddled with troubles and death is just around the corner!

<sup>3</sup>Everyone sees my life ebbing out.

They consider me a hopeless case and see me as a dead man.

<sup>4</sup>They've all left me here to die, helpless,

like one who is doomed for death.

*a* 87:2 Or "The Lord loves Zion's gates more than all the dwelling places of Jacob."

*b* 87:4 This is in anticipation of the nations of the earth coming to know Christ as the eternal King. See Ps. 86:9.

*c* 87:4 Or "the proud one," which is a title given to Egypt.

*d* 87:4 Or "Babylon," which means "gate of God."

*e* 87:4 Or "Philistia," which means "land of sojourners."

*f* 87:4 Or "Tyre," which means "a rock."

*g* 87:5 As translated from the Aramaic. The Hebrew reads "Each one is born in Zion, and the Most High makes her secure."

*h* 87:7 As translated from the Aramaic.

*i* 88 This psalm has traditionally been used by Christians for reading on Good Friday. Many insights can be found here of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

*j* 88 Psalm 88 is both a song and a psalm. The Hebrew for "song" can also mean "wall." There are times that our purest music will come when we feel like we are up against a "wall."

*k* 88 Heman the Ezrahite was considered comparable to Solomon in his wisdom (1 Kings 4:31). Jewish literature states that he was also a gifted musician and vocalist. But it also teaches that Heman was a leper, an outcast from society who lived in poverty, was shunned by all, and could not sing in the temple because of his disease. Read Ps. 88 with this background in mind. *To the tune of "Pierced"* can also be translated "He has been humbled more than any man." The Hebrew word for "instruction" (*maschil*) comes from a word that means "to prosper" or "to understand."

<sup>5</sup>They're convinced you've forsaken me,  
certain that you've forgotten me  
completely—  
abandoned, pierced, with nothing to  
look forward to but death.

<sup>6</sup>They have discarded me<sup>a</sup> and thrown  
me down  
into the deepest darkness as into a  
bottomless pit.

<sup>7</sup>I feel your wrath, and it's a heavy  
weight upon me,  
drowning me beneath a sea of  
sorrow.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>8</sup>Why did you turn all my friends  
against me?  
You've made me like a cursed man  
in their eyes.  
No one wants to be with me now.  
You've caught me in a trap with no  
way out.

<sup>9</sup>Every day I beg for your help. Can't  
you see my tears?  
My eyes are swollen with weeping.  
My arms are wide, longing for mercy,<sup>b</sup>  
but you're nowhere to be found.

<sup>10</sup>How can those who are cut off from  
your care  
even know that you are there?  
Do departed spirits<sup>c</sup> rise up to praise  
you?

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>11</sup>Who can give thanks for your love in  
the graveyard?

Who preaches your faithfulness in  
the place of destruction?

<sup>12</sup>Does death's darkness declare your  
miracles?

How can anyone who's in the grave,  
where all is forgotten,  
remember how you keep your  
promises?

<sup>13</sup>Lord, you know my prayer before I  
even whisper it.<sup>d</sup>

At each and every sunrise you  
will  
continue to hear my cry until you  
answer.

<sup>14</sup>O Lord, why have you thrown my  
life away?

Will you keep turning the other  
way every time I call out to  
you?

<sup>15</sup>I've had to live in poverty and  
trouble all my life.<sup>e</sup>

Now I'm humiliated, broken, and  
helpless before your terrors  
and I can't take it anymore.

<sup>16</sup>I'm overwhelmed by your burning  
anger.

I've taken the worst you could give  
me,  
and I'm speechless before you.

<sup>17</sup>I'm drowning beneath the waves of  
this sorrow,  
cut off with no one to help.

<sup>18</sup>All my loved ones and friends keep  
far away from me,  
leaving me all alone with only dark-  
ness as my friend.

a 88:6 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew reads "You have discarded me."

b 88:9 As translated from the Septuagint. The Greek reads "My hands are stretched out to you."

c 88:10 Or "Rephaites." The Rephaites were giants that inhabited the region of Bashan east of the Jordan. See Deut. 2:11; 3:11; Josh. 12:4–5.

d 88:13 As translated from the Septuagint.

e 88:15 As translated from the Septuagint. The Greek reads "close to death all my life."



# 89 WILL YOU REJECT US FOREVER?

*Poems by Ethan the Ezrahite for instruction<sup>a</sup>*

## First Poem – God’s Promises to David

<sup>1</sup>This forever-song I sing<sup>b</sup> of the gentle love of God!

Young and old alike will hear about

your faithful, steadfast love—never failing!

<sup>2</sup>Here’s my chorus: “Your mercy grows through the ages.<sup>c</sup>

Your faithfulness is firm, rising up to the skies.”

<sup>3</sup>I heard the Lord say, “My covenant has been made, and I’m committed forever to my chosen one, David.

<sup>4</sup>I have made my oath that there will be sons of David forever, sons that are kings through every generation.”

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>5-6</sup>Can you hear it? Heaven is filled with your praises, O Lord! All the holy ones are praising you for your miracles.

The sons of God are all praising you for your mighty wonders.

We could search the skies forever and never find one like you.

All the mighty angels could not be compared to you.

<sup>7</sup>You are a God who is greatly to be feared

as you preside over the council of holy ones.

You are surrounded by trembling ones who are overwhelmed with fear and dread,

stunned as they stand in awe of you!

<sup>8</sup>So awesome are you, O Yahweh, Lord God of Angel Armies!

Where could we find anyone as glorious as you?

Your faithfulness shines all around you!

<sup>9</sup>You rule over oceans and the swelling seas.

When their stormy waves rise, you speak, and they lie still.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>10</sup>You crushed the strongholds of Egypt,

and all your enemies were scattered at the mighty display of your glory-power.

<sup>11</sup>All the heavens and everything on earth belong to you, for you are the Creator of all that is seen and unseen.

<sup>12</sup>The four corners of the earth were put in place by you.

You made the majestic mountains that are still shouting their praises to your name.

<sup>a</sup> 89 Many scholars believe Ps. 89 contains four poems or stanzas. This translation signifies each poem with an inscription.

<sup>b</sup> 89:1 The Hebrew word for “sing” has multiple homonyms. *Shuwr* can also mean “wall.” When we feel like we are up against a wall, it is time to sing and see ourselves break through by faith. But *shuwr* can also mean “to behold” or “to perceive.” As we sing to God in abandoned worship, we perceive that his glory is greater than the wall that stands before us. The root word of the word used here for “sing” is *sur*, which is also the same word used for “having dominion over.” So many times when we sing in worship, exalting the loving-kindness of God, we establish dominion over any thoughts that God might not be faithful or that he may fail us. Sing when you feel defeated and watch as the walls come down and you rise to take dominion over your foes.

<sup>c</sup> 89:2 As translated from the Septuagint.

<sup>d</sup> 89:9 This is a prophecy of Jesus, who would one day calm the stormy seas. See Matt. 8:23–27.

<sup>13</sup>Breathtaking and awesome is your power!

Astounding and unbelievable is your might and strength when it goes on display!

<sup>14</sup>Your glorious throne rests on a foundation of righteousness and just verdicts. Grace and truth are the attendants who go before you.

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, how blessed are the people who know the triumphant shout;<sup>a</sup> for they walk in the radiance of your presence.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>16</sup>We can do nothing but leap for joy all day long, for we know who you are and what you do, and you've exalted us on high.

<sup>17</sup>The glory of your splendor is our strength, and your marvelous favor makes us even stronger, lifting us even higher!

<sup>18</sup>You are our King, the holiest one of all; your wraparound presence is our protection.

## Second Poem – God Keeps His Promises

<sup>19–20</sup>You spoke to your prophets in visions, saying, “I have found a mighty hero for my people.

I have chosen David as my loving servant and exalted him.

I have anointed him as king with the oil of my holiness.

<sup>21</sup>I will be strength to him, and I will give him

my grace to sustain him no matter what comes.

<sup>22</sup>None of his enemies will get the best of him, nor will the wicked one overpower him.

<sup>23</sup>For I will crush his every adversary and do away with all who hate him.

<sup>24</sup>Because I love him and treasure him, my faithfulness will always protect him.

I will place my great favor upon him, and I will cause his power and fame to increase.

<sup>25</sup>I will set his hand over the sea and his right hand over the rivers.

<sup>26</sup>And he will come before me, saying, “You truly are my Father,<sup>c</sup> my only God, and my strong deliverer!”

<sup>27</sup>I am setting him apart, favoring him as my firstborn son.

I will make him the most high king in all the earth!

<sup>28</sup>I will love him forever and always show him kindness. My covenant with him will never be broken.

<sup>29</sup>For I have decreed that he will always have an heir— a dynasty that will release the days of heaven on earth.

<sup>30–32</sup>But if his children turn from me and forsake my words, refusing to walk in my truth, renouncing and violating my laws, then I will surely punish them for their sins with my stern discipline until they regret it.

<sup>a</sup> 89:15 The Hebrew word for “triumphant shout” is *teruah*, a homonym of the word for “brokenness.” Our triumphant shout can be powerful even in the midst of our brokenness.

<sup>b</sup> 89:15 Or “in the radiance of your face.”

<sup>c</sup> 89:26 David was the first man in the Bible to address God as “my Father.”

<sup>33</sup>But I will never, no never, lift my faithful love from off their lives. My kindness will prevail and I will never disown them.

<sup>34-35</sup>How could I revoke my covenant of love that I promised David?  
For I have given him my word, my holy, irrevocable word.  
How could I lie to my loving servant David?

<sup>36-37</sup>Sons of David will continue to reign on his throne, and their kingdom will endure as long as the sun is in the sky. This covenant will be an unbreakable promise that I have established for all time.”  
*Pause in his presence*

### Third Poem – Why Has Our King Been Defeated?

<sup>38</sup>Why have you rejected me, the one you anointed?

Why would you cast me away?

Why would you lose your temper with me?

<sup>39</sup>You have torn up the contract you made with me, your servant. You have stripped away my crown<sup>a</sup> and thrown it to the ground.

<sup>40</sup>You have torn down all my walls of defense and have made my every hiding place into ruins.

<sup>41</sup>All the passersby attack and rob me while my neighbors mock!

<sup>42</sup>Instead of fighting for me, you take the side of my enemies, even giving them strength to subdue me, and then watched them celebrate their victory!

<sup>43</sup>You are no longer helping me in battle.

You’ve forsaken me to the swords of those who would strike me down.

<sup>44</sup>You’ve made my regal splendor to decrease and allowed my rule to be overthrown.

<sup>45</sup>Because of you, I’ve become old before my time, and I’m publicly disgraced!

*Pause in his presence*

### Fourth Poem – Save Us, God

<sup>46</sup>How long will you hide your love from me?

Have you left me for good?

How long will your anger continue to burn against me?

<sup>47</sup>Remember, Lord, I am nothing but dust, here today and so soon blown away. Is this all you’ve created us for? For nothing but this?

<sup>48</sup>Which one of us will live forever?

We are all mortal, terminal, for we will all one day die.

Which one of us would ever escape our appointment with death and dodge our own funeral?

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>49</sup>So God, where is all this love and kindness you promised us?

What happened to your covenant with David?

<sup>50</sup>Have you forgotten how your own servants are being slandered?

Lord God, it seems like I’m carrying in my heart

all the pain and abuse of many people.

<sup>51</sup>They have relentlessly insulted and persecuted us, your anointed ones.

<sup>52</sup>Nevertheless, blessed be our God forever and ever.

Amen! Faithful is our King!

<sup>a</sup> 89:39 In place of the word *crown*, some translations render “my dignity.”

## BOOK 4

## THE NUMBERS PSALMS

*Psalms of our pilgrimage on earth*

## 90 GOD, THE ETERNAL

*A prayer of Moses, God's prophet*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, you have always been our  
eternal home,  
our hiding place from generation to  
generation.

<sup>2</sup>Long before you gave birth to the  
earth  
and before the mountains were born,  
you have been from everlasting to  
everlasting,<sup>a</sup>  
the one and only true God.

<sup>3</sup>When you speak the words "Life,  
return to me!"  
man turns back to dust.

<sup>4</sup>One thousand years pass before your  
eyes  
like yesterday that quickly faded  
away,  
like a night's sleep soon forgotten.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>5-6</sup>One day we will each be swept  
away into the sleep of death.  
We glide along through the tides of  
time—  
so quickly gone, like a dream that  
fades at dawn,<sup>c</sup>  
like glistening grass that springs up  
one day

and is dry and withered the next,  
ready to be cut down!

<sup>7</sup>Terrified by your anger, confined  
beneath the curse,  
we live our lives knowing your  
wrath.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>8</sup>For all of our faults and flaws are in  
full view to you.<sup>e</sup>  
Everything we want to hide, you  
search out  
and expose by the radiance of your  
face.

<sup>9</sup>We are banished to live in the  
shadow of your anger.  
Our days soon become years until  
our lifetime comes to an end,  
finished with nothing but a sigh.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>10</sup>You've limited our life span to a  
mere seventy years,  
yet some you give grace to live still  
longer.<sup>g</sup>

But even the best of years are  
marred by tears and toils  
and in the end are nothing more  
than a gravestone in a graveyard!<sup>h</sup>

We're gone so quickly, so swiftly;  
we pass away and simply disappear.

<sup>11</sup>Lord, who fully knows the power of  
your passion

a 90:2 The Hebrew word often rendered "eternity" ["everlasting"] is *'olam*, which can be translated "beyond the horizon."

b 90:4 Or "like divisions [watches] of the night."

c 90:5-6 A poetic description of what is implied in the context.

d 90:7 Or "worn out by your rage." Jesus has come and broken the curse and lifted the unbearable burden of our sins.

e 90:8 The Septuagint reads "The laws we have broken all stand before you."

f 90:9 The Septuagint reads "All our days have been filled with failures."

g 90:10 Or "if in strength eighty years."

h 90:10 A poetic description of what is implied in the context. The Septuagint has the phrase "until we mellow and accept your correction."



and the intensity of your emotions?<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>12</sup>Help us to remember that our days  
 are numbered,  
 and help us to interpret our lives  
 correctly.

Set your wisdom deeply in our  
 hearts  
 so that we may accept your  
 correction.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Return to us again, O God!  
 How much longer will it take until  
 you show us  
 your abundant compassion?

<sup>14</sup>Let the sunrise of your love end our  
 dark night.  
 Break through our clouded dawn  
 again!  
 Only you can satisfy our hearts,  
 filling us with songs of joy to the  
 end of our days.

<sup>15</sup>We've been overwhelmed with grief;  
 come now and overwhelm us with  
 gladness.  
 Replace our years of trouble with  
 decades of delight.

<sup>16</sup>Let us see your miracles again, and  
 let the rising generation  
 see the glorious wonders you're  
 famous for.

<sup>17</sup>O Lord our God, let your sweet beau-  
 ty<sup>c</sup> rest upon us.  
 Come work with us, and then our  
 works will endure;  
 you will give us success in all we do.

## 91 SAFE AND SECURE

<sup>1</sup>When you abide under the shadow  
 of Shaddai,<sup>d</sup>  
 you are hidden<sup>e</sup> in the strength of  
 God Most High.

<sup>2</sup>He's the hope that holds me and the  
 stronghold to shelter me,  
 the only God for me, and my great  
 confidence.

<sup>3</sup>He will rescue you from every hidden  
 trap of the enemy,<sup>f</sup>  
 and he will protect you from false  
 accusation  
 and any deadly curse.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>4</sup>His massive arms<sup>h</sup> are wrapped  
 around you, protecting you.  
 You can run under his covering of  
 majesty and hide.

His arms of faithfulness are a shield  
 keeping you from harm.

<sup>5</sup>You will never worry about an attack  
 of demonic forces at night

*a* 90:11 As translated from the Aramaic. The Hebrew can be translated "Who could experience the strength of your anger? Who could endure the fear your fury can bring, and who truly comprehends the fear of God?"

*b* 90:12 As translated from the Septuagint.

*c* 90:17 Or "favor."

*d* 91:1 Shaddai (*šadday*) is taken from a Hebrew root word with many expressive meanings. It can mean "God of the Mountain," "God the Destroyer of Enemies," "God the Self-Sufficient One," "God the Nurturer of Babies," or "God the Almighty." Moses the lawgiver is the author of this psalm, yet every verse seems to breathe the unlimited grace and mercy of God.

*e* 91:1 Or "[I] endure through the night." See Job 39:28, where the same Hebrew word is used for an eagle passing the night on the high cliffs.

*f* 91:3 Or "hunter."

*g* 91:3 As translated from the most ancient Hebrew manuscripts and the Septuagint. The Hebrew word can mean "poisoned arrows."

*h* 91:4 Or "wings." Also found in the next sentence, "under his wings," which speaks not of God having wings, but of the wings of the cherubim resting on the mercy seat. The implication is that we can always come to the mercy seat and rest without fear.

nor have to fear a spirit of darkness  
coming against you.

<sup>6</sup>Don't fear a thing!

Whether by night or by day, demonic  
danger will not trouble you,<sup>a</sup>  
nor will the powers of evil be  
launched against you.

<sup>7</sup>Even in a time of disaster, with thou-  
sands and thousands being killed,  
you will remain unscathed and  
unharméd.

<sup>8</sup>You will be a spectator as the wicked  
perish in judgment,  
for they will be paid back for what  
they have done!

<sup>9-10</sup>When we live our lives within the  
shadow of God Most High,  
our secret hiding place, we will  
always be shielded from harm.  
How then could evil prevail against  
us or disease infect us?

<sup>11</sup>God sends angels with special orders  
to protect you wherever you go,  
defending you from all harm.

<sup>12</sup>If you walk into a trap, they'll be  
there for you  
and keep you from stumbling.

<sup>13</sup>You'll even walk unharmed among  
the fiercest powers of darkness,<sup>b</sup>  
trampling every one of them  
beneath your feet!

<sup>14</sup>For here is what the Lord has spo-  
ken to me:  
"Because you loved me, delighted in  
me, and have been loyal to my name,  
I will greatly protect you.

<sup>15</sup>I will answer your cry for help every  
time you pray,  
and you will feel my presence  
in your time of trouble.

I will deliver you and bring you honor.

<sup>16</sup>I will satisfy you with a full life and  
with all that I do for you.  
For you will enjoy the fullness of my  
salvation!"

## 92 A SONG OF PRAISE

*A song for the day of worship<sup>c</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>It's so enjoyable to come before you  
with uncontainable praises spilling  
from our hearts!  
How we love to sing our praises over  
and over to you,  
to the matchless God, high and  
exalted over all!

<sup>2</sup>At each and every sunrise we will be  
thanking you  
for your kindness and your love.  
As the sun sets and all through the  
night,  
we will keep proclaiming, "You are  
so faithful!"

<sup>3</sup>Melodies of praise will fill the air as  
every musical instrument,<sup>d</sup>  
joined with every heart, overflows  
with worship.

<sup>4</sup>No wonder I'm so glad; I can't keep  
it in!  
Lord, I'm shouting with glee over all  
you've done,  
for all you've done for me:

<sup>a</sup> 91:6 Verses 5–6 are seen by many Jewish scholars as a reference not merely to pestilence and natural dangers but to the realm of spiritual darkness that would come against God's servants. These spirits are equated to "arrows that fly in daytime" or "a pestilence that walks" in the darkness. God's sheltered ones are kept from the harm that could come from natural sources or supernatural sources. What a wonderful place to hide and be secure!

<sup>b</sup> 91:13 The Hebrew includes the words for "lions," "snakes," and "dragons" as the three great symbols of satanic power.

<sup>c</sup> 92 Ancient Jewish tradition holds that Adam composed this psalm on the first Sabbath of creation, and it was to be sung by the Levites on the Sabbath in the temple.

<sup>d</sup> 92:3 Or "a ten-stringed harp and lyre."



<sup>5</sup>what mighty miracles and your power at work—just to name a few!  
Depths of purpose and layers of meaning  
saturate everything you do.

<sup>6</sup>Such amazing mysteries are found within every miracle  
that nearly everyone seems to miss.  
Those with no discernment can never really discover  
the deep and glorious secrets hidden in your ways.

<sup>7</sup>It's true the wicked flourish, but only for a moment;  
they foolishly forget their destiny with death,  
that they will all one day be destroyed forevermore.

<sup>8</sup>But you, O Lord, are exalted forever in the highest place of endless glory,

<sup>9</sup>while your opponents, the workers of wickedness,  
will all perish, forever separated from you.

<sup>10</sup>Your anointing has made me strong and mighty.  
*You've empowered my life for triumph<sup>a</sup>*  
by pouring fresh oil over me.

<sup>11</sup>You've said that those lying in wait to pounce on me  
would be defeated,  
and now it's happened right in front of my eyes,  
and I've heard their cries of surrender!

<sup>12</sup>Yes! Look how you've made all your devoted lovers  
to flourish like palm trees,  
each one growing in victory, standing with strength!<sup>b</sup>

<sup>13</sup>You've transplanted them into your heavenly courtyard,  
where they are thriving before you,

<sup>14</sup>for in your presence they will still overflow and be anointed.

Even in their old age they will stay fresh,  
bearing luscious fruit and abiding faithfully.

<sup>15</sup>Listen to them! With pleasure they still proclaim:

"You're so good! You're my beautiful strength!

You've never made a mistake with me."<sup>c</sup>

## 93 THE MAJESTY OF GOD

*A Friday song composed by King David after being resettled in the land<sup>d</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Look! Yahweh now reigns as King!  
He has covered himself with majesty and strength,  
wearing them as his splendor-garments.

Regal power surrounds him as he sits securely on his throne.

He's in charge of it all, the entire world,  
and he knows what he's doing!

<sup>2</sup>Lord, you have reigned as King from the very beginning of time.  
Eternity is your home.

<sup>3-4</sup>Chaos once challenged you.  
The raging waves lifted themselves over and over,  
high above the ocean's depths, letting out their mighty roar!  
Yet at the sound of your voice they were all stilled by your might.

a 92:10 The Septuagint reads "I will raise my horn high like a rhinoceros [Hb. translated as "wild ox"], and in my old age I will still have plenty of oil [anointing]."

b 92:12 Or "growing high like a cedar in Lebanon." God makes us immortal and immovable.

c 92:15 Or "You are just and never unfair."

d 93 This inscription is found in the Septuagint. Jews called this psalm "The Friday psalm." The Talmud indicates that this psalm was sung every Friday in the temple by the Levites.

What a majestic King, filled with power!

<sup>5</sup>Nothing could ever change your royal decrees;  
they will last forever!  
Holiness is the beauty that fills your house;<sup>a</sup>  
you are the one who abides forevermore!

## 94 GOD OF VENGEANCE

*A Wednesday song composed by King David<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Lord God Almighty, you are the God who takes vengeance on your enemies.  
It's time for you to punish evil!  
Let your rays of revelation-light shine from your people and pierce the conscience of the wicked and punish them.

<sup>2</sup>It's time to arise as judge of all the earth;  
arise to punish the proud with the penalty they deserve!

<sup>3</sup>How much longer will you sit back and watch the wicked triumph in their evil, boasting in all that is wrong?

<sup>4-5</sup>Listen to them bragging among themselves,  
big in their own eyes, all because of the crimes  
they've committed against your people!  
See how they're crushing those who love you, God,

cruelly oppressing those who belong to you.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Heartlessly they murder the widows, the foreigners,  
and even the orphaned children.

<sup>7</sup>They say to themselves, "The Lord God doesn't see this.  
Their God, the God of Jacob, he doesn't even care!"

<sup>8</sup>But you'd better watch out, you stupid fools!

You'd better wise up! Why would you act like God doesn't exist?  
Do you really think that God can't hear their cries?

<sup>9</sup>God isn't hard of hearing; he'll hear all their cries.

God isn't blind. He who made the eye has superb vision,  
and he's watching all you do.

<sup>10</sup>Won't the God who knows all things know what you've done?  
The God who punishes nations will surely punish you!

<sup>11</sup>The Lord has fully examined every thought of man  
and found them all to be empty and futile.

<sup>12</sup>Lord Yah, there's such a blessing that comes  
when you teach us your Word and your ways.<sup>d</sup>  
Even the sting of your correction can be sweet.

<sup>13</sup>It rescues us from our days of trouble  
until you are ready to punish the wicked.<sup>e</sup>

a 93:5 Believers are now God's house, made holy by the blood of Jesus. See 1 Cor. 3:16 and Heb. 3:6.

b 94 This inscription is taken from the Septuagint. The Mishnah states that this psalm was sung by the Levites on the fourth day of the week, each Wednesday, in the temple.

c 94:4-5 Or "[the people of] his inheritance." (See also v. 14.)

d 94:12 Or "from your Torah."

e 94:13 Or "until a pit is dug for the wicked."

<sup>14</sup>For the Lord will never walk away  
from his cherished ones,  
nor would he forsake his chosen  
ones who belong to him.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Whenever you pronounce judgments,  
they reveal righteousness.<sup>b</sup>  
All your devoted lovers will be  
pleased.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Lord, who will protect me from these  
wicked ones?  
If you don't stand to defend me, who  
will? I have no one but you!

<sup>17</sup>I would have been killed so many  
times  
if you had not been there for me.

<sup>18</sup>When I screamed out, "Lord, I'm  
doomed!"  
your fiery love was stirred, and you  
raced to my rescue.

<sup>19</sup>Whenever my busy thoughts were  
out of control,  
the soothing comfort of your presence  
calmed me down and overwhelmed  
me with delight.

<sup>20</sup>It's obvious to all; you will have  
nothing to do  
with corrupt rulers who pass laws  
that empower evil  
and defeat what is right.

<sup>21</sup>For they gang up against the lovers  
of righteousness  
and condemn the innocent to death.

<sup>22-23</sup>But I know that all their evil plans  
will boomerang back onto them.  
Every plot they hatch will simply  
seal their own doom.  
For you, my God, you will destroy  
them,  
giving them what they deserve.  
For you are my true tower of strength,  
my safe place, my hideout, and my  
true shelter.

## 95 IT'S TIME TO SING

<sup>1</sup>Come on, everyone! Let's sing for joy  
to the Lord!  
Let's shout our loudest praises to our  
God who saved us!

<sup>2</sup>Everyone come meet his face with a  
thankful heart.  
Don't hold back your praises;  
make him great by your shouts of  
joy!

<sup>3</sup>For the Lord is the greatest of all,  
King-God over all other gods!

<sup>4</sup>In one hand he holds the mysteries  
of the earth,  
and in the other he holds the highest  
mountain peaks.

<sup>5</sup>He's the owner of every ocean,  
the engineer and sculptor of earth  
itself!

<sup>6</sup>Come and kneel before this  
Creator-God;  
come and bow before the mighty  
God, our majestic maker!

<sup>7-9</sup>For we are those he cares for, and  
he is the God we worship.  
So drop everything else and listen to  
his voice!  
For this is what he's saying:  
"Today, when I speak,  
don't even think about turning a  
deaf ear to me  
like they did when they tested me at  
Meribah and Massah,<sup>d</sup>  
the place where they argued with  
me, their Creator.  
Your ancestors challenged me over  
and over with their complaining,  
even though I had convinced them  
of my power and love.  
They still doubted my care for them.

*a* 94:14 Or "[the people of] his inheritance."

*b* 94:15 Or "justice will prevail."

*c* 94:15 The Hebrew reads "and after it [judgment] are the pure in heart."

*d* 95:7-9 *Meribah* means "strife" or "argument." *Massah* means "testing."

<sup>10</sup>So for forty long years I was grieved  
and disgusted by them.  
I described them as wicked  
wanderers  
whose hearts would not follow my  
ways or keep my words.  
<sup>11</sup>So I made a vow in my anger and  
declared,  
“They will not enter the resting place  
I’ve planned for them!”  
*So don’t you ever be hard-hearted or  
stubborn like they were!”*

## 96 KING OF THE WORLD

<sup>1</sup>Go ahead—sing your new song to  
the Lord!  
Let everyone in every language sing  
him a new song.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>2-3</sup>Don’t stop! Keep on singing! Make  
his name famous!  
Tell everyone every day how won-  
derful he is.  
Give them the good news of our  
great Savior.  
Take the message of his glory and  
miracles to every nation.  
Tell them about all the amazing  
things he has done.  
<sup>4</sup>For the Lord’s greatness is beyond  
description,  
and he deserves all the praise that  
comes to him.  
He is our King-God, and it’s right to  
be in holy awe of him.  
<sup>5</sup>Other gods<sup>b</sup> are absolutely worthless.  
For the Lord God is Creator-God,  
who spread the splendor of the  
skies!  
<sup>6</sup>Breath-taking brilliance and awe-  
inspiring majesty  
radiate from his shining presence.

His stunning beauty overwhelms all  
who come before him.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Surrender to the Lord Yahweh, all  
you nations and peoples.  
Surrender to him all your pride and  
strength.

<sup>8</sup>Confess that Yahweh alone deserves  
all the glory and honor.  
Bring an offering and come cele-  
brate in his courts.

<sup>9</sup>Come worship the Lord God wearing  
the splendor of holiness.  
Let everyone wait in wonder as they  
tremble in awe before him.

<sup>10</sup>Tell the nations plainly that Yahweh  
rules over all!  
He is doing a great job, and nothing  
will disrupt him,  
for he treats everyone fair and  
square.

<sup>11-12</sup>Let the skies sing for joy! Let the  
earth join in the chorus.  
Let oceans thunder and fields echo  
this ecstatic praise  
until every swaying tree of every  
forest joins in,  
lifting up their songs of joyous  
praise to him!

<sup>13</sup>For here he comes, the Lord God,  
and he’s ready to judge the world.  
He will do what’s right and can be  
trusted  
to always do what’s fair.

## 97 GOD RULES OVER ALL

*A psalm of David when his  
kingdom was established<sup>d</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh now reigns as King! Let  
everyone rejoice!  
His rule extends everywhere, even to  
distant lands,

<sup>a</sup> 96:1 Every new thing God does requires a new song to make it known.

<sup>b</sup> 96:5 The Septuagint reads “demons.”

<sup>c</sup> 96:6 Or “Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.”

<sup>d</sup> 97 This inscription is from the Septuagint.



and the islands of the sea, let them  
all be glad.

<sup>2</sup>Clouds both dark and mysterious  
now surround him.<sup>a</sup>

His throne of glory rests upon  
a foundation of righteousness and  
justice.

<sup>3</sup>All around him burns a blazing glory-  
fire consuming all his foes.

<sup>4</sup>When his lightning strikes, it lights  
up the world.

People are wide-eyed as they  
tremble and shake.

<sup>5</sup>Mountains melt away like wax in a  
fire  
when the Lord of all the earth draws  
near.

<sup>6</sup>Heaven's messengers preach righ-  
teousness, and  
people everywhere see God's glory  
in the sky!

<sup>7</sup>Shame covers all who boast in other  
gods, for they worship idols.  
For all the supernatural powers once  
worshiped  
the true and living God.

<sup>8</sup>But God's Zion-people are content,  
for they know and hear the truth.  
The people of praise rejoice over all  
your judgments, O Lord!

<sup>9</sup>For you are King-God, the Most High  
God over all the earth.  
You are exalted above every super-  
natural power!

<sup>10</sup>Listen, you lovers of God! Hate evil,  
for God can keep you from wrong  
and protect you from the power of  
wickedness.

<sup>11</sup>For he sows seeds of light within his  
devoted lovers,  
and seeds of joy burst forth for the  
lovers of God!

<sup>12</sup>So be glad and continue to give him  
thanks,  
for God's holiness is seen in every-  
thing he does.

## 98 SING A NEW SONG

*David's poetic praise<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Go ahead—sing your brand-new  
song to the Lord!

He is famous for his miracles and  
marvels,  
for he is victorious through his  
mighty power and holy strength.

<sup>2</sup>Everyone knows how God has saved  
us,  
for he has displayed his justice  
throughout history.

<sup>3</sup>He never forgets to show us his love  
and faithfulness.  
How kind he has been to Israel!  
All the nations know how he stands  
behind his people  
and how he saves his own.

<sup>4</sup>So go ahead, everyone, and shout  
out your praises with joy!  
Break out of the box and let loose  
with the most joyous sound of  
praise!

<sup>5</sup>Sing your melody of praise to the  
Lord  
and make music like never before!<sup>c</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Blow those trumpets and shofars!  
Shout with joyous triumph before  
King Yahweh!

<sup>7</sup>Let the ocean's waves join in the  
chorus with their roaring praise  
until everyone everywhere shouts  
out in unison,  
“Glory to the Lord!”

<sup>8</sup>Let the rivers and streams clap with  
applause

<sup>a</sup> 97:2 See Deut. 4:11; 5:22.

<sup>b</sup> 98 The Septuagint has David as the author. The Hebrew reads simply “A psalm.”

<sup>c</sup> 98:5 Or “accompanied by a harp and the sound of music.”

as the mountains rise in a standing ovation  
to join the mighty choir of exaltation.

<sup>9</sup>Look! Here he comes! The Lord and judge of all the earth!  
He's coming to make things right and to do it fair and square.  
And everyone will see that he does all things well!

## 99 GOD OF HOLINESS

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh is King over all! Everyone trembles in awe before him.  
He rules enthroned between the wings of the cherubim.  
So let the earth shake and quake in wonder before him!  
<sup>2</sup>For Yahweh is great and glorious in the midst of his Zion-people.  
He is exalted above all!  
<sup>3</sup>Let everyone praise this breathtaking God, for he is holy.  
<sup>4</sup>A lover of justice is our mighty King; he is right in all his ways.  
He insists on being fair to all, promoting true justice and righteousness in Jacob.  
<sup>5</sup>So everyone, exalt the Lord our God facedown before his glory-throne, for he is great and holy.  
<sup>6</sup>*God has his praying priests,* like Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, who all interceded, asking God for help.  
God heard their cries and came to their rescue.  
<sup>7</sup>He spoke to them from the pillar of clouds, and they followed his instructions, doing everything he told them.

<sup>8</sup>God, the great forgiver, answered their prayers,  
yet he would punish them when they went astray.

<sup>9</sup>Keep exalting the Lord our God facedown before his glory-throne, for he is great and holy!

## 100 PRAISE GOD

*A poetic song for thanksgiving*

<sup>1</sup>Lift up a great shout of joy to Yahweh!  
Go ahead and do it—everyone, everywhere!  
<sup>2</sup>Worship Yahweh with gladness.  
Sing your way into his presence with joy!  
<sup>3</sup>And realize what this really means—we have the privilege of worshipping Yahweh our God.  
For he is our Creator and we belong to him.  
We are the people of his pleasure.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>4</sup>You can pass through his open gates<sup>b</sup> with the password of praise.  
Come right into his presence with thanksgiving.  
Come bring your thank offering to him and affectionately bless his beautiful name!  
<sup>5</sup>For Yahweh is always good and ready to receive you.  
He's so loving that it will amaze you—so kind that it will astound you!  
And he is famous for his faithfulness toward all.  
Everyone knows our God can be trusted,  
for he keeps his promises to every generation!

<sup>a</sup> 100:3 Or “the sheep of his pasture.”

<sup>b</sup> 100:4 The Hebrew word for “gate [doorway]” is *sha'ar* and has multiple meanings. It can also mean “storm.” When you pass through his gates you enter into the stormy, passionate love of God. See Rev. 3:20.



# 101

## INTEGRITY

*David's poetic praise*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, I will sing about your faithful love for me.  
My song of praise will have your justice as its theme.

<sup>2</sup>I'm trying my best to walk in the way of integrity,  
especially in my own home.  
But I need your help!  
I'm wondering, Lord, when will you appear?

<sup>3</sup>I refuse to gaze on that which is vulgar.  
I despise works of evil people  
and anything that moves my heart away from you.  
I will not let evil hold me in its grip.

<sup>4</sup>Every perverse and crooked way I have put away from my heart,  
for I will have nothing to do with the deeds of darkness.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>5</sup>I will silence those who secretly want to slander my friends,  
and I will not tolerate the proud and arrogant.

<sup>6</sup>My innermost circle<sup>b</sup> will only be those who I know are pure and godly.  
They will be the only ones I allow to minister to me.

<sup>7</sup>There's no room in my home for hypocrites,  
for I can't stand chronic liars who flatter and deceive.

<sup>8</sup>At each and every sunrise I will awake to do what's right  
and put to silence those who love wickedness,  
freeing God's people<sup>c</sup> from their evil grip.  
*I will do all of this because of my great love for you!<sup>d</sup>*

# 102

## FROM TEARS TO PRAISE

*A prayer for those who are overwhelmed and for all the discouraged who come to pour out their hearts before the Lord<sup>e</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, listen to my prayer! Listen to my cry for help!

<sup>2</sup>You can't hide your face from me in the day of my distress.

Stoop down to hear my prayer and answer me quickly, Lord!

<sup>3-4</sup>For my days of happiness have gone up in smoke.

My body is raging with fever, my heart is sick,  
and I'm consumed by this illness—withered like a dead leaf. I can't even eat.

<sup>5</sup>I'm nothing but skin and bones.  
Nothing's left of me but whispered groans.

<sup>6</sup>I'm like a pelican of the wilderness,<sup>f</sup>  
like an owl among the ruins.

a 101:4 Or "evil people."

b 101:6 Or "The faithful of the land."

c 101:8 Or "the city of Yahweh."

d 101:8 This phrase, implied in the Hebrew text, brings conclusion to the psalm.

e 102 As translated from the Septuagint.

f 102:6 Ancient expositors viewed the "pelican in the wilderness" as a reference to Christ. The famous legend and much medieval artwork taught that the pelican would give the gift of blood to her starving young by piercing her own breast with her beak, allowing her young to drink her blood and live. What an amazing example of sacrificial love. Augustine writes concerning this: "The mother wounds herself deeply and pours forth her blood over her young, bathed in which they recover life." See Augustine, "Exposition on the Book of Psalms," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*, ed. A. Cleveland Coxe and Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1955), 8:497.

<sup>7</sup>I'm sleepless, shivering in the cold,  
forlorn, and friendless,  
like a lonely bird on the rooftop.

<sup>8</sup>My every enemy mocks and insults  
me incessantly.  
They even use my name as a curse  
to speak over others!

<sup>9-10</sup>Because of your great and furious  
anger against me,  
all I do is suffer with sorrow,  
with nothing to eat but a meal of  
mourning.<sup>a</sup>

My crying fills my cup with salty  
tears!

In your wrath you have rejected me,  
sweeping me away like dirt on the  
floor.

<sup>11</sup>My days are marked by the length-  
ening shadows of death.  
I'm withering away and there's noth-  
ing left of me.

<sup>12</sup>But then I remember that you, O  
Lord,  
still sit enthroned as King over all!  
The fame of your name will be  
revealed to every generation.

<sup>13</sup>I know you are about to arise and  
show your tender love to Zion.  
Now is the time, Lord,  
for your compassion and mercy to  
be poured out—  
the appointed time has come  
*for your prophetic promises to be  
fulfilled!*

<sup>14</sup>For your servants weep in sympathy  
over Zion's ruins  
and feel love for her every stone.

<sup>15</sup>When you arise to intervene,  
all the nations and kings will be  
stunned  
and will fear your awesome name,  
trembling before your glory!

<sup>16</sup>Yes, you will reveal yourself to Zion  
and appear in the brightness of your  
glory

to restore her and give her children.

<sup>17</sup>He responds to the prayer of the  
poor and broken  
and will not despise the cry of the  
homeless.

<sup>18</sup>Write all this down for the coming  
generation,  
so re-created people<sup>b</sup> will read it and  
praise the Lord!

<sup>19</sup>Tell them how Yah<sup>c</sup> looked down  
from his high and holy place,  
gazing from his glory to survey the  
earth.

<sup>20</sup>He listened to all the groaning of his  
people longing to be free,  
and he set loose the sons of death to  
experience life.

<sup>21</sup>Multitudes will stream to  
Jerusalem to  
praise the Lord and declare his  
name in Zion!

<sup>22</sup>Peoples from every land, their kings  
and kingdoms,  
will gather together to worship the  
Lord.

<sup>23</sup>But God has brought me to my  
knees, shortening my life.

<sup>24</sup>So I cry out to you, my God, Father  
of eternity,  
please don't let me die!  
I know my life is not yet finished.

<sup>25</sup>With your hands you once formed  
the foundations of the earth  
and handcrafted the heavens above.

<sup>26-27</sup>They will all fade away one day  
like worn-out clothing,  
ready to be discarded, but you'll still  
be here.

You will replace it all!

<sup>a</sup> 102:9-10 Or "I eat ashes as if they were bread." Ashes speak of mourning, for mourners would often throw dust and ashes over their heads.

<sup>b</sup> 102:18 Or "those born anew [re-created]."

<sup>c</sup> 102:19 Taken from *Yahweh*. Yah is often used as the name of the God of Power.

Your first creation will be changed,  
but you alone will endure, the God  
of all eternity!

<sup>28</sup>Generation after generation our  
descendants will live securely,  
for you are the one protecting us,  
keeping us for yourself.

## 103 OUR FATHER'S LOVE

*King David's song of praise*

<sup>1</sup>With my whole heart, with my whole  
life,  
and with my innermost being,  
I bow in wonder and love before  
you, the holy God!

<sup>2</sup>Yahweh, you are my soul's  
celebration.  
How could I ever forget the miracles  
of kindness  
you've done for me?

<sup>3</sup>You kissed my heart with forgive-  
ness, in spite of all I've done.<sup>a</sup>  
You've healed me inside and out  
from every disease.

<sup>4</sup>You've rescued me from hell<sup>b</sup> and  
saved my life.  
You've crowned me with love and  
mercy.

<sup>5</sup>You satisfy my every desire with  
good things.<sup>c</sup>  
You've supercharged my life so that  
I soar again<sup>d</sup>  
like a flying eagle in the sky!

<sup>6</sup>You're a God who makes things right,  
giving justice to the defenseless.

<sup>7</sup>You unveiled to Moses your plans  
and showed Israel's sons what you  
could do.

<sup>8</sup>Lord, you're so kind and  
tenderhearted<sup>e</sup>  
and so patient with people who fail  
you!

Your love is like a flooding river  
overflowing its banks with kindness.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>9</sup>You don't look at us only to find our  
faults,<sup>g</sup>  
just so that you can hold a grudge  
against us.

<sup>10</sup>You may discipline us for our many  
sins,  
but never as much as we really  
deserve.  
Nor do you get even with us for  
what we've done.

<sup>11</sup>Higher than the highest heavens—  
that's how high your tender mercy  
extends!

Greater than the grandeur of heaven  
above  
is the greatness of your loyal love,  
towering over all  
who fear you and bow down before  
you!

<sup>12</sup>Farther than from a sunrise to a  
sunset—  
that's how far you've removed our  
guilt from us.

a 103:3 From this verse through the rest of the psalm, the writer used the second person (you). This translation has left the psalm in the first person to enhance the poetic nuance for the English reader.

b 103:4 Or "redeemed me from the pit," a term often used for Sheol or hell.

c 103:5 The Hebrew text is somewhat difficult to understand. It is literally "who satisfies with good ornaments."

d 103:5 Or "your youth [implying both strength and beauty] he restores."

e 103:8 Or "Lord, you're so compassionate and merciful." The Hebrew word for "compassion" has a homonym that means "womb." The Lord carries his people like a mother carries a child in her womb.

f 103:8 See Ex. 34:6.

g 103:9 Or "You [he] will not always fight with us [like fighting with enemies]."

<sup>13</sup>The same way a loving father feels  
toward his children—  
that's but a sample of your tender  
feelings toward us,<sup>a</sup>  
your beloved children, who live in  
awe of you.

<sup>14</sup>You know all about us, inside and  
out.<sup>b</sup>  
You are mindful that we're made  
from dust.

<sup>15</sup>Our days are so few, and our  
momentary beauty<sup>c</sup>  
so swiftly fades away!

<sup>16</sup>Then all of a sudden we're gone,  
like grass clippings blown away in a  
gust of wind,  
taken away to our appointment with  
death,  
leaving nothing to show that we  
were here.

<sup>17</sup>But Lord, your endless love stretches  
from one eternity to the other,  
unbroken and unrelenting toward  
those who fear you  
and those who bow facedown in  
awe before you.

Your faithfulness to keep every gra-  
cious promise you've made  
passes from parents, to children, to  
grandchildren, and beyond.

<sup>18</sup>You are faithful to all those who  
follow your ways  
and keep your word.

<sup>19</sup>Yahweh has established his throne  
in heaven;  
his kingdom rules the entire  
universe.

<sup>20</sup>So bless the Lord, all his messengers  
of power,  
for you are his mighty heroes who  
listen intently  
to the voice of his word to do it.

<sup>21</sup>Bless and praise the Lord, you  
mighty warriors,  
ministers who serve him well and  
fulfill his desires.

<sup>22</sup>I will bless and praise the Lord with  
my whole heart!  
Let all his works throughout the  
earth,  
wherever his dominion stretches—  
let everything bless the Lord!

## 104 OUR CREATOR'S COMPASSION<sup>d</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Everything I am will praise and bless  
the Lord!

O Lord, my God, your greatness  
takes my breath away,  
overwhelming me by your majesty,  
beauty, and splendor!<sup>e</sup>

<sup>2</sup>You wrap yourself with a shimmer-  
ing, glistening light.

You wear sunshine like a garment  
of glory.

<sup>a</sup> 103:13 Or "like a father has deep compassion for his children." The Hebrew word for "tender feelings" is *racham*, which has a homonym that can be translated "womb." Our Father carries you in his womb. What a beautiful word play that our Father has a mother's nurturing love for his children.

<sup>b</sup> 103:14 The Hebrew word *yatsar* can be translated "form" or "frame." God knows our frame. But *yatsar* also has a homonym that means "to be in distress" or "to be frustrated." So this sentence could be translated "You know all about our frustrations and distress." These thoughts combined would mean that God hasn't forgotten that he formed us from dust and we'll experience frustrations as human beings. God is sympathetic to our difficulties.

<sup>c</sup> 103:15 The Hebrew word translated "beauty" actually means "shining."

<sup>d</sup> 104 This psalm, attributed to David in the Septuagint, can be seen as an exposition of the days of creation: first day: vv. 1–2; second day: vv. 3–4; third day: vv. 5–17; fourth day: vv. 18–23; fifth day: vv. 24–26; sixth day: vv. 27–30.

<sup>e</sup> 104:1 See Job 40:10.



You stretch out the starry skies like a tapestry.

<sup>3</sup>You build your balconies with light beams

and ride as King in a chariot you made from clouds.

You fly upon the wings of the wind.

<sup>4</sup>You make your messengers into winds of the Spirit,  
and all your ministers become flames of fire.

<sup>5</sup>You, our Creator, formed the earth,  
and you hold it all together so it will never fall apart.

<sup>6</sup>You poured the ocean depths over the planet,  
submerging mountains beneath.

<sup>7</sup>Yet at the sound of your thunder-shout  
the waters all fled away, filling the deep with seas.

<sup>8</sup>The mountains rose and valleys sank to the levels you decreed for them.

<sup>9</sup>Then you set a boundary line for the seas  
and commanded them not to trespass.

<sup>10</sup>You sent springs cascading through the valleys,  
flowing freely between the mountains and hills.

<sup>11</sup>You provide drink for every living thing;  
men and beasts<sup>a</sup> have their thirst quenched because of you.

<sup>12</sup>The birds build nests near the tranquil streams,  
chirping their joyous songs from the branches above.

<sup>13</sup>From your kindness you send the rain to water the mountains  
from the upper rooms of your palace.

Your goodness<sup>b</sup> brings forth fruit for all to enjoy.

<sup>14</sup>Your compassion brings the earth's harvest, feeding the hungry.

You cause the grass to grow for livestock,

along with the fruit, grains, and vegetables to feed mankind.

<sup>15</sup>You provide sweet wine to gladden hearts.

You give us daily bread to sustain life,  
giving us glowing health for our bodies.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>16</sup>The trees of the Lord drink until they're satisfied.  
Lebanon's lofty trees stand tall right where you planted them.

<sup>17</sup>Within their branches you provide for birds  
a place to build their nests;  
even herons find a home in the cypress trees.

<sup>18</sup>You make the high mountains a home for wild goats  
and the rocky crag where the rock badgers burrow.

<sup>19</sup>You made the moon to mark the months  
and the sun to measure the days.

<sup>20</sup>You turn off the light and it becomes night,  
and all the beasts of the forest come out to prowl.

<sup>21</sup>The mighty lions roar for their dinner,  
but it's you, God, who feeds them all.

<sup>22</sup>At sunrise they slink back to their dens  
to crouch down in the shadows.

<sup>23</sup>Then man goes out to his labor and toil,  
working from dawn to dusk.

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<sup>a</sup> 104:11 Or "wild donkeys."

<sup>b</sup> 104:13 Or "your works."

<sup>c</sup> 104:15 Or "oil for our faces to shine."

<sup>24</sup>O Lord, what an amazing variety of  
all you have created!  
Wild and wonderful is this world you  
have made,  
while wisdom was there at your  
side.  
This world is full of so many crea-  
tures, yet each belongs to you!  
<sup>25</sup>And then there is the sea! So vast!  
So wide and deep—  
swarming with countless forms of  
sea life, both small and great.  
<sup>26</sup>Trading ships glide through the high  
seas.  
And look! There are the massive  
whales  
bounding upon the waves.  
<sup>27</sup>All the creatures wait expectantly  
for you  
to give them their food as you  
determine.  
<sup>28</sup>You come near and they all gather  
around,  
feasting from your open hands,  
and each is satisfied from your  
abundant supply.  
<sup>29</sup>But if you were to withhold from  
them and turn away,  
they all would panic.  
And when you choose to take away  
their breath,  
each one dies and returns to the  
dust.  
<sup>30</sup>When you release your Spirit-Wind,  
life is created,  
ready to replenish life upon the  
earth.  
<sup>31</sup>May God's glorious splendor endure  
forever!  
May the Lord take joy and pleasure  
in all that he has made.  
<sup>32</sup>For the earth's overseer has the  
power to make it tremble;

just a touch of his finger and volca-  
noes erupt  
as the earth shakes and melts.  
<sup>33</sup>I will sing my song to the Lord as  
long as I live!  
Every day I will sing my praises to  
God.  
<sup>34</sup>May you be pleased with every  
sweet thought I have about you,  
for you are the source of my joy and  
gladness.  
<sup>35</sup>Now, let all the sinners be swept  
from the earth.  
But I will keep on praising you, my  
Lord, with all that is within me.  
My joyous, blissful shouts of  
“Hallelujah” are all because of  
you!

## 105 GOD'S WONDERFUL WORKS<sup>a</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Go ahead and give God thanks  
for all the glorious things he has  
done!  
Go ahead and worship him!  
Tell everyone about his wonders!  
<sup>2</sup>Let's sing his praises! Sing, and put  
all of his miracles to music!  
<sup>3</sup>Shine and make your joyful boast in  
him, you lovers of God.  
Let's be happy and keep rejoicing no  
matter what.  
<sup>4</sup>Seek more of his strength! Seek more  
of him!  
Let's always be seeking the light of  
his face.  
<sup>5</sup>Don't you ever forget his miracles  
and marvels.  
Hold to your heart every judgment  
he has decreed.  
<sup>6</sup>For you are his servants, the true  
seed of Abraham,

<sup>a</sup> 105 The first fifteen verses of this psalm were sung as the ark of glory was brought up to Jerusalem. See 2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 13–16.



and you are the chosen ones, Jacob's sons.

<sup>7</sup>For he is the Lord our God,  
and his wise authority<sup>a</sup> can be seen  
in all he does.

<sup>8-9</sup>For though a thousand generations  
may pass away,  
he is still true to his word.  
He has kept every promise<sup>b</sup> he made  
to Abraham and to Isaac.

<sup>10</sup>His promises have become an ever-  
lasting covenant to Jacob,  
as a decree to Jacob.

<sup>11</sup>He said to them, "I will give you all  
the land of Canaan  
as your inheritance."

<sup>12</sup>They were very few in number  
when God gave them that  
promise,  
and they were all foreigners to that  
land.

<sup>13</sup>They were wandering from one land  
to another  
and from one kingdom to another.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Yet God would not permit anyone to  
touch them,  
punishing even kings who came  
against them.

<sup>15</sup>He said to them, "Don't you dare lay  
a hand on my anointed ones,  
and don't do a thing to hurt my  
prophets!"

<sup>16</sup>So God decreed a famine upon  
Canaan-land,  
cutting off their food supply.

<sup>17</sup>But he had already sent a man  
ahead of his people to Egypt;  
it was Joseph, who was sold as a  
slave.

<sup>18</sup>His feet were bruised by strong  
shackles  
and his soul was held by iron.

<sup>19</sup>God's promise to Joseph purged his  
character  
until it was time for his dreams to  
come true.

<sup>20</sup>Eventually, the king of Egypt sent  
for him, setting him free at last.

<sup>21</sup>Then Joseph was put in charge of  
everything under the king;  
he became the master of the  
palace  
over all the royal possessions.

<sup>22</sup>Pharaoh gave him authority over all  
the princes of the land,  
and Joseph became the teacher of  
wisdom to the king's advisers.

<sup>23</sup>Then Jacob, with all of Joseph's  
family,  
came from Canaan to Egypt and  
settled in Goshen.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>24</sup>God made them very fruitful, and  
they multiplied incredibly  
until they were greater in number  
than those who ruled them.

<sup>25</sup>God turned their hearts to hate his  
people  
and to deal treacherously with his  
servants.

<sup>26</sup>But he sent them his faithful ser-  
vant, Moses, the deliverer,  
and chose Aaron to accompany him.

<sup>27</sup>Their command brought down signs  
and wonders,  
working miracles in Egypt.

<sup>28</sup>By God's direction, they spoke and  
released a plague

of thick darkness over the land.

<sup>29</sup>God turned their rivers to blood,  
causing every fish to die.

<sup>30</sup>And the judgment-plague of frogs  
came in enormous numbers,  
swarming everywhere, even into  
Pharaoh's bedroom!

*a* 105:7 Or "judgments."

*b* 105:8-9 Or "promise of the covenant [pact]."

*c* 105:13 Or "from a kingdom to another nation."

*d* 105:23 Or "lived as a foreigner in the land of Ham [Egypt]." Ham was a son of Noah.

<sup>31</sup>God spoke and another plague was released—  
massive swarms of flies, vast clouds  
of insects, covered the land.

<sup>32</sup>God rained down hail and flaming  
fire upon Egypt.

<sup>33</sup>Their gardens and vines were all  
destroyed,  
shattering trees into splinters  
throughout the territory.

<sup>34</sup>God spoke, and devouring hordes of  
locusts swept over the land,

<sup>35</sup>picking the ground clean of vegeta-  
tion and crops.

<sup>36</sup>Then God struck down their firstborn  
sons,  
the pride and joy<sup>a</sup> of every Egyptian  
family.

<sup>37</sup>At last, God freed all the Hebrews  
from their slavery  
and sent them away laden with the  
silver and gold of Egypt.  
And not even one was feeble<sup>b</sup> on  
their way out!

<sup>38</sup>Egypt was relieved at their exodus,  
ready to see them go,  
for the terror of the Lord of the  
Hebrews had fallen upon them!

<sup>39</sup>God spread out a cloud as shade as  
they moved ahead  
and a cloud of fire to light up their  
night.

<sup>40</sup>Moses prayed and God brought  
them quail to eat.  
He satisfied them with heaven's  
bread falling from the sky.

<sup>41</sup>He broke open the boulder  
and the waters poured out like a  
river in the desert.

<sup>42</sup>For God could never forget  
his holy promise to his servant  
Abraham.

<sup>43</sup>So God brought out his chosen ones  
with singing;

with a joyful shout they were set free!

<sup>44</sup>He gave them lands and nations,  
just like he promised.  
Fruitful lands of crops they had  
never planted were now theirs.

<sup>45</sup>All this was done for them so that  
they would be faithful  
to keep the ways of God, obeying his  
laws and following his truths.  
Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

## 106 GOD IS GOOD

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!  
Everyone thank God, for he is good  
and easy to please.  
Your tender love for us, Lord, contin-  
ues on forever.

<sup>2</sup>Who could ever fully describe your  
glorious miracles?  
Yahweh, who could ever praise you  
enough?

<sup>3</sup>The happiest one on earth is the one  
who keeps your word  
and clings to righteousness every  
moment.

<sup>4</sup>So remember me, Lord, as you take  
joy in your people.  
And when you come to bring the  
blessings of salvation,  
don't forget me!

<sup>5</sup>Let me share in the wealth and  
beauty of all your devoted lovers,  
rejoice with your nation in all their  
joys,  
and let me share in the glory you  
give to your chosen ones.

<sup>6</sup>We have all sinned so much, just like  
our fathers.  
“Guilty” is written over our lives.

<sup>7</sup>Our fathers who were delivered from  
Egypt  
didn't fully understand your  
wonders,

<sup>a</sup> 105:36 Or “the beginning of all their strength.”

<sup>b</sup> 105:37 Or “Not one of his tribes was a pauper” or “Not one stumbled.”

and they took you for granted.  
 Over and over you showed them  
 such tender love and mercy!  
 Yet they were barely beyond the Red  
 Sea  
 when they rebelled against you.  
<sup>8</sup>Nonetheless, you saved them more  
 than once  
 so they would know how powerful  
 you are,  
 showing them the honor of your  
 name.  
<sup>9</sup>You roared over the waters of the  
 Red Sea,  
 making a dry path for your people to  
 cross through.  
<sup>10</sup>You freed them from the strong power  
 of those who oppressed them  
 and rescued them from bondage.  
<sup>11</sup>Then the waters rushed over their  
 enemies and drowned them all—  
 not one survived.  
<sup>12</sup>Seeing this, the people believed your  
 words,  
 and they all broke out with songs of  
 praise!  
<sup>13</sup>Yet how quickly they forgot your  
 miracles of power.  
 They wouldn't wait for you to act  
 when they were hungry,  
<sup>14</sup>but demanded you satisfy their crav-  
 ings and give them food!  
 They tested you to the breaking point.  
<sup>15</sup>So you gave them what they wanted  
 to eat,  
 but their souls starved away to  
 nothing.  
<sup>16</sup>They became envious of Moses and  
 Aaron, your holy ones.  
<sup>17</sup>You split open the earth, and it  
 swallowed up  
 Dathan and Abiram along with their  
 followers.  
<sup>18</sup>Fire fell from heaven and burnt up  
 all the band of rebels,

turning them to ashes.

<sup>19</sup>They made an idol of a calf at Sinai  
 and bowed to worship their man-  
 made statue.  
<sup>20</sup>They preferred the image of a grass-  
 eating ox  
 to the presence of the glory-filled  
 God.  
<sup>21-22</sup>They totally forgot it was you who  
 saved them  
 by the wonders and awesome mira-  
 cles you worked in Egypt.  
<sup>23</sup>So you decided to destroy them.  
 But Moses, your chosen leader,  
 stood in the gap between you and  
 the people  
 and made intercession on their  
 behalf  
 to turn away your wrath from killing  
 them all.  
<sup>24</sup>Yet they still didn't believe your  
 words  
 and they despised the land of  
 delight you gave to them.  
<sup>25</sup>They grumbled and found fault with  
 everything  
 and closed their hearts to your voice.  
<sup>26</sup>So you solemnly swore to them  
 that they would all die in the desert.  
<sup>27</sup>And you scattered their children to  
 distant lands to die as exiles.  
<sup>28</sup>Then our fathers joined the  
 worshipers  
 of the false god named "Lord of the  
 Pit."  
 They even ate the sacrifices offered  
 to the dead!  
<sup>29</sup>All they did made you burn with  
 anger.  
 It made you so angry that a plague  
 broke out among them!  
<sup>30</sup>It continued until Phineas inter-  
 vened and executed  
 the guilty for causing judgment to  
 fall upon them.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 106:30 This is implicit information found in the story of Phineas (Num. 25:7-9).

<sup>31</sup>Because of this deed of righteousness  
Phineas will be remembered forever.

<sup>32</sup>Your people also provoked you to  
wrath  
at the stream called Strife.<sup>a</sup>  
This is where Moses got into serious  
trouble!

<sup>33</sup>Because the people were rebellious  
against you,  
Moses exploded in anger and spoke  
to them out of his bitterness.

<sup>34</sup>Neither did our fathers destroy the  
enemies in the land,  
as you had commanded them.

<sup>35</sup>But they mingled themselves with  
their enemies  
and learned to copy their works of  
darkness.

<sup>36</sup>They began to serve their gods and  
bow before their idols.  
All of this led them away from you  
and brought about their downfall.

<sup>37</sup>They even sacrificed their little chil-  
dren to the demon spirits,

<sup>38–39</sup>shedding the innocent blood of  
their sons and daughters.  
These dark practices greatly defiled  
the land and their own souls,  
through the murder and bloodshed  
of their own babies!

Their sins made them spiritual adul-  
terers before you.

<sup>40</sup>This is why you were furious.  
As your anger burned hot against  
them,  
you couldn't even stand to look  
at your very own people any longer!

<sup>41</sup>So you turned them over to the  
crushing hands of other nations,

and those who hated them became  
tyrants over them.

<sup>42</sup>Oppressive enemies subdued them,  
ruling over them with their tyranny.

<sup>43</sup>Many times you would have come to  
rescue them,  
but they continued in their rebellious  
ways,  
choosing to ignore your warnings.  
Then they sank lower and lower,  
destroyed by their depravity.

<sup>44–45</sup>Yet even so, you waited and  
waited,  
watching to see if they would turn  
and cry out to you for *a father's*  
help.

And then, when you heard their cry,  
you relented and you remembered  
your covenant,  
and you turned your heart toward  
them again,  
according to your abundant, over-  
flowing, and limitless love.

<sup>46</sup>Then you caused even their  
oppressors  
to pity them and show them  
compassion.

<sup>47</sup>Do it again, Lord! Save us, O Lord,  
our God!

Gather us from our exile and unite  
us together

so that we will give our great and  
joyous thanks to you again  
and bring you glory by our praises.

<sup>48</sup>Blessed be our Lord God forever and  
ever.

And let everyone everywhere say,  
“Hallelujah!”

Amen! Faithful is our King!

<sup>a</sup> 106:32 The word used here is *Meribah*, the Hebrew word for “strife” (Num. 20:1–13).



## BOOK 5

### THE DEUTERONOMY PSALMS

*Psalms of praise and the Word*

## 107 GOD'S CONSTANT LOVE

- <sup>1</sup>Let everyone give all their praise and thanks to the Lord!  
Here's why—he's better than anyone could ever imagine.  
Yes, he's always loving and kind, and his faithful love never ends.
- <sup>2-3</sup>So, go ahead—let everyone know it! Tell the world how he broke through and delivered you from the power of darkness and has gathered us together from all over the world.  
He has set us free to be his very own!
- <sup>4</sup>Some of us once wandered in the wilderness like desert nomads, with no true direction or dwelling place.
- <sup>5</sup>Starving, thirsting, staggering, we became desperate and filled with despair.
- <sup>6</sup>Then we cried out, "Lord, help us! Rescue us!" And he did!
- <sup>7</sup>He led us out by the right way until we reached a suitable city to dwell in.
- <sup>8</sup>So lift your hands and thank God for his marvelous kindness and for all his miracles of mercy for those he loves.
- <sup>9</sup>How he satisfies the souls of thirsty ones and fills the hungry with goodness!
- <sup>10</sup>Some of us once sat in darkness, living in the dark shadows of death. We were prisoners to our pain, chained to our regrets.
- <sup>11</sup>For we rebelled against God's Word and rejected the wise counsel of God Most High.
- <sup>12</sup>So he humbled us through our circumstances, watching us as we stumbled, with no one there to pick us back up. Our own pain became our punishment.
- <sup>13</sup>Then we cried out, "Lord, help us! Rescue us!" And he did!
- <sup>14</sup>His light broke through the darkness and he led us out in freedom from death's dark shadow and snapped every one of our chains.
- <sup>15</sup>So lift your hands and give thanks to God for his marvelous kindness and for his miracles of mercy for those he loves!
- <sup>16</sup>For he smashed through heavy prison doors and shattered the steel bars that held us back, just to set us free!
- <sup>17</sup>Some of us were such fools, bringing on ourselves sorrow and suffering all because of our sins.
- <sup>18</sup>Sick and feeble, unable to stand the sight of food, we drew near to the gates of death.
- <sup>19</sup>Then we cried out, "Lord, help us! Rescue us!" And he did!
- <sup>20</sup>God spoke the words "Be healed," and we were healed, delivered from death's door!
- <sup>21</sup>So lift your hands and give thanks to God for his marvelous kindness

and for his miracles of mercy for  
those he loves!

<sup>22</sup>Bring your praise as an offering and  
your thanks as a sacrifice  
as you sing your story of miracles  
with a joyful song.

<sup>23</sup>Some of us set sail upon the sea to  
faraway ports,  
transporting our goods from ship to  
shore.

<sup>24</sup>We were witnesses of God's power  
out in the ocean deep;  
we saw breathtaking wonders upon  
the high seas.

<sup>25</sup>When God spoke he stirred up a  
storm,  
lifting high the waves with hurricane  
winds.

<sup>26-27</sup>Ships were tossed by the swelling  
sea, rising to the sky,  
then dropping down to the depths,  
reeling like drunkards, spinning like  
tops,  
everyone at their wits' end until even  
sailors despaired of life, cringing  
in terror.

<sup>28</sup>Then we cried out, "Lord, help us!  
Rescue us!" And he did!

<sup>29</sup>God stilled the storm, calmed the  
waves,  
and he hushed the hurricane winds  
to only a whisper.

<sup>30</sup>We were so relieved, so glad as he  
guided us  
safely to harbor in a quiet haven.

<sup>31</sup>So lift your hands and give thanks  
to God for his marvelous  
kindness  
and for his miracles of mercy for  
those he loves!

<sup>32</sup>Let's exalt him on high and lift up  
our praises in public;  
let all the people and the leaders of  
the nation know  
how great and wonderful is Yahweh,  
our God!

<sup>33</sup>Whenever he chooses he can dry up  
a river  
and turn the land into a desert.

<sup>34</sup>Or he can take a fruitful land and  
make it into a saltwater swamp,  
all because of the wickedness of  
those who dwell there.

<sup>35</sup>But he also can turn a barren  
wilderness into an oasis with  
water!

He can make springs flow into des-  
ert lands

<sup>36</sup>and turn them into fertile valleys so  
that cities spring up,  
and he gives it all to those who are  
hungry.

<sup>37</sup>They can plant their fields and vine-  
yards there  
and reap a bumper crop and gather  
a fruitful harvest.

<sup>38</sup>God will bless them and cause them  
to multiply and prosper.

<sup>39</sup>But others will become poor,  
humbled because of their oppres-  
sion, tyranny, and sorrows.

<sup>40</sup>For God pours contempt upon their  
arrogant abuse of power,  
heaping scorn upon their  
princes,  
and makes them wander among  
ruins.

<sup>41</sup>But he raises up the poor and lowly  
with his favor,  
giving them a safe place to live  
where no one can touch them.  
God will grant them a large family  
and bless them!

<sup>42</sup>The lovers of God will rejoice when  
they see this.  
Good men are glad when the evil  
ones are silenced.

<sup>43</sup>If you are truly wise, you'll learn  
from what I've told you.  
It's time for you to consider these  
profound lessons  
of God's great love and mercy!



# 108 A PRAYER FOR GOD'S HELP

*A poetic psalm by King David*

<sup>1</sup>My heart, O God, is focused and determined.  
Now I can sing my song with passionate praises!  
Awake, O my soul, with the music of his splendor.

<sup>2</sup>Arise, my soul, and sing his praises!  
I will awaken the dawn with my worship,  
greeting the daybreak with my songs of light.

<sup>3</sup>Wherever I go, I will thank you.  
All the nations will hear my praise songs to you.

<sup>4</sup>Your love is so extravagant, it reaches higher than the heavens!  
Your faithfulness is so astonishing, it stretches to the skies!

<sup>5</sup>Lord God, be exalted as you soar throughout the heavens.  
May your shining glory be seen high above all the earth!

<sup>6</sup>Come to your beloved ones and gently draw us out.  
Answer our prayer for your saving help.  
Come with your might and strength, for we need you, Lord!

<sup>7-9</sup>Then I heard the Lord speak in his holy splendor,  
and from his sanctuary I heard the Lord promise:  
“In my triumph I will be the one to measure out  
the portion of my inheritance to my people,

and I will secure the land as I promised you.

Shechem, Succoth, Gilead,  
Manasseh<sup>a</sup>—  
they are all still mine!” he says.

“Judah will continue to produce kings and lawgivers,  
and Ephraim will produce great warriors.

Moab will become my lowly servant.  
Edom will likewise serve my purposes.

I will lift up a shout of victory over the land of Philistia!

<sup>10</sup>But who will bring my triumph into Edom’s fortresses?”<sup>b</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Lord, have you really rejected us, refusing to fight our battles?

<sup>12</sup>Give us a father’s help when we face our enemies.  
For to trust in any man is an empty hope.

<sup>13</sup>With God’s help we will prevail with might and power.  
And with God’s help we’ll trample down our every foe!

# 109 GOD, IT’S TIME FOR VENGEANCE

*To the Pure and Shining One  
A poetic song by King David*

<sup>1</sup>God of all my praise, don’t stand silently by, aloof to my pain,

<sup>2</sup>while the wicked slander me with their lies.

Even right in front of my face they lie through their teeth.

<sup>3</sup>I’ve done nothing to them, but they still surround me

*a* 108:7–9 The Hebrew includes two geographical places in the text: Shechem and Succoth. Shechem is where Jacob (Israel) first bought title to the land, paying one hundred pieces of silver for the place where he camped. Succoth is another place where Jacob temporarily camped in the Land of Promise. These two places speak of God being the one who brought them in and portioned out the land for his people.

*b* 108:10 *Edom* is a variant form of the word *Adam*.

with their venomous words of hatred  
and vitriol.

<sup>4</sup>Though I love them, they stand  
accusing me like Satan  
for what I've never done.  
I will pray until I become prayer  
itself.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>5</sup>They continually repay me with evil  
when I show them good.  
They give me hatred when I show  
them love.

<sup>6-7</sup>Show him how it feels! Let accusing  
liars be raised up against him,  
like Satan himself standing right  
next to him.  
And let him be declared guilty by a  
wicked judge.  
May even his prayers be seen as  
sinful!

<sup>8</sup>Shorten his life and let another  
replace him!

<sup>9</sup>Make his wife a widow and his chil-  
dren orphans!

<sup>10</sup>Let them wander as beggars in the  
street,  
like homeless vagabonds, evicted  
from their ruins!

<sup>11</sup>Let the creditors seize his entire estate,  
and strangers, like vultures, take all  
that's left!

<sup>12</sup>Let no one be kind to him by show-  
ing pity to his fatherless children!

<sup>13</sup>May all his posterity die with him!  
Cut down his family tree!

<sup>14-15</sup>And may all the sins of his ances-  
tors be recorded,  
remembered before you, forever!  
Cut off even the memory of his  
family from the face of the earth,

<sup>16</sup>because he never once showed love  
or kindness to others,  
but persecuted the poor, the broken-  
hearted, and afflicted ones,  
even putting them to death!

<sup>17</sup>Since he enjoyed cursing them,  
may all his curses now come raining  
back on him  
until it all overwhelms him with  
misfortune!

Since he refused to bless others,  
God, withhold every single blessing  
from him!

<sup>18</sup>Bitterness, such vile vindictiveness,  
was upon everything he did.  
Cursing was his lifestyle.

<sup>19-20</sup>So smother him now with his own  
curses as his just reward.  
This will be the Lord's punishment  
upon him and  
all my lying accusers who speak evil  
against me.

<sup>21</sup>But now, O Yahweh-God, make your-  
self real to me  
like you promised me you would.<sup>b</sup>  
Because of your constant love and  
your heart-melting kindness, come  
be my hero and deliver me!

<sup>22</sup>I'm so broken, needy and hurting.  
My heart is pierced through and I'm  
so wounded.

<sup>23</sup>I'm slipping down a dark slope,  
shaken to the core, and helpless.

<sup>24</sup>All my fasting has left me so weak I  
can hardly stand.  
Now I'm shriveled up, nothing but  
skin and bones.

<sup>25</sup>I'm the example of failure and  
shame to all who see me.  
They just walk by me, shaking their  
heads.

<sup>26</sup>You have to help me, O Lord God!  
My true hero, come to my rescue  
and save me,  
for you are loving and kind.

<sup>27</sup>Then everyone will know that you  
have won my victory,  
and they will all say to the Lord,  
"You have finished it!"

<sup>a</sup> 109:4 In the face of accusation and slander, David wrote in Hebrew literally "I am prayer!"

<sup>b</sup> 109:21 The Hebrew text reads "for your name's sake."

<sup>28</sup>So let them curse me if they want,  
but I know you will bless me!  
All their efforts to destroy me will fail,  
but I will succeed and be glad.

<sup>29</sup>So let my Satan-like accusers fail!  
Make them look ridiculous if they try  
to come against me.  
Clothe them with a robe of guilty  
shame from this day on!

<sup>30</sup>But I will give my thanks to you over  
and over,  
and everyone will hear my lavish  
praises.

<sup>31</sup>For you stand right next to the broken ones  
as their saving hero to rescue them  
from all their accusers!

## 110 MESSIAH, KING, AND PRIEST<sup>a</sup>

*King David's psalm*

<sup>1</sup>Yahweh said to my Lord, the Messiah:  
“Sit with me as enthroned ruler<sup>b</sup>  
while I subdue your every enemy.  
They will bow low before you  
as I make them a footstool for your  
feet.”<sup>c</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Messiah, I know God himself will  
establish your kingdom  
as you reign in Zion-glory.  
For he says to you, “Rule in the  
midst of your enemies!”

<sup>3</sup>Your people will be your love  
offerings.

In the day of your mighty power you  
will be exalted,  
and in the brightness of your holy  
ones you will shine

as an army arising from the womb  
of the dawn,  
anointed with the dew of your youth!<sup>d</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Yahweh has taken a solemn oath  
and will never back away from it,  
saying,

“You are a priest for eternity, after  
the manner of Melchizedek!”<sup>e</sup>

<sup>5</sup>The Lord stands in full authority<sup>f</sup> to  
shatter to pieces  
the kings who stand against you  
on the day he displays his terrible  
wrath.

<sup>6</sup>He will judge every rebellious nation,  
filling their battlefields with corpses,  
and will shatter the strongholds of  
ruling powers.

<sup>7</sup>Yet he himself will drink from his  
inheritance  
as from a flowing brook;  
refreshed by love he will stand  
victorious!

## 111 CELEBRATE GOD'S GREATNESS

<sup>1</sup>Shout hallelujah to Yahweh!  
May every one of his devoted lovers  
hear my passionate praise to him,  
even among the council of the holy  
ones.

a 110 This psalm is applied to Christ in the New Testament, where it is quoted more often than any other Old Testament passage.

b 110:1 Or “at my right hand.” The right hand is the position of authority and honor.

c 110:1 A footstool symbolizes what is subdued. It is taken from the Hebrew root word “to subdue.”

d 110:3 Or “like dew, your youth will come to you.”

e 110:4 Melchizedek was the name of a Canaanite king and priest over the Jebusite kingdom that later became Jerusalem. The name Melchizedek means “my king of righteousness.”

f 110:5 The Hebrew word used here for “Lord” is *Adonai* or *Adonay*. It is the plural form of *Adhon*. Jesus is called Lord of lords, and we are the lords that he is Lord over. We are seated at his right hand (Benjamin) to rule with him.

<sup>2</sup>For God's mighty miracles astound me!

His wonders are so delightfully mysterious  
that they leave all who seek them  
astonished.

<sup>3</sup>Everything he does is full of splendor  
and beauty!

Each miracle demonstrates his eternal  
perfection.

<sup>4</sup>His unforgettable works of surpassing wonder  
reveal his grace and tender mercy.

<sup>5</sup>He satisfies all who love and trust him,  
and he keeps every promise he makes.

<sup>6</sup>He reveals mighty power and marvels to his people  
by handing them nations as a gift.

<sup>7</sup>All God accomplishes is flawless,  
faithful, and fair,  
and his every word proves trustworthy and true.

<sup>8</sup>They are steadfast forever and ever,  
formed from truth and righteousness.

<sup>9</sup>His forever-love paid a full ransom for his people  
so that now we're free to come before Yahweh  
to worship his holy and awesome name!

<sup>10</sup>Where can wisdom be found? It is born in the fear of God.  
Everyone who follows his ways  
will never lack his living-understanding.  
And the adoration of God will abide throughout eternity!

## 112 THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH

<sup>1</sup>Shout in celebration of praise to the Lord!

Everyone who loves the Lord and delights in him  
will cherish his words and be blessed beyond expectation.

<sup>2</sup>Their descendants will be prosperous and influential.

Every generation of the righteous will experience his favor.

<sup>3</sup>Great blessing and wealth fills the house of *the wise*,  
for their integrity endures forever.

<sup>4</sup>Even if darkness overtakes them, sunrise-brilliance will come bursting through  
because they are gracious to others, so tender and true.

<sup>5</sup>Life is good for the one who is generous and charitable,  
conducting affairs with honesty and truth.

<sup>6</sup>Their circumstances will never shake them  
and others will never forget their example.

<sup>7</sup>They will not live in fear or dread of what may come,  
for their hearts are firm, ever secure in their faith.

<sup>8</sup>Steady and strong, they will not be afraid,  
but will calmly face their every foe  
until they all go down in defeat.

<sup>9</sup>Never stingy and always generous to those in need,



they lived lives of influence and  
honor that will never be forgotten,  
for they were full of good deeds.

<sup>10</sup>But the wicked take one look at a  
life lived like this  
and they grit their teeth in anger, not  
understanding their bliss.  
The wicked slink away speechless in  
the darkness that falls,  
where hope dies and all their  
dreams fade away to nothing,  
nothing at all!

## 113<sup>a</sup> GOD IS KIND

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!  
Go ahead, praise the Lord, all you  
loving servants of God!  
Keep it up! Praise him some more!  
<sup>2</sup>For the glorious name of the Lord is  
blessed forever and ever.  
<sup>3</sup>From sunrise-brilliance to  
sunset-beauty,  
lift up his praise from dawn to  
dusk!  
<sup>4</sup>For he rules on high over the  
nations  
with a glory that outshines even the  
heavens.  
<sup>5</sup>No one can be compared to God,  
enthroned on high!  
<sup>6</sup>He stoops down to look upon the sky  
and the earth.  
<sup>7</sup>He promotes the poor, picking them  
up from the dirt,  
and rescues the needy from the  
garbage dump.  
<sup>8</sup>He turns paupers into princes and  
seats them  
on their royal thrones of honor.

<sup>9</sup>God's grace provides for the barren  
ones a joyful home with children  
so that even childless couples find a  
family.  
He makes them happy parents sur-  
rounded by their pride and joy.  
That's the God we praise, so give it  
all to him!

## 114 A SONG FOR PASSOVER

<sup>1</sup>Many years ago the Jewish people  
escaped Egypt's tyranny,  
<sup>2</sup>so that Israel, God's people of praise,<sup>b</sup>  
would become his holy sanctuary,  
his kingdom on the earth.  
<sup>3</sup>The Red Sea waters saw them com-  
ing and ran the other way!  
Then later, the Jordan River too  
moved aside so that they could all  
pass through.  
<sup>4</sup>The land shuddered with fear.  
Mountains and hills shook with  
dread.<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>5</sup>O sea, what happened to you to  
make you flee?  
O Jordan, what was it that made you  
turn and run?  
<sup>6</sup>O mountains, what frightened you  
so?  
And you hills, what made you  
shiver?  
<sup>7</sup>Tremble, O earth, for you are in the  
presence of the Lord,  
the presence of the God of Jacob.  
<sup>8</sup>He splits open boulders and brings  
up bubbling water.  
Gushing streams burst forth *when he*  
*is near!*

<sup>a</sup> 113 Psalms 113–114 were sung before the meal during the Jewish family's celebration of Passover, while Pss. 115–118 were sung after the meal (see Mark 14:26).

<sup>b</sup> 114:2 Or *Judah*, which means "praise."

<sup>c</sup> 114:4 The literal Hebrew reads "Mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs." This does not mean they skipped with joy, but that they shook with fear, as the context reveals.

# 115 THE ONLY TRUE HERO

<sup>1</sup>God, glorify your name!

Yes, your name alone be glorified,  
not ours.

For you are the one who loves us  
passionately,  
and you are faithful and true.

<sup>2</sup>Why should the unbelievers mock us,  
saying,

“Where is this God of yours?”

<sup>3</sup>But we know our God rules from the  
heavens,  
and he takes delight in all that he  
does.

<sup>4</sup>The unbelievers worship what they  
make—  
their wealth and their work.

<sup>5-6</sup>They idolize what they own  
and what they make with their  
hands,  
but their things can’t talk to them or  
answer their prayers.

Their possessions will never  
satisfy.

Their futile faith in dead idols and  
dead works

can never bring life or meaning to  
their souls.

Blind men can only create blind  
things.

Those deaf to God can only make a  
deaf image.<sup>a</sup>

Dead men can only create dead  
idols.

And everyone who trusts in these  
powerless, dead things  
will be just like what they worship—  
powerless and dead.

<sup>9</sup>So trust in the Lord, all his people.  
For he is the only true hero,  
the wraparound God who is our  
shield!

<sup>10</sup>You, his priests, trust in the Lord.  
For he is the only true hero,  
God-wrapped-around-us as our  
shield.

<sup>11</sup>Yes, all his lovers who bow before  
him, trust in the Lord.

For he is our only true hero,  
God-wrapped-around-us as our  
shield.

<sup>12</sup>The Lord will never forget us in our  
need; he will bless us indeed!  
He will bless the house of Israel;  
he will bless the house of Aaron, his  
priest.

<sup>13</sup>Yes! He will bless his devoted lovers  
who bow before him,  
no matter who they are.

<sup>14-15</sup>God himself will fill you with more.  
Blessings upon blessings will be  
heaped upon you  
and upon your children from the  
maker of heaven and earth,  
the very God who made you!

<sup>16</sup>The heavens belong to our God; they  
are his alone,  
but he has given us<sup>b</sup> the earth and  
put us in charge.

<sup>17-18</sup>Dead people cannot praise the  
Lord, but we can!  
Those who sink to the silence of the  
grave  
can no longer give glory to God, but  
we can!

So let’s praise the Lord and let it go  
on forever.

Hallelujah, and praise the Lord!

<sup>a</sup> 115:5–8 Referring to the idols, the literal Hebrew could be translated “With mouths, but they cannot speak; with eyes, but they cannot see; with ears, but they cannot hear; with noses, but they cannot smell; with hands, but they cannot feel; with feet, but they cannot walk. Those who make them will become like them and everyone who trusts in them.”

<sup>b</sup> 115:16 Or “Adam’s sons.”



# 116 I'M SAVED

- <sup>1</sup>I am passionately in love with God  
because he listens to me.  
He hears my prayers and answers  
them.
- <sup>2</sup>As long as I live I'll keep praying to  
him,  
for he stoops down to listen to my  
heart's cry.
- <sup>3</sup>Death once stared me in the face,  
and I was close to slipping into its  
dark shadows.  
I was terrified and overcome with  
sorrow.
- <sup>4</sup>I cried out to the Lord, "God, come  
and save me!"
- <sup>5</sup>He was so kind, so gracious to me.  
Because of his passion toward me,  
he made everything right and he  
restored me.
- <sup>6</sup>So I've learned from my experience  
that God protects the vulnerable.  
For I was broken and brought low,  
but he answered me and came to my  
rescue!
- <sup>7</sup>Now I can say to myself and to all,  
"Relax and rest, be confident and  
serene,  
for the Lord rewards fully those who  
simply trust in him."
- <sup>8</sup>God has rescued my soul from  
death's fear  
and dried my eyes of many tears.  
He's kept my feet firmly on his path
- <sup>9</sup>and strengthened me so that I may  
please him<sup>a</sup>  
and walk before Yahweh in his fields  
of life.
- <sup>10-11</sup>Even when it seems I'm surrounded  
by many liars and my own fears,  
and though I'm hurting in my suffer-  
ing and trauma,

I still stay faithful to God and speak  
words of faith.

- <sup>12</sup>So now, what can I ever give back  
to God  
to repay him for the blessings he's  
poured out on me?
- <sup>13</sup>I will lift up his cup of salvation and  
praise him extravagantly  
for all that he's done for me.
- <sup>14</sup>I will fulfill the promise I made to  
God  
in the presence of his gathered  
people.
- <sup>15</sup>When one of God's holy lovers dies,  
it is costly to the Lord, touching his  
heart.
- <sup>16</sup>Lord, because I am your loving  
servant,  
you have broken open my life and  
freed me from my chains.
- <sup>17</sup>Now I'll worship you passionately  
and bring to you  
my sacrifice of praise, drenched with  
thanksgiving!
- <sup>18</sup>I'll keep my promise to you, God,  
in the presence of your gathered  
people, just like I said I would.
- <sup>19</sup>I will worship you here in your living  
presence,  
in the temple in Jerusalem.  
I will worship and sing hallelujah,  
for I praise you, Lord!

# 117 GLORIOUS PRAISE

*A praise psalm*

- <sup>1</sup>Let everyone everywhere shine with  
praise to Yahweh!<sup>b</sup>  
Let it all out! Go ahead and praise  
him!
- <sup>2</sup>For he has conquered us with his  
great love,  
and his kindness has melted our  
hearts.

<sup>a</sup> 116:9 As translated from the Septuagint.

<sup>b</sup> 117:1 The word for "praise" is taken from the Hebrew words for "to shine."

His faithfulness lasts forever, and he  
will never fail you.  
So go ahead, let it all out!  
Praise Yah!  
O Yah!<sup>a</sup>

# 118 GLORIOUS THANKSGIVING

*A praise psalm<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Keep on giving your thanks to God,  
for he is so good!

His constant, tender love lasts  
forever!

<sup>2</sup>Let all his princely people sing,  
“His constant, tender love lasts  
forever!”

<sup>3</sup>Let all his holy priests sing,  
“His constant, tender love lasts  
forever!”

<sup>4</sup>Let all his lovers who bow low before  
him sing,  
“His constant, tender love lasts  
forever!”

<sup>5</sup>Out of my deep anguish and pain I  
prayed,  
and God, you helped me as a father.  
You came to my rescue and broke  
open the way  
into a beautiful and broad place.

<sup>6</sup>Now I know, Lord, that you are for  
me,  
and I will never fear what man can  
do to me.

<sup>7</sup>For you stand beside me as my hero  
who rescues me.  
I’ve seen with my own eyes the  
defeat of my enemies.  
I’ve triumphed over them all!

<sup>8</sup>Lord, it is so much better to trust in  
you to save me

than to put my confidence in some-  
one else.

<sup>9</sup>Yes, it is so much better to trust in  
the Lord to save me  
than to put my confidence in  
celebrities.

<sup>10</sup>Once I was hemmed in and sur-  
rounded by those  
who don’t love you.  
But by Yahweh’s supernatural power  
I overcame them all!

<sup>11-12</sup>Yes, they surrounded me,  
like a swarm of killer bees swirling  
around me.

I was trapped like one trapped by a  
raging fire;

I was surrounded with no way out  
and at the point of collapse.

But by Yahweh’s supernatural  
power, I overcame them all!

<sup>13</sup>They pushed me right up to the  
edge, and I was ready to fall,  
but you helped me to triumph, and  
together we overcame them all.

<sup>14</sup>Lord, you are my true strength and  
my glory-song,  
my champion, my Savior!

<sup>15</sup>The joyful songs I now sing will be  
sung again  
in the hearts and homes of all your  
devoted lovers.

My loud shouts of victory will echo  
throughout the land.<sup>c</sup>

For Yahweh’s right hand conquers  
valiantly!

<sup>16</sup>The right hand of Yahweh exalts!  
The right hand of Yahweh will never  
fail.

<sup>17</sup>You will not let them kill me,  
but I will live to tell the world what  
the Lord has done for me.

a 117:2 The name Yah is not an abbreviated form of Yahweh; it is the name of God as he displays his power. Yahweh is found 6,830 times in the Hebrew text, and Yah is found 49 times.

b 118 This is the psalm or hymn that Jesus likely sang after the Passover supper with his disciples, before making his way to Gethsemane and Calvary.

c 118:15 Or “in the tents of the righteous.”

<sup>18</sup>Yes, the Lord punished me as I deserved,  
but he'll never give me over to death.

<sup>19</sup>Swing wide, you gates of righteousness, and let me pass through, and I will enter into God's presence to worship only him.

<sup>20</sup>I have found the gateway to God, the pathway to his presence for all his devoted lovers.

<sup>21</sup>I will offer all my loving praise to you,  
and I thank you so much for answering my prayer  
and bringing me salvation!

<sup>22</sup>The very stone the masons rejected as flawed  
has turned out to be the most important capstone of the arch,<sup>a</sup>  
holding up the very house of God.

<sup>23</sup>The Lord himself is the one who has done this,  
and it's so amazing, so marvelous to see!

<sup>24</sup>This is the very day of the Lord that brings  
gladness and joy, filling our hearts with glee.

<sup>25</sup>O God, please come and save us again;  
bring us your breakthrough-victory!

<sup>26</sup>Blessed is this one who comes to us, the sent one of the Lord.  
And from within the temple we cry,  
"We bless you!"

<sup>27-28</sup>For the Lord our God has brought us his glory-light.

I offer him my life in joyous sacrifice.  
Tied tightly to your altar, I will bring you praise.

For you are the God of my life and I lift you high,  
exalting you to the highest place.

<sup>29</sup>So let's keep on giving our thanks to God, for he is so good!

His constant, tender love lasts forever!

## 119 THE WORDS OF GOD<sup>b</sup>

### The Way to Happiness

<sup>1</sup>You're only truly happy when you walk in total integrity,  
walking in the light of God's Word.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>2</sup>What joy overwhelms everyone who keeps the ways of God,  
those who seek him as their heart's passion!

<sup>3</sup>They'll never do what's wrong but will always choose the paths of the Lord.

<sup>4</sup>God has prescribed the right way to live:  
obeying his laws with all our hearts.

<sup>5</sup>How I long for my life to bring you glory  
as I follow each and every one of your holy precepts!

<sup>6</sup>Then I'll never be ashamed,  
for I take strength from all your commandments.

<sup>a</sup> 118:22 The words "capstone of the arch" can also be translated "head of the corner."

<sup>b</sup> 119 This psalm is an acrostic poem, a mathematical masterpiece. It consists of twenty-two stanzas of eight lines each. Each stanza begins with the same Hebrew letter at the beginning of every one of its eight lines, going in succession, by strophes, from *alef*—the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, as the first letter of each line in the first strophe—to *taw*—the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, as the first letter of each line in the last strophe. Like the eight lines of each stanza, there are eight Hebrew words, all synonyms, used to refer to the Word of God. Although many believe Ezra wrote Ps. 119, the acrostic poetic style is unique to King David within the book of Psalms, which points to his authorship of this psalm.

<sup>c</sup> 119:1 Or "perfection." The Hebrew reads "utterances."

<sup>7</sup>I will give my thanks to you from a heart of love and truth.  
 And every time I learn more of your righteous judgments,  
<sup>8</sup>I will be faithful to all that your Word reveals—  
 so don't ever give up on me!

### True Joy

<sup>9</sup>How can a young man stay pure?  
 Only by living in the Word of God and walking in its truth.  
<sup>10</sup>I have longed for you with the passion of my heart;  
 don't let me stray from your directions!  
<sup>11</sup>I consider your Word to be my greatest treasure,  
 and I treasure it in my heart to keep me from committing sin's treason against you.  
<sup>12</sup>My wonderful God, you are to be praised above all;  
 teach me the power of your decrees!  
<sup>13</sup>I speak continually of your laws as I recite out loud your counsel to me.  
<sup>14</sup>I find more joy in following what you tell me to do than in chasing after all the wealth of the world.  
<sup>15</sup>I set my heart on your precepts and pay close attention to all your ways.  
<sup>16</sup>My delight is found in all your laws, and I won't forget to walk in your words.

### The Abundant Life

<sup>17</sup>Let me, your servant, walk in abundance of life  
 that I may always live to obey your truth.  
<sup>18</sup>Open my eyes to see the miracle-wonders hidden in Scripture.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>19</sup>My life on earth is so brief, so tutor me in the ways of your wisdom.  
<sup>20</sup>I am continually consumed by these irresistible longings,  
 these cravings to obey your every commandment!  
<sup>21</sup>Your displeasure rests with those who are arrogant,  
 who think they know everything;  
 you rebuke the rebellious who refuse your laws.  
<sup>22</sup>Don't let them mock and scorn me for obeying you.  
<sup>23</sup>For even if the princes and my leaders choose to criticize me,  
 I will continue to serve you and walk in your plans for my life.  
<sup>24</sup>Your commandments are my counselors;  
 your Word is my light and delight!

### Revived by the Word

<sup>25</sup>Lord, I'm fading away. I'm discouraged and lying in the dust;  
 revive me by your word, just like you promised you would.  
<sup>26</sup>I've poured out my life before you, and you've always been there for me.  
 So now I ask: teach me more of your holy decrees.  
<sup>27</sup>Open up my understanding to the ways of your wisdom,  
 and I will meditate deeply on your splendor and your wonders.  
<sup>28</sup>My life's strength melts away with grief and sadness;  
 come strengthen me and encourage me with your words.  
<sup>29</sup>Keep me far away from what is false;  
 give me grace to stay true to your laws.  
<sup>30</sup>I've chosen to obey your truth and walk in the splendor-light of all that you teach me.

<sup>a</sup> 119:18 Or "your law."



<sup>31</sup>Lord, don't allow me to make a mess  
of my life,  
for I cling to your commands and  
follow them as closely as I can.  
<sup>32</sup>I will run after you with delight in  
my heart,  
for you will make me obedient to  
your instructions.

### Understanding God's Ways

<sup>33</sup>Give me revelation about the mean-  
ing of your ways  
so I can enjoy the reward of follow-  
ing them fully.  
<sup>34</sup>Give me an understanding heart so  
that I can  
passionately know and obey your  
truth.  
<sup>35</sup>Guide me into the paths that please  
you,  
for I take delight in all that you say.  
<sup>36</sup>Cause my heart to bow before your  
words of wisdom  
and not to the wealth of this world.  
<sup>37</sup>Help me turn my eyes away from  
illusions  
so that I pursue only that which is  
true;  
drench my soul with life as I walk in  
your paths.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>38</sup>Reassure me of your promises, for I  
am your beloved,  
your servant who bows before you.  
<sup>39</sup>Defend me from the criticism I  
face  
for keeping your beautiful words.  
<sup>40</sup>See how I long with cravings for  
more of your ways?  
Let your righteousness revive my  
spirit!

### Trust in the Lord

<sup>41</sup>May your tender love overwhelm  
me, O Lord,

for you are my Savior and you keep  
your promises.

<sup>42</sup>I'll always have an answer for those  
who mock me

because I trust in your word.

<sup>43</sup>May I never forget your truth, for I  
rely upon your precepts.

<sup>44</sup>I will observe your laws every  
moment of the day  
and will never forget the words you  
say.

<sup>45</sup>I will walk with you in complete  
freedom,  
for I seek to follow your every  
command.

<sup>46</sup>When I stand before kings, I will tell  
them the truth  
and will never be ashamed.

<sup>47</sup>My passion and delight is in your  
word,  
for I love what you say to me!

<sup>48</sup>I long for more revelation of your  
truth,  
for I love the light of your word as I  
meditate on your decrees.

### My Comfort

<sup>49</sup>Lord, never forget the promises  
you've made to me,  
for they are my hope and  
confidence.

<sup>50</sup>In all of my affliction I find great  
comfort in your promises,  
for they have kept me alive!

<sup>51</sup>No matter how bitterly the proud  
mockers speak against me,  
I refuse to budge from your precepts.

<sup>52</sup>Your revelation-light is eternal;  
I'm encouraged every time I think  
about your truth!

<sup>53</sup>Whenever I see the wicked breaking  
your laws, I feel horrible.

<sup>54</sup>As I journey through life, I put all  
your statutes to music;

<sup>a</sup> 119:37 The Masoretic Text and the Dead Sea Scrolls read "Preserve my life according to your word."

they become the theme of my joyous songs.

<sup>55</sup>Throughout the night I think of you, dear God;

I treasure your every word to me.

<sup>56</sup>All this joy is mine as I follow your ways!

### My Heart Is Devoted to You

<sup>57</sup>You are my satisfaction, Lord, and all that I need, so I'm determined to do everything you say.

<sup>58</sup>With all my heart I seek your favor; pour out your grace on me as you promised!

<sup>59</sup>When I realize that I'm going astray, I turn back to obey your instructions.

<sup>60</sup>I give my all to follow your revelation-light; I will not delay to obey.

<sup>61</sup>Even when temptations encircle me with evil, I won't forget for a moment to follow your commands.

<sup>62</sup>In the middle of the night I awake to give thanks to you because of all your revelation-light—so right and true!

<sup>63</sup>Anyone who loves you and bows in obedience to your words will be my friend.

<sup>64</sup>Give me more revelation of your ways, for I see your love and tender care everywhere.

### My True Treasure

<sup>65</sup>Your extravagant kindness to me makes me want to follow your words even more!

<sup>66</sup>Teach me how to make good decisions, and give me revelation-light, for I believe in your commands.

<sup>67</sup>Before I was humbled I used to always wander astray, but now I see the wisdom of your words.

<sup>68</sup>Everything you do is beautiful, flowing from your goodness; teach me the power of your wonderful words!

<sup>69</sup>Proud boasters make up lies about me because I am passionate to follow all that you say.

<sup>70</sup>Their hearts are dull and void of feelings, but I find my true treasure in your truth.

<sup>71</sup>The punishment you brought me through was the best thing that could have happened to me, for it taught me your ways.

<sup>72</sup>The words you speak to me are worth more than all the riches and wealth in the whole world!

### Growth through the Word

<sup>73</sup>Your very hands have held me and made me who I am; give me more revelation-light so I may learn to please you more.

<sup>74</sup>May all your devoted lovers see how you treat me and be glad, for your words are entwined with my heart.

<sup>75</sup>Lord, I know that your judgments are always right. Even when it's me you judge, you're still faithful and true.

<sup>76</sup>Send your kind mercy-kiss to comfort me, your servant, just like you promised you would.

<sup>77</sup>Love me tenderly so I can go on, for I delight in your life-giving truth.



<sup>78</sup>Shame upon the proud liars! See  
how they oppress me,  
all because of my passion for your  
precepts!

<sup>79</sup>May all your devoted lovers follow me  
as I follow the path of your  
instruction.

<sup>80</sup>Make me passionate and whole-  
hearted to fulfill your every wish,  
so that I'll never have to be ashamed  
of myself.

### Deliver Me

<sup>81</sup>I'm lovesick with yearnings for more  
of your salvation,  
for my heart is entwined with your  
Word.

<sup>82</sup>I'm consumed with longings for  
your promises,  
so I ask, "When will they all come  
true?"

<sup>83</sup>My soul feels dry and shriveled,  
useless and forgotten,  
but I will never forget your living  
truth.

<sup>84</sup>How much longer must I wait until  
you punish my persecutors?  
For I am your loving servant.

<sup>85</sup>Arrogant men who hate your truth  
and never obey your laws  
have laid a trap for my life.

<sup>86</sup>They don't know that everything you  
say is true,  
so they harass me with their lies.  
Help me, Lord!

<sup>87</sup>They've nearly destroyed my life, but  
I refuse to yield;  
I still live according to your Word.

<sup>88</sup>Revive me with your tender love and  
spare my life by your kindness, and I  
will continue to obey you.

### Faith in the Word of God

<sup>89</sup>Standing firm in the heavens and  
fastened to eternity  
is the Word of God.

<sup>90</sup>Your faithfulness flows from one  
generation to the next;  
all that you created sits firmly in  
place to testify of you.

<sup>91</sup>By your decree everything stands at  
attention,  
for all that you have made serves you.

<sup>92</sup>Because your words are my deepest  
delight,  
I didn't give up when all else was  
lost.

<sup>93</sup>I can never forget the profound reve-  
lations you've taught me,  
for they have kept me alive more  
than once.

<sup>94</sup>Lord, I'm all yours, and you are my  
Savior;  
I have sought to live my life pleasing  
to you.

<sup>95</sup>Even though evil men wait in  
ambush to kill me,  
I will set my heart before you to  
understand more of your ways.

<sup>96</sup>I've learned that there is nothing  
perfect  
in this imperfect world except your  
words,  
for they bring such fantastic freedom  
into my life!

### I Love the Word of God

<sup>97</sup>O how I love and treasure your law;  
throughout the day I fill my heart  
with its light!

<sup>98</sup>By considering your commands I  
have an edge over my enemies,  
for I take seriously everything you  
say.

<sup>99</sup>You have given me more under-  
standing than those who teach me,  
for I've absorbed your eye-opening  
revelation.

<sup>100</sup>You have graced me with more  
insight than the old sages  
because I have not failed to walk in  
the light of your ways.

<sup>101</sup>I refused to bend my morals when temptation was before me so that I could become obedient to your Word.

<sup>102</sup>I refuse to turn away from difficult truths, for you yourself have taught me to love your words.

<sup>103</sup>How sweet are your living promises to me; sweeter than honey is your revelation-light.

<sup>104</sup>For your truth is the source of my understanding, not the falsehoods of those who don't know you, which I despise.

### Truth's Shining Light

<sup>105</sup>Truth's shining light guides me in my choices and decisions; the revelation of your Word makes my pathway clear.

<sup>106</sup>To live my life by your righteous rules has been my holy and lifelong commitment.

<sup>107</sup>I'm bruised and broken, overwhelmed by it all; breathe life into me again by your living word.

<sup>108</sup>Lord, receive my grateful thanks and teach me more of how to please you.

<sup>109</sup>Even though my life hangs in the balance, I'll keep following what you've taught me, no matter what.

<sup>110</sup>The ungodly have done their best to throw me off track, but I'll not deviate from what you've told me to do.

<sup>111</sup>Everything you speak to me is like joyous treasure, filling my life with gladness.

<sup>112</sup>I have determined in my heart to obey whatever you say, fully and forever!

### Trust and Obey

<sup>113</sup>I despise those who can't keep commitments, for I passionately love your revelation-light!

<sup>114</sup>You're my place of quiet retreat, and your wraparound presence becomes my shield as I wrap myself in your Word!

<sup>115</sup>Go away! Leave me, all you workers of wickedness, for you can't stop me from following every command of my God.

<sup>116</sup>Lord, strengthen my inner being by the promises of your Word so that I may live faithful and unashamed for you.

<sup>117</sup>Lift me up and I will be safe. Empower me to live every moment in the light of your ways.

<sup>118</sup>Lord, you reject those who reject your laws, for they fool no one but themselves!

<sup>119</sup>The wicked are thrown away, discarded and valueless. That's why I will keep loving all of your laws!

<sup>120</sup>My body trembles in holy awe of you, leaving me speechless, for I'm frightened of your righteous judgments.

### I Will Follow Your Ways

<sup>121</sup>Don't leave me to the mercies of those who hate me, for I live to do what is just and fair.

<sup>122</sup>Let me hear your promise of blessing over my life, breaking me free from the proud oppressors.

<sup>123</sup>As a lovesick lover, I yearn for more of your salvation and for your virtuous promises.

<sup>124</sup>Let me feel your tender love, for I am yours.

Give me more understanding of your wonderful ways.

<sup>125</sup>I need more revelation from your Word to know more about you, for I'm in love with you!

<sup>126</sup>Lord, the time has come for you to break through, for evil men keep breaking your laws.

<sup>127</sup>Truly, your message of truth means more to me than a vault filled with the purest gold.

<sup>128</sup>Every word you speak, every truth revealed, is always right and beautiful to me, for I hate what is phony or false.

### I Long to Obey You

<sup>129</sup>Your marvelous words are living miracles; no wonder I long to obey everything you say.

<sup>130</sup>Break open your Word within me until revelation-light shines out! Those with open hearts are given insight into your plans.

<sup>131</sup>I open my mouth and inhale the Word of God because I crave the revelation of your commands.

<sup>132</sup>Turn your heart to me, Lord, and show me your grace like you do to every one of your godly lovers.

<sup>133</sup>Prepare before me a path filled with your promises, and don't allow even one sin to have dominion over me.

<sup>134</sup>Rescue me from the oppression of ungodly men so that I can keep all your precepts.

<sup>135</sup>Smile on me,<sup>a</sup> your loving servant. Instruct me in what is right in your eyes.

<sup>136</sup>When I witness the rebellious breaking your laws, it makes me weep uncontrollably!

### His Word Is True

<sup>137</sup>Lord, your judgments reveal your righteousness, and your verdicts are always fair.

<sup>138</sup>The motive behind your every word is pure, and your teachings are remarkably faithful and true.

<sup>139</sup>I've been consumed with a furious passion to do what's right, all because of the way my enemies disrespect your laws.

<sup>140</sup>All your promises glow with fire;<sup>b</sup> that's why I'm a lover of your Word.

<sup>141</sup>Even though I'm considered insignificant and despised by the world, I'll never abandon your ways.

<sup>142</sup>Your righteousness has no end; it is everlasting, and your rules are perfectly fair.

<sup>143</sup>Even though my troubles overwhelm me with anguish, I still delight and cherish every message you speak to me.

<sup>144</sup>Give me more revelation so that I can live for you, for nothing is more pure and eternal than your truth.

### Save Me, God

<sup>145</sup>Answer my passionate prayer, O Lord, and I'll obey everything you say.

<sup>146</sup>Save me, God, and I'll follow your every instruction.

<sup>a</sup> 119:135 Or "Cause your face to shine on me."

<sup>b</sup> 119:140 As translated from the Septuagint and implied in the Hebrew.

<sup>147</sup>Before the day dawns, I'll be crying  
out for help  
and wrapping your words into my  
life.

<sup>148</sup>I lie awake every night pondering  
your promises to me.

<sup>149</sup>Lord, listen to my heart's cry, for  
I know your love is real for  
me;  
breathe life into me again by the  
revelation of your justice.

<sup>150</sup>Here they come—these lawless  
rebels are coming near,  
but they are all so far away from  
your laws.

<sup>151</sup>God, you are near me always, so  
close to me;  
every one of your commands reveals  
truth.

<sup>152</sup>I've known all along how true and  
unchanging  
is every word you speak, established  
forever!

### Breathe Life into Me Again

<sup>153</sup>Look upon all my misery and come  
be my hero to rescue me,  
for I will never forget what you've  
revealed to me.

<sup>154</sup>Take my side and defend me in  
these sufferings;  
redeem me and revive me, just like  
you promised you would.

<sup>155</sup>The wicked are so far from  
salvation,  
for they could not care less about  
your message of truth.

<sup>156</sup>Your tender mercies are what I  
need, O God;  
give me back my life again  
through the revelation of your  
judgments.

<sup>157</sup>I have so many enemies who perse-  
cute me,

yet I won't swerve from following  
your ways.

<sup>158</sup>I grieve when I see how the faith-  
less ones live,  
for they just walk away from your  
promises.

<sup>159</sup>Lord, see how much I truly love  
your instructions.  
So in your tender kindness, breathe  
life into me again.

<sup>160</sup>The sum total of all your words  
adds up to absolute truth,  
and every one of your righteous  
decrees is everlasting.

### Devoted to God's Word

<sup>161</sup>The powerful elite have persecuted  
me without a cause,  
but my heart trembles in awe  
because of your miracle-words.

<sup>162</sup>Your promises are the source of my  
bubbling joy;  
the revelation of your Word thrills  
me  
like one who has discovered hidden  
treasure.

<sup>163</sup>I despise every lie and hate every  
falsehood,  
for I am passionate about keeping  
your precepts.

<sup>164</sup>I stop to praise you seven times a  
day,  
all because your ways are perfect!

<sup>165</sup>There is such a great peace and  
well-being that comes  
to the lovers of your Word, and they  
will never be offended.

<sup>166</sup>Lord, I'm longing for more of your  
salvation,  
for I want to do what pleases you.

<sup>167</sup>My love for your ways is  
indescribable;  
in my innermost being I want to  
follow them perfectly!

<sup>168</sup>I will keep your instructions and  
follow your counsel;  
all my ways are an open book before  
you.

### I Want to Follow You

<sup>169</sup>Lord, listen to my prayer. It's like a  
sacrifice I bring to you;  
I must have more revelation of your  
Word!

<sup>170</sup>Take my words to heart when I ask  
you, Lord;  
rescue me, just like you promised!

<sup>171</sup>I offer you my joyous praise for all  
that you've taught me.

<sup>172</sup>Your wonderful words will become  
my song of worship,  
for everything you've commanded is  
perfect and true.

<sup>173</sup>Place your hands of strength and  
favor upon me,  
for I've made my choice to follow  
your ways.

<sup>174</sup>I wait for your deliverance, O Lord,  
for your words thrill me like nothing  
else!

<sup>175</sup>Invigorate my life so that I can  
praise you even more,  
and may your truth be my strength!

<sup>176</sup>I'll never forget what you've taught  
me, Lord,  
but when I wander off and lose my  
way,

come after me, for I am your  
beloved!

## 120 GOD HELPED ME

*A song of the stairway<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>I was desperate for you to help me in  
my struggles, and you did!

<sup>2</sup>So come and deliver me now  
from this treachery and false  
accusation.

<sup>3</sup>O lying deceivers, don't you know  
what is your fate?

<sup>4</sup>You will be pierced through with  
condemnation  
and consumed with burning coals  
of fire!

<sup>5</sup>Why am I doomed to live as an alien,  
scattered among these cruel savages?<sup>b</sup>  
Am I destined to dwell in the dark-  
ened tents of desert nomads?<sup>c</sup>

<sup>6</sup>For too long I've had to live among  
those who hate peace.

<sup>7</sup>I speak words of peace while they  
speak words of war,  
but they refuse to listen.

## 121 GOD PROTECTS US

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1-2</sup>I look up to the mountains and hills,  
longing for God's help.

<sup>a</sup> 120 Psalms 120–134 all begin with the words “A song to take you higher” or “A song of ascent” or “A song of the stairway.” It is likely these fifteen songs were sung on the fifteen steps that would take the worshiper into the temple. On each step they would stop to worship and sing the corresponding psalm as they went up ever higher into the temple to worship God. Others believe they were the songs sung as David brought up the ark of glory to Jerusalem. They are also known as “Songs of Degrees” or “Songs of Ascent.” One Hebrew manuscript titles them “Songs of the Homeward Marches.”

<sup>b</sup> 120:5 The Hebrew text includes the word *Meshech*, which is a foreign land. The meaning of the word *Meshech* is “to scatter” and may refer to ancient Persia.

<sup>c</sup> 120:5 The Hebrew text includes the word *Kedar*, who was one of Ishmael's sons, whose descendants became a wandering group of nomads. *Kedar* means “a dark place.” See Song. 1:5.



But then I realize that our true help  
and protection  
is only from the Lord,  
our Creator who made the heavens  
and the earth.

<sup>3</sup>He will guard and guide me, never  
letting me stumble or fall.  
God is my keeper; he will never  
forget nor ignore me.

<sup>4</sup>He will never slumber nor sleep;  
he is the Guardian-God for his  
people, Israel.

<sup>5</sup>Yahweh himself will watch over you;  
he's always at your side to shelter  
you safely in his presence.

<sup>6</sup>He's protecting you from all danger  
both day and night.

<sup>7</sup>He will keep you from every form of  
evil or calamity  
as he continuously watches over you.

<sup>8</sup>You will be guarded by God himself.  
You will be safe when you leave  
your home,  
and safely you will return.

He will protect you now,  
and he'll protect you forevermore!

## 122 JERUSALEM

*A song of the stairway by King  
David<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>I was overjoyed when they said,  
“Let's go up to the house of the Lord.”

<sup>2</sup>And now at last we stand here, inside  
the very gates of Jerusalem!

<sup>3</sup>O Jerusalem, you were built as a city  
of praise,  
where God and man mingle  
together.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>4</sup>This is where all the tribes of Yahweh  
are required

to come and worship him.

<sup>5</sup>This is where the thrones of kings  
have been established  
to rule in righteousness;  
even King David ruled from here.

<sup>6</sup>Pray *and seek* for Jerusalem's peace,  
for all who love her will prosper!

<sup>7</sup>O Jerusalem, may there be peace for  
those  
who dwell inside your walls  
and prosperity in your every  
palace.

<sup>8</sup>I intercede for the sake of my family  
and friends  
who dwell there, that they may all  
live in peace.

<sup>9</sup>For the sake of your house, Yahweh  
our God,  
I will seek the welfare and prosperity  
of Jerusalem.

## 123 A PRAYER FOR MERCY

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1</sup>O God-Enthroned in heaven, I lift my  
eyes toward you in worship.

<sup>2</sup>The way I love you  
is like the way a servant wants to  
please his master,  
the way a maid waits for the orders  
of her mistress.

We look to you, our God, with pas-  
sionate longing  
to please you and discover more of  
your mercy and grace.

<sup>3-4</sup>For we've had more than our fill of  
this scoffing and scorn—  
this mistreatment by the wealthy  
elite.

Lord, show us your mercy!  
Lord, show us your grace!

<sup>a</sup> 122 David wrote this song for the people to sing for the feasts. It was sung when the worshipers entered the gates of Jerusalem.

<sup>b</sup> 122:3 The Hebrew phrase “a city bound together” is taken from a root word that means “joined, united, coupled.” By inference in the context, it is the city where God dwells and man worships.



# 124 VICTORY

*A song of the stairway by King David*

<sup>1</sup>What if God had not been on our side? Let all Israel admit this!

<sup>2-3</sup>What if God had not been there for us?

Our enemies, in their violent anger,  
would have swallowed us up alive!

<sup>4-5</sup>The nations, with their flood of rage, would have swept us away, and we would have drowned and perished beneath their torrent of terror!

<sup>6</sup>We can praise God over and over that he never left us!

God wouldn't allow the terror of our enemies to defeat us.

<sup>7</sup>We are free from the hunter's trap; their snare is broken and we have escaped!

<sup>8</sup>For the same God who made everything,  
our Creator and our mighty maker,  
he himself is our helper and defender!

# 125 GOD'S SURROUNDING PRESENCE

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1</sup>Those who trust in the Lord are as unshakeable,  
as unmovable as mighty Mount Zion!

<sup>2</sup>Just as the mountains surround Jerusalem,  
so the Lord's *wraparound* presence

surrounds his people, protecting them now and forever.

<sup>3</sup>The wicked will not always rule over the godly,  
provoking them to do what is evil.

<sup>4</sup>God, let your goodness be given away to your good people,  
to all your righteous ones!

<sup>5</sup>But those who turn away from truth—  
them you will turn away from you,  
to follow their crooked ways.  
*You will give them just what they deserve.*

May Israel experience peace and prosperity!

# 126 RESTORED

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1</sup>It was like a dream come true  
when you freed us from our bondage  
and brought us back to Zion!

<sup>2</sup>We laughed and laughed and overflowed with gladness.

We were left shouting for joy and singing your praise.

All the nations saw it and joined in, saying,

"The Lord has done great miracles for them!"

<sup>3</sup>Yes, he did mighty miracles and we are overjoyed!

<sup>4</sup>Now, Lord, do it again! Restore us to our former glory!

May streams of your refreshing flow over us  
until our dry hearts are drenched again.

<sup>5</sup>Those who sow their tears as seeds<sup>a</sup>  
will reap a harvest with joyful shouts of glee.

<sup>a</sup> 126:5 Or "sow their seeds with tears." A sower weeps when he sows his precious seed while his children are hungry. This is a picture of sacrificing what little we have for the harvest to come.

<sup>c</sup>They may weep as they go out carrying their seed to sow,  
but they will return with joyful laughter and shouting with gladness  
as they bring back armloads of blessing and a harvest  
overflowing!

## 127 GOD AND HIS GIFTS

*A song of the stairway by King Solomon*

<sup>1</sup>If God's grace doesn't help the builders,  
they will labor in vain to build a house.  
If God's mercy doesn't protect the city,  
all the sentries will circle it in vain.

<sup>2</sup>It really is senseless to work so hard from early morning till late at night,  
toiling to make a living for fear of not having enough.

God can provide for his devoted lovers even while they sleep!

<sup>3</sup>Children are God's love-gift; they are heaven's generous reward.

<sup>4</sup>Children born to a young couple will one day rise to protect and provide for their parents.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Happy will be the couple who has many of them!

A household full of children will not bring shame on your name but victory when you face your enemies,

for your offspring will have influence and honor<sup>b</sup>  
to prevail on your behalf!

## 128 THE BLESSINGS OF THE LORD

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1</sup>How joyous are those who love the Lord and bow low before God, ready to obey him!

<sup>2</sup>Your reward will be prosperity, happiness, and well-being.

<sup>3</sup>Your wife will bless your heart and home.

Your children will bring you joy as they gather around your table.

<sup>4</sup>Yes, this is God's generous reward for those who love him.

<sup>5</sup>May the Lord bless you out of his Zion-glory!

May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem throughout your lifetime.

<sup>6</sup>And may you be surrounded by your grandchildren.

Happiness to you! And happiness to Israel!

## 129 PERSECUTED BUT NOT DEFEATED

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1</sup>Let all Israel admit it.

From our very beginning we have been persecuted by the nations.

<sup>2</sup>And from our very beginning we have faced never-ending discrimination.

Nevertheless, our enemies have not defeated us. We're still here!

<sup>3</sup>They have hurt us more than can be expressed,

<sup>a</sup> 127:4 The Hebrew text refers to children as "arrows in the hands of a warrior." Our children will be our future protection and provision. So the more the merrier!

<sup>b</sup> 127:5 The Hebrew includes a reference to "speaking with your enemies at the gate." This is in the context of children being God's way of blessing parents in their old age.

ripping us to shreds, cutting deeply  
into our souls.

<sup>4</sup>But no matter what, the Lord is good  
to us.

He is a righteous God who stood to  
defend us,  
breaking the chains of the evil ones  
that bound us.

<sup>5</sup>May all who hate the Jews  
fall back in disgrace to a shameful  
defeat!

<sup>6</sup>Let them be like grass planted in  
shallow soil  
that soon withers with no  
sustenance.

<sup>7</sup>Let them be like weeds ignored by  
the reaper  
and worthless to the harvester.

<sup>8</sup>Let no one who sees them say,  
“May the blessings of Yahweh be  
upon your life.  
May the Lord bless you.”<sup>a</sup>

## 130 OUT OF THE DEPTHS

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, I cry out to you out of the  
depths of *my despair!*

<sup>2</sup>Hear my voice, O God!  
Answer this prayer and hear my plea  
for mercy.

<sup>3</sup>Lord, if you measured us and marked  
us with our sins,  
who would ever have their prayers  
answered?

<sup>4</sup>But your forgiving love is what  
makes you so wonderful.  
No wonder you are loved and  
worshiped!

<sup>5</sup>This is why I wait upon you, expect-  
ing your breakthrough,

for your Word brings me hope.

<sup>6</sup>I long for you more than any  
watchman  
would long for the morning light.  
I will watch and wait for you,  
O God,  
throughout the night.

<sup>7</sup>O Israel, keep hoping, keep trusting,  
and keep waiting on the Lord,  
for he is tenderhearted, kind, and  
forgiving.

He has a thousand ways to set you  
free!

<sup>8</sup>He himself will redeem you;  
he will ransom you from the cruel  
slavery of your sins!

## 131 MY HEART IS MEEK

*A song of the stairway by King David*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, my heart is meek before you.  
I don't consider myself better than  
others.

I'm content to not pursue matters  
that are over my head—  
such as your complex mysteries and  
wonders—  
that I'm not yet ready to  
understand.

<sup>2</sup>I am humbled and quieted in your  
presence.  
Like a contented child who rests on  
its mother's lap,<sup>b</sup>

I'm your resting child and my soul is  
content in you.

<sup>3</sup>O people of God,<sup>c</sup> your time has  
come to quietly trust,  
waiting upon the Lord now and  
forever.

<sup>a</sup> 129:8 In the Jewish culture, if you passed by one who was harvesting his crops, you would shout out, “The Lord bless you!”

<sup>b</sup> 131:2 “Like a contented child” is literally “Like a weaned child.”

<sup>c</sup> 131:3 Or “O Israel.”

# 132 DAVID'S DYNASTY

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, please don't forget all the hardships  
David had to pass through.

<sup>2</sup>And how he promised you, Jacob's mighty God, saying,

<sup>3a</sup>"I will not cross the threshold of my own home  
to sleep in my own bed.

<sup>4</sup>I will not sleep or slumber,  
nor even take time to close my eyes  
in rest,

<sup>5</sup>until I find a place for you to dwell, O mighty God of Jacob.

I devote myself to finding a resting place for you!"<sup>a</sup>

<sup>6</sup>First we heard that the ark was at Bethlehem.

Then we found it in the forest of Kiriath-Jearim.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Let's go into God's dwelling place and bow down and worship before him.

<sup>8</sup>Arise, O Lord, and enter your resting place,  
both you and the ark of your glorious strength!

<sup>9</sup>May your priests wear the robes of righteousness,  
and let all your godly lovers sing for joy!

<sup>10</sup>Don't forsake your anointed king now,

but honor your servant David.

<sup>11</sup>For you gave your word and promised David

in an unbreakable oath that one of his sons  
would be sitting on the throne to succeed him as king.

<sup>12</sup>You also promised that if David's sons

would be faithful to keep their promise to follow you,  
obeying the words you spoke to them,

then David's dynasty would never end.

<sup>13</sup>Lord, you have chosen Zion as your dwelling place,

for your pleasure is fulfilled in making it your home.

<sup>14</sup>I hear you say, "I will make this place my eternal dwelling,

for I have loved and desired it as my very own!

<sup>15</sup>I will make Zion prosper and satisfy her poor with my provision.

<sup>16</sup>I will cover my priests with salvation's power,  
and all my righteous ones will shout for joy!

<sup>17</sup>I will increase the anointing that was upon David,

and my glistening *glory* will rest upon my anointed one.

<sup>18</sup>I will clothe his enemies with shame,  
but holiness will bloom on my anointed one."<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 132:5 Historically, this refers to David wanting to bring the ark of glory back to Jerusalem.

<sup>b</sup> 132:6 Although the Hebrew text does not have the word *ark* but simply *it*, this translation supplies the word *ark* from its reference in verse 8. For the sake of understanding the text, this translation substitutes "Bethlehem" for "Ephrathah" (Ephrathah was the ancient name for Bethlehem) and "Kiriath-Jearim" for "Jaar" ("the fields of Jaar" was a variant form of Kiriath-Jearim, which means "the city of forests").

<sup>c</sup> 132:18 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew reads "his crown will sparkle and gleam."

# 133

## UNITY

*A song of the stairway by King David*

<sup>1</sup>How truly wonderful and delightful  
it is  
to see brothers and sisters living  
together in sweet unity!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>2</sup>It's as precious as the sacred scented  
oil  
flowing from the head of the high  
priest Aaron,  
dripping down upon his beard and  
running all the way down  
to the hem of his priestly robes.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>3</sup>This harmony can be compared to  
the dew  
dripping from Mount Hermon,  
which flows down upon the hills of  
Zion.  
Indeed, that is where Yahweh has  
decreed his blessings  
will be found, the promise of life  
forevermore!

# 134

## THE NIGHT WATCH

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1</sup>All his loving priests who serve and  
sing,  
come and sing your song of blessing  
to God.  
Come and stand before him in the  
house of God  
throughout the night watch,  
<sup>2</sup>lifting up your hands in holy wor-  
ship; come and bless the Lord!

<sup>3</sup>May the Lord, whom you worship,  
the mighty maker of heaven and  
earth,  
bless you from Zion's glory!

# 135

## HIS WONDERFUL WORKS

*A song of the stairway*

<sup>1</sup>Shout hallelujah and praise the  
greatness of God!

All his righteous ones, praise him!

<sup>2</sup>All you worshiping priests on duty in  
the temple,

<sup>3</sup>praise him, for he is beautiful!  
Sing loving praises to his lovely  
name.

<sup>4</sup>For Yahweh has chosen Jacob for his  
own purpose,  
and Israel is his special treasure.

<sup>5</sup>Next to every other god, the great-  
ness of our God is unequalled.  
For our God is incomparable!

<sup>6</sup>He does what he pleases with unlim-  
ited power and authority,  
extending his greatness throughout  
the entire universe!

<sup>7</sup>He forms the misty clouds and cre-  
ates thunder and lightning,  
bringing the wind and rain out of  
his heavenly storehouse.

<sup>8</sup>He struck down the eldest child in  
each Egyptian home;  
both man and beast perished that  
night.

<sup>9</sup>He did great miracles—mighty signs  
and wonders throughout the land  
before Pharaoh and all his subjects.

<sup>a</sup> 133:1 This specifically speaks to the tribes of Israel that live in harmony, but it also applies to believers today. Nothing can be sweeter than the love of Christ we share with one another.

<sup>b</sup> 133:2 Or “running down the collar of his robe.”



<sup>10</sup>He conquered many nations and  
killed their mighty kings,  
<sup>11</sup>like Sihon, king of the Amorites, and  
Og, king of Bashan,  
and kings from every kingdom in  
Canaan.  
<sup>12</sup>He gave their land to Israel as an  
inheritance for his people.  
<sup>13</sup>O Yahweh, your name endures  
forever!  
Your fame is known in every  
generation.  
<sup>14</sup>For you will vindicate your perse-  
cuted people,  
showing your tender love to all your  
servants.  
<sup>15</sup>The unbelieving nations worship  
what they make.  
They worship their wealth and their  
work.  
They idolize what they own and  
what they do.  
<sup>16-18</sup>Their possessions will never  
satisfy.  
Their lifeless and futile works cannot  
bring life to them!  
Their things can't talk to them or  
answer their prayers.  
Blind men can only create blind  
things.  
Those deaf to God can only make a  
deaf image.<sup>a</sup>  
Dead men can only create dead  
idols.  
And everyone who trusts in these  
powerless, dead things  
will be just like what they worship—  
powerless and dead!  
<sup>19</sup>Praise Lord Yahweh, all the families  
of Israel!

Praise Lord Yahweh, you family of  
Aaron!<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>20</sup>Let all the priests<sup>c</sup> bless Lord  
Yahweh!  
Let all his lovers who bow low  
before him<sup>d</sup>  
praise the Lord Yahweh!  
<sup>21</sup>So bless the Lord Yahweh who lives  
in Jerusalem  
and dwells in Zion's glory!  
Hallelujah and praise the Lord!

## 136 HIS TENDER LOVE

<sup>1</sup>Let everyone thank God, for he is  
good, and he is easy to please!  
His tender love for us continues on  
forever!  
<sup>2</sup>Give thanks to God, our King over all  
gods!  
His tender love for us continues on  
forever!  
<sup>3</sup>Give thanks to the Lord over all  
lords!  
His tender love for us continues on  
forever!  
<sup>4</sup>Give thanks to the only miracle-  
working God!  
His tender love for us continues on  
forever!  
<sup>5</sup>Give thanks to the Creator who made  
the heavens with wisdom!<sup>e</sup>  
His tender love for us continues on  
forever!  
<sup>6</sup>To him who formed dry ground,  
raising it up from the sea!  
His tender love for us continues on  
forever!  
<sup>7</sup>Praise the one who created every  
heavenly light!

a 135:16–18 Referring to the idols, the Hebrew could be translated “with mouths, but they cannot speak; with eyes, but they cannot see; with ears, but they cannot hear.”

b 135:19 The name Aaron means “light-bringer” or “light-bearer.”

c 135:20 Or “all the family of Levi.” Levi represents the holy priesthood.

d 135:20 Or “those who fear him.”

e 136:5 See Ps. 104:24; Prov. 8:27–31.



His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>8</sup>He set the sun in the sky to rule over day!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>9</sup>Praise him who set in place the moon and stars to rule over the night!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>10</sup>Give thanks to God, who struck down the firstborn in Egypt!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>11</sup>He brought his people out of Egypt with miracles!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>12</sup>With his mighty power he brought them out!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>13</sup>He split open the Red Sea for them!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>14</sup>And led his people right through the middle!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>15</sup>He vanquished Pharaoh's armies, drowning them all!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>16</sup>He led his people through the wilderness!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>17</sup>He's the one who smashed mighty kingdoms!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>18</sup>He triumphed over powerful kings who stood in his way!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>19</sup>He conquered Sihon, king of the Amorites!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>20</sup>He conquered the giant named Og, king of Bashan!<sup>a</sup>  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>21</sup>Then he gave away their lands as an inheritance!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>22</sup>For he handed it all over to Israel, his beloved!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>23</sup>He's the God who chose us when we were nothing!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>24</sup>He has rescued us from the power of our enemies!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>25</sup>He provides food for hungry men and animals!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

<sup>26</sup>Give thanks to the great God of the heavens!  
His tender love for us continues on forever!

## 137 THE SONG OF OUR CAPTIVITY

<sup>1</sup>Along the banks of Babylon's rivers  
we sat as exiles, mourning our captivity,

<sup>a</sup> 136:20 The name Og means "giant."

and wept with great love for Zion.  
<sup>2</sup>*Our music and mirth were no longer heard, only sadness.*  
 We hung up our harps on the willow trees.  
<sup>3</sup>Our captors tormented us, saying,  
 “Make music for us and sing one of your happy Zion-songs!”  
<sup>4</sup>But how could we sing the song of the Lord  
 in this foreign wilderness?  
<sup>5</sup>May my hands never make music again  
 if I ever forget you, O Jerusalem.  
<sup>6</sup>May I never be able to sing again if I fail to honor Jerusalem supremely!  
<sup>7</sup>And Lord, may you never forget what the sons of Edom did to us, saying,  
 “Let’s raze the city of Jerusalem and burn it to the ground!”<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>8</sup>Listen, O Babylon, you evil destroyer!  
 The one who destroys you will be rewarded above all others.  
 You will be repaid for what you’ve done to us.  
<sup>9</sup>Great honor will come to those who destroy you and your future,  
 by smashing your infants against the rubble of your own destruction.

## 138 THE DIVINE PRESENCE

*By King David*

<sup>1</sup>I thank you, Lord, and with all the passion of my heart  
 I worship you in the presence of angels!<sup>b</sup>

Heaven’s mighty ones will hear my voice  
 as I sing my loving praise to you.  
<sup>2</sup>I bow down before your divine presence  
 and bring you my deepest worship  
 as I experience your tender love and your living truth.  
 For your Word and the fame of your name  
 have been magnified above all else!<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>3</sup>At the very moment I called out to you, you answered me!  
 You strengthened me deep within my soul  
 and breathed fresh courage into me.  
<sup>4</sup>One day all the kings of the earth will rise to give you thanks when they hear the living words that I have heard you speak.  
<sup>5</sup>They too will sing of your wonderful ways,  
 for your ineffable glory is great!  
<sup>6</sup>For though you are lofty and exalted,  
 you stoop to embrace the lowly.  
 Yet you keep your distance from those filled with pride.  
<sup>7</sup>By your mighty power I can walk through any devastation,  
 and you will keep me alive, reviving me.  
 Your power set me free from the hatred of my enemies.  
<sup>8</sup>You keep every promise you’ve ever made to me!

a 137:7 The Hebrew text reads “Strip her [Jerusalem] naked!”

b 138:1 Or “gods.” The Hebrew *elohim* is literally “mighty ones” and can refer to either angels or the gods of the heathen.

c 138:2 Or “You have exalted your Word above all your name.”

Since your love for me is constant  
and endless,  
I ask you, Lord, to finish every  
good thing that you've begun in  
me!

## 139 YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT ME

*For the Pure and Shining One  
King David's poetic song*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, you know everything there is to  
know about me.

<sup>2</sup>You perceive every movement of my  
heart and soul,  
and you understand my every  
thought before it even enters my  
mind.

<sup>3-4</sup>You are so intimately aware of me,  
Lord.

You read my heart like an open book  
and you know all the words I'm  
about to speak

before I even start a sentence!

You know every step I will take  
before my journey even begins.

<sup>5</sup>You've gone into my future to pre-  
pare the way,  
and in kindness you follow behind  
me

to spare me from the harm of my  
past.<sup>a</sup>

You have laid your hand on me!

<sup>6</sup>This is just too wonderful, deep, and  
incomprehensible!

Your understanding of me brings me  
wonder and strength.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Where could I go from your Spirit?

Where could I run and hide from  
your face?

<sup>8</sup>If I go up to heaven, you're there!

If I go down to the realm of the  
dead, you're there too!

<sup>9</sup>If I fly with wings into the shining  
dawn, you're there!

If I fly into the radiant sunset,<sup>c</sup> you're  
there waiting!

<sup>10</sup>Wherever I go, your hand will guide  
me;

your strength will empower me.

<sup>11</sup>It's impossible to disappear from  
you

or to ask the darkness to hide me,  
for your presence is everywhere,  
bringing light into my night.

<sup>12</sup>There is no such thing as darkness  
with you.

The night, to you, is as bright as the  
day;

there's no difference between the  
two.

<sup>13</sup>You formed my innermost being,  
shaping my delicate inside  
and my intricate outside,  
and wove them all together in my  
mother's womb.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>14</sup>I thank you, God, for making me so  
mysteriously complex!

Everything you do is marvelously  
breathtaking.

It simply amazes me to think about  
it!

How thoroughly you know me,  
Lord!

a 139:5 Or "You hem me in [lit. "besiege me"] before and behind." The implication is that God protects the psalmist from what may come in the future and what has happened in the past.

b 139:6 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew reads "too high to understand."

c 139:9 Implied in the Hebrew, which reads "the remote parts of the sea" or "beyond the horizon to the west." The sea is west of Israel.

d 139:13 The Hebrew word for "knit" or "wove" can also be translated "covered" or "defended." God places an eternal spirit inside the conceived child within the womb of a mother and covers that life, sends the child a guardian angel, and watches over him or her.

<sup>15</sup>You even formed every bone in my body  
 when you created me in the secret place;<sup>a</sup>  
 carefully, skillfully you shaped me<sup>b</sup>  
 from nothing to something.  
<sup>16</sup>You saw who you created me to be  
 before I became me!<sup>c</sup>  
*Before I'd ever seen the light of day,*  
 the number of days you planned for me  
 were already recorded in your book.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>17-18</sup>Every single moment you are  
 thinking of me!  
 How precious and wonderful to consider  
 that you cherish me constantly in  
 your every thought!  
 O God, your desires toward me are  
 more  
 than the grains of sand on every  
 shore!  
 When I awake each morning, you're  
 still with me.  
<sup>19</sup>O God, come and slay these blood-  
 thirsty, murderous men!  
 For I cry out, "Depart from me, you  
 wicked ones!"  
<sup>20</sup>See how they blaspheme your  
 sacred name  
 and lift up themselves against you,  
 but all in vain!  
<sup>21</sup>Lord, can't you see how I despise  
 those who despise you?  
 For I grieve when I see them rise up  
 against you.  
<sup>22</sup>I have nothing but complete hatred  
 and disgust for them.  
 Your enemies shall be my enemies!  
<sup>23</sup>God, I invite your searching gaze  
 into my heart.  
 Examine me through and through;

find out everything that may be  
 hidden within me.  
 Put me to the test and sift through  
 all my anxious cares.  
<sup>24</sup>See if there is any path of pain I'm  
 walking on,  
 and lead me back to your glorious,  
 everlasting way—  
 the path that brings me back to you.

## 140 A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

*For the Pure and Shining One  
 King David's poetic song*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, protect me from this evil one!  
 Rescue me from these violent  
 schemes!

<sup>2</sup>He concocts his secret strategy to  
 divide and harm others,  
 stirring up trouble one against  
 another.

<sup>3</sup>They are known for their sharp  
 rhetoric  
 of poisonous, hateful words.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>4</sup>Keep me safe, Lord, out of reach  
 from these wicked and violent men,  
 and guard me, God, for they have  
 plotted an evil scheme  
 to ruin me and bring me down.

<sup>5</sup>They are proud and insolent; they've  
 set an ambush for me in secret.  
 They are determined to snare me in  
 their net like captured prey.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>6-7</sup>O Lord, you are my God and my  
 saving strength!  
 My Hero-God, you wrap yourself  
 around me to protect me.

a 139:15 The Hebrew text is literally "the depths of the earth."

b 139:15 Or "embroidered me."

c 139:16 The Hebrew could be translated "as an embryo."

d 139:16 See Ps. 69:28.

For I'm surrounded by your presence  
in my day of battle.  
Lord Yahweh, hear my cry.  
May my voice move your heart to  
show me mercy.

<sup>8</sup>Don't let the wicked triumph over  
me,  
but bring down their every strategy  
to subdue me  
or they will become even more  
arrogant!

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>9</sup>Those who surround me are nothing  
but proud troublemakers.  
May they drink the poison of their  
own poisonous words.

<sup>10-11</sup>May their slanderous lives never  
prosper!  
Let evil itself hunt them down and  
pursue them relentlessly  
until they are thrown into fiery pits  
from which they will never get out!  
Let burning coals of hellfire fall  
upon their heads!

<sup>12</sup>For I know, Lord, that you will be  
the hero  
of all those they persecute,  
and you will secure justice for the  
poor.

<sup>13</sup>Your godly ones will thank you no  
matter what happens.  
For they choose and cherish your  
presence  
above everything else!

## 141 AN EVENING PRAYER

*King David's poetic song*

<sup>1</sup>Please, Lord, come close and come  
quickly to help me!

Listen to my prayer as I call out to  
you.

<sup>2</sup>Let my prayer be as the evening  
sacrifice  
that burns like fragrant incense,  
rising as my offering to you  
as I lift up my hands in surrendered  
worship!

<sup>3</sup>God, give me grace to guard my  
lips<sup>a</sup>  
from speaking what is wrong.

<sup>4</sup>Guide me away from temptation and  
doing evil.

Save me from sinful habits and from  
keeping company  
with those who are experts in evil.  
Help me not to share in their sin in  
any way!

<sup>5</sup>When one of your godly ones cor-  
rects me  
or one of your faithful ones rebukes  
me,  
I will accept it like an honor I cannot  
refuse.

It will be as healing medicine that I  
swallow  
without an offended heart.  
Even if they are mistaken, I will  
continue to pray.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>6</sup>When the leaders and judges are  
condemned,  
falling upon the rocks of justice,<sup>c</sup>  
then they'll know my words to them  
were true!

<sup>7</sup>Like an earthquake splits open the  
earth,  
so the world of hell will open its  
mouth  
to swallow their scattered bones.

<sup>8</sup>But you are my Lord and my God; I  
only have eyes for you!

<sup>a</sup> 141:3 The Septuagint reads "Set a fortress door before my lips."

<sup>b</sup> 141:5 This is one of most difficult verses to translate, with scholars divided over the meaning of the Hebrew text. Another translation could be "Don't let the oil of the wicked anoint my head, for I pray continually against their wickedness."

<sup>c</sup> 141:6 See 2 Chron. 25:12.



I hide myself in you, so don't leave me defenseless.

<sup>9</sup>Protect me! Keep me from the traps of wickedness they set for me.

<sup>10</sup>Let them all stumble into their own traps while I escape without a scratch!

## 142 MY ONLY HOPE

*King David's poetic song of instruction*

*A prayer when he was confined in a cave*

<sup>1</sup>God, I'm crying out to you!

I lift up my voice boldly to beg for your mercy.

<sup>2</sup>I spill out my heart to you and tell you all my troubles.

<sup>3</sup>For when I was desperate, overwhelmed, and about to give up, you were the only one there to help. You gave me a way of escape from the hidden traps of my enemies.

<sup>4</sup>I look to my left and right to see if there is anyone who will help, but there's no one who takes notice of me.

I have no hope of escape, and no one cares whether I live or die.

<sup>5</sup>So I cried out to you, Lord, my only hiding place.

You're all I have, my only hope in this life, my last chance for help.

<sup>6</sup>Please listen to my heart's cry, for I am low and in desperate need of you!

Rescue me from all those who persecute me, for I am no match for them.

<sup>7</sup>Bring me out of this dungeon so I can declare your praise!

And all the righteous will celebrate

all the wonderful things you've done for me!

## 143 MY HUMBLE PRAYER

*King David's poetic song when he was chased by Absalom<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, you must hear my prayer, for you are faithful to your promises. Answer my cry, O righteous God!

<sup>2</sup>Don't bring me into your courtroom for judgment, for there is no one who is righteous before you.

<sup>3</sup>My enemies have chased and caught me and crushed my life into dust. Now I'm living in the darkness of death's shadow.

<sup>4</sup>My inner being is in depression and my heart is heavy, dazed with despair.

<sup>5</sup>I remember the glorious miracles of days gone by, and I often think of all the wonders of old.

<sup>6</sup>Now I'm reaching out to you, thirsting for you like the dry, cracked ground thirsts for rain.

*Pause in his presence*

<sup>7</sup>Lord, come quickly and answer me, for my depression deepens and I'm about to give up.

Don't leave me now or I'll die!

<sup>8</sup>Let the dawning day bring me revelation of your tender, unfailing love. Give me light for my path and teach me, for I trust in you.

<sup>9</sup>Save me from all my enemies, for I hide myself in you.

<sup>10</sup>I just want to obey all you ask of me.

<sup>a</sup> 143 As translated from the Septuagint.



So teach me, Lord, for you are my God.  
Your gracious Spirit is all I need, so  
lead me on good paths  
that are pleasing to you, my one and  
only God!

<sup>11</sup>Lord, if you rescue me, it will bring  
you more glory,  
for you are true to your promises.  
Bring me out of these troubles!

<sup>12</sup>Since I am your loving servant,  
destroy all those  
who are trying to harm me.  
And because you are so loving and  
kind to me,  
silence all of my enemies!

## 144 RESCUE ME

*King David's poetic song as he  
stood before Goliath<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>There is only one strong, safe, and  
secure place for me;  
it's in God alone who gives me  
strength for the battle.

<sup>2</sup>He's my shelter of love and my for-  
tress of faith,  
who wraps himself around me as a  
secure shield.  
I hide myself in this one who sub-  
dues enemies before me.

<sup>3</sup>Lord, what is it about us that you  
would even notice us?  
Why do you even bother with us?

<sup>4</sup>For man is nothing but a faint whis-  
per, a mere breath.  
We spend our days like nothing  
more than a passing shadow.

<sup>5</sup>Step down from heaven, Lord, and  
come down!  
Make the mountains melt at your  
touch.

<sup>6</sup>Loose your fiery lightning flashes  
and scatter your enemies.

Overthrow them with your terrifying  
judgments.

<sup>7</sup>Reach down from your heavens  
and rescue me from this hell  
and deliver me from these dark  
powers.

<sup>8</sup>They speak nothing but lies; their  
words are pure deceit.  
Nothing they say can ever be  
trusted.

<sup>9</sup>My God, I will sing you a brand-new  
song!

The harp inside my heart will make  
music to you!

<sup>10</sup>I will sing of you, the one who gives  
victory to kings—  
the one who rescues David, your  
loving servant,  
from the fatal sword.

<sup>11</sup>Deliver me and save me from these  
dark powers  
who speak nothing but lies.  
Their words are pure deceit,  
and you can't trust anything they  
say.

<sup>12</sup>Deliver us! Then our homes will be  
happy.  
Our sons will grow up as strong,  
sturdy men  
and our daughters with graceful  
beauty,  
royally fashioned as for a palace.  
<sup>13-14</sup>Our barns will be filled to the brim,  
overflowing with the fruits of our  
harvest.

Our fields will be full of sheep and  
cattle,  
too many to count,  
and our livestock will not miscarry  
their young.  
Our enemies will not invade our  
land,  
and there'll be no breach in our  
walls.

<sup>a</sup> 144 As translated from the Septuagint. Put yourself in David's place as he faced a giant named Goliath. Imagine how he felt as you read through this psalm.

<sup>15</sup>What bliss we experience when  
these blessings fall!  
The people who love and serve our  
God will be happy indeed!

# 145

## GOD'S GREATNESS

*King David's poetic song of praise*

<sup>1</sup>My heart explodes with praise to you!  
Now and forever my heart bows in  
worship to you,  
my King and my God!

<sup>2</sup>Every day I will lift up my praise to  
your name  
with praises that will last throughout  
eternity.

<sup>3</sup>Lord, you are great and worthy of the  
highest praise!  
For there is no end to the discovery  
of the greatness that surrounds you.

<sup>4</sup>Generation after generation will  
declare more of your greatness  
and declare more of your glory.

<sup>5</sup>Your magnificent splendor and the  
miracles of your majesty  
are my constant meditation.

<sup>6</sup>Your awe-inspiring acts of power  
have everyone talking!  
I'm telling people everywhere about  
your excellent greatness!

<sup>7</sup>Our hearts bubble over as we cele-  
brate the fame  
of your marvelous beauty, *bringing  
bliss to our hearts.*  
We shout with ecstatic joy over your  
breakthrough for us.

<sup>8</sup>You're kind and tenderhearted to  
those who don't deserve it  
and very patient with people who  
fail you.  
Your love is like a flooding river  
overflowing its banks with  
kindness.

<sup>9</sup>God, everyone sees your goodness,  
for your tender love is blended into  
everything you do.

<sup>10</sup>Everything you have made will  
praise you, fulfilling its purpose.  
And all your godly ones will be  
found bowing before you.

<sup>11</sup>They will tell the world of the lavish  
splendor of your kingdom  
and preach about your limitless  
power.

<sup>12</sup>They will demonstrate for all to see  
your miracles of might  
and reveal the glorious majesty of  
your kingdom.

<sup>13</sup>You are the Lord who reigns over  
your never-ending kingdom  
through all the ages of time and  
eternity!

You are faithful to fulfill every prom-  
ise you've made.  
You manifest yourself as kindness in  
all you do.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Weak and feeble ones you will  
sustain.  
Those bent over with burdens of  
shame you will lift up.

<sup>15</sup>You have captured our attention  
and the eyes of all look to you.  
You give what they hunger for at  
just the right time.

<sup>16</sup>When you open your generous  
hand, it's full of blessings,  
satisfying the longings of every  
living thing.

<sup>17</sup>You are fair and righteous in every-  
thing you do,  
and your love is wrapped into all  
your works.

<sup>18</sup>You draw near to those who call out  
to you,  
listening closely, especially when  
their hearts are true.

<sup>a</sup> 145:13 The last two lines of this verse are only found in one reliable Hebrew manuscript and in the Septuagint. It could also be translated "All your works are very holy."

<sup>19</sup>Every godly one receives  
even more than what they ask for.  
For you hear what their hearts really  
long for,  
and you bring them your saving  
strength.

<sup>20</sup>God, you watch carefully over  
all your devoted lovers like a  
bodyguard,  
but you will destroy the ungodly.

<sup>21</sup>I will praise you, Lord!  
Let everyone everywhere join me in  
praising  
the beautiful Lord of holiness from  
now through eternity!

## 146 OUR TRUE HELP

*A poetic psalm by Haggai and  
Zechariah<sup>a</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!  
My innermost being will praise you,  
Lord!

<sup>2</sup>I will spend my life praising you  
and  
singing high praises to you, my God,  
every day of my life!

<sup>3-4</sup>We can never look to men for  
help;  
no matter who they are, they can't  
save us,  
for even our great leaders fail and  
fall.

They too are just mortals who will  
one day die.  
At death the spirits of all depart and  
their bodies return to dust.

In the day of their death all their  
projects and plans are over.

<sup>5</sup>But those who hope in the Lord will  
be happy and pleased!

Our help comes from the God of  
Jacob!

<sup>6</sup>You keep all your promises.  
You are the Creator of heaven's glory,  
earth's grandeur, and the ocean's  
greatness.

<sup>7</sup>The oppressed get justice with you.  
The hungry are satisfied with you.  
Prisoners find their freedom with  
you.

<sup>8</sup>You open the eyes of the blind,  
and you fully restore those bent over  
with shame.  
You love those who love and honor  
you.

<sup>9</sup>You watch over strangers and  
immigrants  
and support the fatherless and  
widows.  
But you subvert the plans of the  
ungodly.

<sup>10</sup>Lord, you will reign forever!  
Zion's God will rule throughout time  
and eternity!  
Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

## 147 OUR AMAZING GOD

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!  
How beautiful it is when we sing our  
praises to the beautiful God,  
for praise makes you lovely before  
him  
and brings him great delight!

<sup>2</sup>Yahweh builds up Jerusalem;  
he gathers up the outcasts and  
brings them home.

<sup>3</sup>He heals the wounds of every shat-  
tered heart.

<sup>4</sup>He sets his stars in place, calling  
them all by their names.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 146 As translated from the Septuagint. Pss. 146–150 are called “Hallelujah Psalms” because they all begin in Hebrew with the words “Hallelujah, praise the Lord.”

<sup>b</sup> 147:4 See Job 9:9; 38:31–33; Isa. 40:26; Amos 5:8.

<sup>5</sup>How great is our God!

There's absolutely nothing his power  
cannot accomplish,  
and he has infinite understanding of  
everything.

<sup>6</sup>Yahweh supports and strengthens  
the humble,  
but the ungodly will be brought  
down to the dust.

<sup>7</sup>Sing out with songs of thanksgiving  
to the Lord!  
Let's sing our praises with melodies  
overflowing!

<sup>8</sup>He fills the sky with clouds, sending  
showers to water the earth  
so that the grass springs up on the  
mountain fields  
and the earth produces food for  
man.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>9</sup>All the birds and beasts who cry with  
hunger to him  
are fed from his hands.

<sup>10</sup>His people don't find security in  
strong horses,  
for horsepower is nothing to him.  
Manpower is even less  
impressive!

<sup>11</sup>Yahweh shows favor to<sup>b</sup> those who  
fear him,  
those who wait for his tender  
embrace.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Jerusalem, praise the Lord! Zion,  
worship your God!

<sup>13</sup>For he has strengthened the  
authority of your gates.  
He even blesses you with more  
children.

<sup>14</sup>He's the one who brings peace to  
your borders,<sup>d</sup>

feeding you the most excellent of  
fare.

<sup>15</sup>He sends out his orders throughout  
the world;  
his words run as swift messengers,  
bringing them to pass.

<sup>16</sup>He blankets the earth with glistening  
snow,  
painting the landscape with frost.

<sup>17</sup>Sleet and hail fall from the sky,  
causing waters to freeze before win-  
ter's icy blast.

<sup>18</sup>Then he speaks his word and it all  
melts away;  
as the warm spring winds blow, the  
streams begin to flow.

<sup>19</sup>In the same way, he speaks his word  
to Jacob,  
and to Israel he brings his life-giving  
instruction.

<sup>20</sup>He has dealt with Israel differently  
than with any other people,  
for they have received his laws.  
Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

## 148 THE COSMIC CHORUS OF PRAISE

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Let the  
skies be filled with praise  
and the highest heavens with the  
shouts of glory!

<sup>2</sup>Go ahead—praise him, all you his  
messengers!  
Praise him some more, all you heav-  
enly hosts!

<sup>3</sup>Keep it up, sun and moon!  
Don't stop now, all you twinkling  
stars of light!

<sup>a</sup> 147:8 As translated from the Septuagint.

<sup>b</sup> 147:11 Or "takes pleasure in," "delights in," "sets his affection on," "enjoys," "finds pleasing," "is satisfied with."

<sup>c</sup> 147:11 Or "who wait for his loyal, unfailing love."

<sup>d</sup> 147:14 The Septuagint reads "He makes peace your borders."

<sup>4</sup>Take it up even higher—up to the highest heavens,  
until the cosmic chorus thunders his praise!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Let the entire universe erupt with praise to God.

He spoke and created it all—from nothing to something.

<sup>6</sup>He established the cosmos to last forever,  
and he stands behind his commands  
so his orders will never be revoked.

<sup>7</sup>Let the earth join in with this parade of praise!

You mighty creatures of the ocean's depths,  
echo in exaltation!

<sup>8</sup>Lightning, hail, snow, clouds,  
and the stormy winds that fulfill his word—

<sup>9</sup>bring your melody, O mountains and hills;  
trees of the forest and field, harmonize your praise!

<sup>10–12</sup>Praise him, all beasts and birds,  
mice and men,  
kings, queens, princes, and princesses,  
young men and maidens, children and babes,  
old and young alike, everyone everywhere!

<sup>13</sup>Let them all join in with this orchestra of praise.

For the name of the Lord is the only name we raise!

His stunning splendor ascends  
higher than the heavens.

<sup>14</sup>He anoints his people with strength and authority,  
showing his great favor to all his godly lovers,

even to his princely people, Israel,  
who are so close to his heart.  
Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

## 149 TRIUMPHANT PRAISE

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

It's time to sing to God a brand-new song<sup>b</sup>

so that all his holy people will hear  
how wonderful he is!

<sup>2</sup>May Israel be enthused with joy  
because of him,  
and may the sons of Zion pour out  
their joyful praises to their King.

<sup>3</sup>Break forth with dancing!  
Make music and sing God's praises  
with the rhythm of drums!

<sup>4</sup>For he enjoys his faithful lovers.  
He adorns the humble with his  
beauty,

and he loves to give them victory.

<sup>5</sup>His godly lovers triumph in the glory of God,  
and their joyful praises will rise even  
while others sleep.

<sup>6</sup>God's high and holy praises fill their mouths,  
for their shouted praises are their  
weapons of war!

<sup>7</sup>These warring weapons will bring  
vengeance  
on the nations and every resistant  
power—

<sup>8</sup>to bind kings with chains and rulers  
with iron shackles.

<sup>9</sup>Praise-filled warriors will enforce  
the judgment decreed against their  
enemies.

This is the honor he gives to all his  
godly lovers.

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

<sup>a</sup> 148:4 Poetic implication in the text. The literal Hebrew reads "[Praise him] you waters above the sky."

<sup>b</sup> 149:1 Or "a spontaneous song."



# 150 THE HALLELUJAH CHORUS

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Praise  
 God in his holy sanctuary!  
 Praise him in his stronghold in the  
 sky!  
<sup>2</sup>Praise him for his mighty miracles!  
 Praise him for his magnificent  
 greatness!  
<sup>3</sup>Praise him with trumpets blasting!

Praise him with piano and guitar!  
<sup>4-5</sup>Praise him with drums<sup>a</sup> and  
 dancing!  
 Praise him with loud clashing of  
 cymbals!  
 Praise him upon the high-sounding  
 cymbals!  
<sup>6</sup>Let everyone everywhere join in the  
 crescendo  
 of ecstatic praise to Yahweh!  
 Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

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<sup>a</sup> 150:4–5 Or “tambourines.”





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# PROVERBS

## Introduction

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### AT A GLANCE

*Author:* Mostly Solomon, king of Israel, but other contributors too

*Audience:* Originally Israel, but these words of wisdom are for everyone—they are written to you

*Date:* Preexile (chs. 10–29) and Postexile (chs. 1–9; 30–31), the tenth to fifth centuries BC

*Type of Literature:* Poetry and wisdom literature

*Major Themes:* The fear of the Lord; God's transcendence and immanence; godly wisdom and human foolishness; the righteous and wicked wealth and poverty; men and women; husbands and wives; Jesus and wisdom

*Outline:*

Collection I: Introduction to Wisdom — 1:1–9:18

Collection II: Sayings of Solomon, Part 1 — 10:1–22:16

Collection III: Sayings of the Wise — 22:17–24:22

Collection IV: More Sayings of the Wise — 24:23–34

Collection V: Sayings of Solomon, Part 2 — 25:1–29:27

Collection VI: Sayings of Agur and Lemuel — 30:1–31:31

### ABOUT PROVERBS

The Bible is a book of poetry, not simply starched, stiff doctrines devoid of passion. The Bible, including Proverbs, is full of poetic beauty and subtle nuances ripe with meaning. The ancient wisdom of God fills its pages!

Proverbs is a book of wisdom from above tucked inside metaphors, symbols, and poetic imagery. God could properly be described as the divine poet and master artisan who crafted the cosmos to portray his glory and has given us his written Word to reveal his wisdom. Inspired from eternity, the sixty-six books of our Bible convey the full counsel and wisdom of God. Do you need wisdom? God has a verse for that!

Five books of divine poetry show us the reality of knowing God through experience, not just through history or doctrines. Job points us to the end of our self-life to discover the greatest revelation of the Lord, which is his tender love and wisdom. Psalms reveals the new life we enter into with God, expressed through praise and prayer. Next is Proverbs, where we enroll in the divine seminary of wisdom and revelation to learn the ways of God. Ecclesiastes teaches us to set

our hearts not on the things of this life but on those values that endure eternally. And finally, in Song of Songs, the sweetest lyrics ever composed lead us into divine romance where we are immersed in Jesus' love for his bride.

The nature of Hebrew poetry is quite different from that of English poetry. There is a pleasure found in Hebrew poetry that transcends rhyme and meter. The Hebrew verses come in a poetic package, a form of meaning that imparts an understanding that is deeper than mere logic. True revelation unfolds an encounter—an experience of knowing God as he is revealed through the mysterious vocabulary of riddle, proverb, and parable.

For example, the Hebrew word for “proverb,” *mashal*, has two meanings. The first is “parable, byword, metaphor, a pithy saying that expresses wisdom.” But the second meaning is overlooked by many. The homonym *mashal* can also mean “to rule, to take dominion” or “to reign with power.”

What you have before you now is a dynamic translation of the ancient book of Proverbs. These powerful words will bring you revelation from the throne room—the wisdom you need to guide your steps and direct your life. What you learn from these verses will change your life and launch you into your destiny.

### PURPOSE

Within this divinely anointed compilation of proverbs there is a deep well of wisdom to reign in our lives and to succeed in our destiny. The wisdom that God has designed for us to receive will cause us to excel—to rise up as rulers-to-be on earth for his glory. The kingdom of God is brought into the earth as we implement the godly wisdom of Proverbs.

Although the book of Proverbs can be interpreted in its most literal and practical sense, the wisdom contained herein is not unlocked by a casual surface reading. The Spirit of revelation has breathed upon every verse to embed a deeper meaning of practical insight to guide our steps into the lives God meant for us to live.

### AUTHOR AND AUDIENCE

You're about to read the greatest book of wisdom ever written, mostly penned by the wisest man to ever live. God gave Solomon this wisdom to pass along to us, God's servants, who continue the ministry of Jesus, the embodiment of wisdom, until he returns in full glory. While Solomon penned most of these words of wisdom, it is believed others had a hand too, including advisers to King Hezekiah and the unknown men Agur and Lemuel—which could be pseudonyms for Solomon. Regardless, the one who edited the final version of Proverbs brought together the wisest teachings from the wisest person to ever live to write a book containing some of the deepest revelation in the Bible. When Solomon pens a proverb, there is more than meets the eye!

To whom are these proverbs written? This compilation of wisdom's words is written to you! Throughout the book we find words like “Listen, my sons. Listen, my daughters.” The book of Proverbs is written to us as sons and daughters of the living God. The teaching we receive is not from a distant god who tells us we'd better live right or else. These are personal words of love and tenderness

from our wise Father, the Father of eternity, who speaks right into our hearts with healing, radiant words. Receive deeply the words of the kind Father of heaven as though he were speaking directly to you.

### MAJOR THEMES

The wisdom found in Proverbs is about the art of successful living. The appeal of these insights is that they touch on universal problems and issues that affect human behavior in us all. Several major themes are present in these godly sayings of God's servant Solomon:

**Lady Wisdom, Revelation-Knowledge, Living-Understanding.** Throughout Proverbs wisdom is personified with the metaphor of Lady Wisdom, who dispenses revelation-knowledge and living-understanding. Lady Wisdom is a figure of speech for God, whose divine wisdom invites us to receive the best way to live, the excellent and noble way of life. Wisdom is personified as a guide (6:22), a beloved sister or bride (7:4), and a hostess who generously invites people to “come and dine at my table and drink of my wine” (9:1–6). In Proverbs, wisdom is inseparable from knowledge and understanding, which is not received independent of God's revelation. We are invited to “come to the one who has living-understanding” (9:10) in order to receive what Lady Wisdom has to offer. God promises that revelation-knowledge will flow to the one who hungers for the gift of understanding (14:6).

**The Fear of the Lord.** From the beginning, in 1:7, Proverbs makes it clear that we “gain the essence of wisdom” and “cross the threshold of true knowledge” only when we fear the Lord—or, as The Passion Translation reads, we live “in obedient devotion to God.” Living in a way that our entire being worships and adores God is a constant theme throughout Proverbs.

**God's Transcendence and Immanence.** Proverbs teaches that God is both the author of (transcendent) and actor within (immanent) our human story. First, God is above and outside the world: as Creator “he broke open the hidden fountains of the deep, bringing secret springs to the surface” (3:20); “God sees everything you do and his eyes are wide open as he observes every single habit you have” (5:21); he is sovereign and steers “a king's heart for his purposes” as easily as he directs “the course of a stream” (21:1).

Second, God is a part of and involved with the world: “The rich and the poor have one thing in common: the Lord God created each one” (22:2); “the Lord champions the widow's cause” (15:25); he “will rise to plead [the poor's] case” (22:23).

Proverbs teaches that God is all-powerful and transcendent while also taking part in our human story as our defender and protector.

**Wise and Fool, Righteous and Wicked.** Solomon believed there are basically two kinds of people in the world: the wise righteous and the wicked fools. The wise person possesses God's revelation-knowledge and living-understanding. Therefore, he is prudent, shrewd, insightful, and does what is right because he is righteous, a God-lover. This lover of God is just, peaceful, upright, blameless, good, trustworthy, and kind.

The wicked fool is different. He is greedy, violent, deceitful, cruel, and he speaks perversely. It's no wonder “the Lord detests the lifestyle of the wicked”

(15:9)! As a foolish person, he is described as being gullible, an idiot, self-sufficient, a mocker, lazy, senseless, and one who rejects revelation-knowledge and living-understanding.

Many of Solomon's wise sayings relate to these two kinds of people, teaching us how to avoid being a wicked fool and instead live as God intends us to live, as his wise, righteous lovers.

***Wealth and Poverty.*** As with many of Solomon's wise sayings, we cannot take one thought on wealth and poverty and apply it to every situation. Instead, Solomon teaches us seven major things about having wealth and being poor, and how wisdom and foolishness affect them both: the righteous are blessed with wealth by God himself; foolishness leads to poverty; fools who have wealth will soon lose it; poverty results from injustice and oppression; the wealthy are called to be generous with their wealth; gaining wisdom is far better than gaining wealth; and the value of wealth is limited.

***Jesus and the Church.*** As with the rest of the Old Testament, we are called to read Proverbs in light of Jesus and his ministry. Throughout the gospels Jesus associates himself with wisdom. For instance, in Matt. 11:18–19 Jesus claims his actions represent Lady Wisdom herself. Where he is identified with Lady Wisdom in the New Testament, it is a powerful way of saying that Jesus is the full, entire embodiment of wisdom. In many ways Col. 1:15–17 mirrors Prov. 8. Likewise, the preface to John's Gospel resonates with this same chapter when Jesus is associated with the Word, another personification of wisdom.

Jesus stands at the center of Scripture; he can be found throughout Scripture, not just in the New Testament. So as you read these important words of wisdom, consider how they point to the One who perfectly embodied and is our Wisdom.

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# PROVERBS

## Wisdom from Above

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### The Prologue

**1** Here are kingdom revelations,  
words to live by,  
and words of wisdom given to  
empower you to reign in life,<sup>a</sup>  
written as proverbs by Israel's King  
Solomon,<sup>b</sup> David's son.

<sup>2</sup>Within these sayings will be found  
the revelation of wisdom<sup>c</sup>  
and the impartation of spiritual  
understanding.  
Use them as keys to unlock the trea-  
sures of true knowledge.

<sup>3</sup>Those who cling to these words will  
receive discipline  
to demonstrate wisdom<sup>d</sup> in every  
relationship  
and to choose what is right and just  
and fair.

<sup>4</sup>These proverbs will give you great skill  
to teach the immature and make  
them wise,  
to give youth the understanding of  
their design and destiny.

<sup>5</sup>For the wise, these proverbs will  
make you even wiser,  
and for those with discernment,  
you will be able to acquire brilliant  
strategies for leadership.

<sup>6</sup>These kingdom revelations will  
break open your understanding  
to unveil the deeper meaning of  
parables,  
poetic riddles, and epigrams,  
and to unravel the words and enig-  
mas of the wise.

<sup>7</sup>We cross the threshold of true  
knowledge

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*a* 1:1 As stated in the introduction, the Hebrew word for "proverbs" means more than just a wise saying. It can also mean "to rule, to reign in power, to take dominion."

*b* 1:1 The name Solomon means "peaceable." There is a greater one than Solomon who gives peace to all of his followers. His name is Jesus. Solomon was the seed of David; we are the seed of Jesus Christ. Solomon had an encounter with God after asking for a discerning heart (1 Kings 3:5–14). This pleased God, so he gave Solomon wisdom, riches, and power. God is ready to impart these same things today to those who ask him. See James 1:5–8.

*c* 1:2 There are six Hebrew words translated "wisdom" in the book of Proverbs. Some of them require an entire phrase in English to convey the meaning. The word used here is *chokmah*, and it is used in Proverbs forty-two times. Forty-two is the number of months Jesus ministered and the number of generations from Abraham to Christ listed in Matt. 1.

*d* 1:3 The Hebrew word translated "wisdom" here also means "righteousness."



when we live in obedient devotion to God.<sup>a</sup>  
Stubborn know-it-alls<sup>b</sup> will never stop to do this,  
for they scorn true wisdom and knowledge.

### The Wisdom of a Father

<sup>8</sup>Pay close attention, my child, to your father's wise words  
and never forget your mother's instructions.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>9</sup>For their insight will bring you success,  
adorning you with grace-filled thoughts  
and giving you reins to guide your decisions.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>10</sup>When peer pressure compels you to go with the crowd  
and sinners invite you to join in,  
you must simply say, "No!"

<sup>11</sup>When the gang says—  
"We're going to steal and kill and get away with it.

<sup>12</sup>We'll take down the rich and rob them.  
We'll swallow them up alive  
and take what we want from whom-  
ever we want.

<sup>13</sup>Then we'll take their treasures and fill our homes with loot.

<sup>14</sup>So come on and join us.  
Take your chance with us.  
We'll divide up all we get;  
we'll each end up with big bags of cash!"—

<sup>15</sup>my son, refuse to go with them and stay far away from them.

<sup>16</sup>For crime is their way of life and bloodshed their specialty.

<sup>17</sup>To be aware of their snare is the best way of escape.

<sup>18</sup>They'll resort to murder to steal their victim's assets,  
but eventually it will be their own lives that are ambushed.

<sup>19</sup>In their ungodly disrespect for God they bring destruction on their own lives.

### Wisdom's Warning

<sup>20</sup>Wisdom's praises are sung in the streets  
and celebrated far and wide.

<sup>21</sup>Yet wisdom's song is not always heard in the halls of higher learning.

But in the hustle and bustle of everyday life

<sup>a</sup> 1:7 Many translations render this "the fear of the Lord." This means much more than the English concept of fear. It also implies submission, awe, worship, and reverence. The Hebrew word used here is found fourteen times in Proverbs. The number fourteen represents spiritual perfection. The number fourteen is mentioned three times in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:1–17). It is also the number for Passover. You will pass from darkness to wisdom's light by the "fear" of the Lord.

<sup>b</sup> 1:7 Or "foolish ones." There are three Hebrew words translated "fool" in Proverbs and another six that are related to a fool or foolish acts. A fool is described in Proverbs as one who hates true wisdom and correction, with no desire to acquire revelation knowledge.

<sup>c</sup> 1:8 Many expositors see this verse as the words of David to Solomon, yet we all must give heed to this command. The words of our Father (God) and our mother (the church, the freewoman) will bring us wisdom. See Gal. 4:21–31.

<sup>d</sup> 1:9 The Hebrew text here is literally translated "adornment for your head, chains for your neck." The head is a metaphor for our thoughts, the neck a symbol for willing obedience that guides our decisions, in contrast to being stiff-necked or proud. See Phil. 2:5–7.



its lyrics can always be heard above  
the din of the crowd.<sup>a</sup>

You will hear wisdom's warning as  
she preaches courageously  
to those who stop to listen:

<sup>22a</sup>Foolish ones, how much longer will  
you cling to your deception?<sup>b</sup>  
How much longer will you mock  
wisdom,  
you cynical scorners who fight the  
facts?

<sup>23</sup>Come back to your senses and be  
restored to reality.

Don't even think about refusing my  
rebuke!

Don't you know that I'm ready  
to pour out my spirit of wisdom  
upon you  
and bring to you the revelation of  
my words

that will make your heart wise?

<sup>24</sup>I've called to you over and over;  
still you refuse to come to me.  
I've pleaded with you again and  
again,  
yet you've turned a deaf ear to my  
voice.

<sup>25</sup>Because you have laughed at my  
counsel  
and have insisted on continuing in  
your stubbornness,

<sup>26</sup>I will laugh when your calamity  
comes  
and will turn away from you at the  
time of your disaster.  
Make a joke of my advice, will you?  
Then I'll make a joke out of you!

<sup>27</sup>When the storm clouds of terror  
gather over your head,  
when dread and distress consume you  
and your catastrophe comes like a  
hurricane,

<sup>28</sup>you will cry out to me, but I won't  
answer.

Then it will be too late to expect my  
help.

When desperation drives you to  
search for me,

I will be nowhere to be found.

<sup>29</sup>Because you have turned up your  
nose at me  
and closed your eyes to the facts  
and refused to worship me in awe—

<sup>30</sup>because you scoffed at my wise  
counsel

and laughed at my correction—  
<sup>31</sup>now you will eat the bitter fruit of  
your own ways.

You've made your own bed; now lie  
in it!

So how do you like that?

<sup>32</sup>Like an idiot you've turned away  
from me  
and chosen destruction instead.  
Your self-satisfied smugness<sup>d</sup> will  
kill you.

<sup>33</sup>But the one who always listens to  
me  
will live undisturbed in a heavenly  
peace.

Free from fear, confident and  
courageous,  
that one will rest unafraid and shel-  
tered from the storms of life."

a 1:21 Literally translated, this verse reads "Wisdom sings out in the streets and speaks her voice in the squares, crying out at the head of noisy crowds and at the entrance of the city gates." This is a parabolic statement of wisdom being heard everywhere and in every place.

b 1:22 Or "Childish ones, how long will you love your childishness?"

c 1:29 The Hebrew word used here can be translated "fear," "dread," "awe," or "worship." Nearly every translation uses the word *fear* or *reverence* while ignoring the other aspects of the Aramaic word *deklatha*. The New Testament is clear that there is no fear in love. See 1 John 4:18.

d 1:32 Or "your abundant prosperity."

# Searching for Wisdom

**2** My child, will you treasure my wisdom?

Then, and only then, will you acquire it.

And only if you accept my advice and hide it within will you succeed.

<sup>2</sup>So train your heart to listen when I speak and open your spirit wide to expand your discernment—then pass it on to your sons and daughters.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Yes, cry out for comprehension and intercede for insight.

<sup>4</sup>For if you keep seeking it like a man would seek for sterling silver, searching in hidden places for cherished treasure,

<sup>5</sup>then you will discover the fear of the Lord and find the true knowledge of God.

<sup>6</sup>Wisdom is a gift from a generous God, and every word he speaks is full of revelation and becomes a fountain of understanding within you.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>7-8</sup>For the Lord has a hidden storehouse of wisdom made accessible to his godly ones.<sup>c</sup> He becomes your personal bodyguard as you follow his ways, protecting and guarding you as you choose what is right.

<sup>9</sup>Then you will discover all that is just, proper, and fair,

and be empowered to make the right decisions as you walk into your destiny.

<sup>10</sup>When wisdom wins your heart and revelation breaks in, true pleasure enters your soul.

<sup>11</sup>If you choose to follow good counsel, divine design will watch over you and understanding will protect you from making poor choices.

<sup>12</sup>It will rescue you from evil in disguise and from those who speak duplicities.

<sup>13</sup>For they have left the paths of righteousness and walk in the ways of darkness.

<sup>14</sup>They take pleasure when evil prospers and thoroughly enjoy a lifestyle of sin.

<sup>15</sup>But they're walking on a path to nowhere, wandering away into deeper deception.

## Wisdom, the Way of the Pure

<sup>16</sup>Only wisdom can save you from the flattery

of the promiscuous woman—she's such a smooth-talking seductress!

<sup>17</sup>She left her husband and has forgotten her wedding vows.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>18</sup>You'll find her house on the road to hell,

*a* 2:2 As translated from the Septuagint.

*b* 2:6 The Septuagint adds "found in his presence."

*c* 2:7-8 Or "the righteous."

*d* 2:17 Clearly this is a warning to those who would commit adultery, but there is a deeper meaning within this text. Proverbs tells us of two women: the adulteress and the virtuous woman of Prov. 31. Both women speak a parable of two systems in the church. One is religious and alluring, tempting the young anointed ones to come to her "bed" of compromise (see Mark 7:13). The other is the holy bride, virtuous and pure, keeping her first love ("wedding vows") for Christ alone. Her "house" is the house of the Lord (see Prov. 2:18). One system brings shame and despair; the other brings favor, honor, and glory. It is wisdom that protects us from one and unites us to the other. See Jer. 50-52 and Rev. 17-18.

<sup>19</sup>and all the men who go through her doors  
will never come back to the place  
they were—  
they will find nothing but desolation  
and despair.

<sup>20</sup>Follow those who follow wisdom  
and stay on the right path.

<sup>21</sup>For all my godly lovers will enjoy  
life to the fullest  
and will inherit their destinies.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>22</sup>But the treacherous ones who love  
darkness  
will lose not only all they could have  
had,  
but even their own souls!

### The Rewards of Wisdom

**3**<sup>1-2</sup>My child, if you truly want a  
long and satisfying life,  
never forget the things that I've  
taught you.  
Follow closely every truth that I've  
given you.  
Then you will have a full, rewarding  
life.

<sup>3</sup>Hold on to loyal love and don't  
let go,  
and be faithful to all that you've  
been taught.  
Let your life be shaped by  
integrity,<sup>b</sup>  
with truth written upon your heart.

<sup>4</sup>That's how you will find favor and  
understanding  
with both God and men—  
you will gain the reputation of living  
life well.

### Wisdom's Guidance

<sup>5</sup>Trust in the Lord completely,  
and do not rely on your own opinions.  
With all your heart rely on him to  
guide you,  
and he will lead you in every deci-  
sion you make.

<sup>6</sup>Become intimate with him in what-  
ever you do,  
and he will lead you wherever you go.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Don't think for a moment that you  
know it all,<sup>d</sup>  
for wisdom comes when you adore  
him with undivided devotion  
and avoid everything that's wrong.

<sup>8</sup>Then you will find the healing  
refreshment  
your body and spirit long for.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Glorify God with all your wealth,  
honoring him with your firstfruits,  
with every increase that comes to you.

<sup>10</sup>Then every dimension of your life  
will overflow with blessings  
from an uncontainable source of  
inner joy!

### Wisdom's Correction

<sup>11</sup>My child, when the Lord God speaks  
to you,  
never take his words lightly,  
and never be upset when he corrects  
you.

<sup>12</sup>For the Father's discipline comes  
only  
from his passionate love and plea-  
sure for you.  
Even when it seems like his correc-  
tion is harsh,

a 2:21 Literally "shall dwell in the land."

b 3:3 Or "Tie my commands around your neck." The neck is a symbol of our will and conscience.

c 3:6 Or "he will cut a straight path before you."

d 3:7 We should always be willing to listen to correction and instruction.

e 3:8 Literally "healing to your navel and moistening to your bones." The blood supply for a baby in the womb comes through the navel. New cells are made in the marrow of our bones. As the navel and bones picture the life flow of our bodies, so the navel and bones are a picture of our inner being. See John 7:37-39.

it's still better than any father on earth gives to his child.

<sup>13</sup>Blessings pour over the ones who find wisdom, for they have obtained living-understanding.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>14</sup>As wisdom increases, a great treasure is imparted, greater than many bars of refined gold.

<sup>15</sup>It is a more valuable commodity than gold and gemstones,<sup>b</sup> for there is nothing you desire that could compare to her.

<sup>16</sup>Wisdom extends to you long life in one hand and wealth and promotion<sup>c</sup> in the other.

Out of her mouth flows righteousness, and her words release both law and mercy.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>17</sup>The ways of wisdom are sweet, always drawing you into the place of wholeness.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Seeking for her brings the discovery of untold blessings, for she is the healing tree of life to those who taste her fruits.<sup>f</sup>

### Wisdom's Blueprints

<sup>19</sup>The Lord laid the earth's foundations with wisdom's blueprints.

By his living-understanding all the universe came into being.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>20</sup>By his divine revelation he broke open the hidden fountains of the deep, bringing secret springs to the surface as the mist of the night dripped down from heaven.<sup>h</sup>

### Wisdom, Our Hiding Place

<sup>21</sup>My child, never drift off course from these two goals for your life:

to walk in wisdom and to discover your purpose.<sup>i</sup>

Don't ever forget how they empower you.

<sup>22</sup>For they strengthen you inside and out and inspire you to do what's right;<sup>j</sup>

you will be energized and refreshed by the healing they bring.

<sup>23</sup>They give you living hope to guide you, and not one of life's tests will cause you to stumble.

<sup>24</sup>You will sleep like a baby, safe and sound—

your rest will be sweet and secure.

<sup>25</sup>You will not be subject to terror, for it will not terrify you.

*a* 3:13 The Hebrew text here implies that wisdom gives the ability to take raw facts and draw right conclusions and meaning from them.

*b* 3:15 The Hebrew word translated here as "gemstones" can also refer to rubies, coral, or pearls.

*c* 3:16 Or "honor."

*d* 3:16 The Septuagint adds this last sentence, which is not found in the Hebrew.

*e* 3:17 The Hebrew word translated here as "wholeness" can also mean "peace" or "prosperity."

*f* 3:18 Verses 17 and 18 are recited in contemporary Torah services as the Torah scroll is returned to the ark, where it is kept.

*g* 3:19 When compared with Col. 1:16, we can see that Wisdom is used as a title in Proverbs for the Living Wisdom, Jesus Christ. See 1 Cor. 1:30.

*h* 3:20 The dew is a metaphor for the Holy Spirit, who comes from the heavens and drenches us with God's presence. See Gen. 27:28; Deut. 32:2; Judg. 6:37-40; Ps. 133:3.

*i* 3:21 Like many Hebrew words, there are various possible translations. The word translated here as "purpose" can also mean "discretion," "counsel," "meditation," or "discernment."

*j* 3:22 Or "adorn your neck." The neck is a picture of our will and conscience.

Nor will the disrespectful be able to push you aside.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>26</sup>because God is your confidence in times of crisis, keeping your heart at rest in every situation.<sup>b</sup>

### Wisdom in Relationships

<sup>27</sup>Why would you withhold payment on your debt<sup>c</sup> when you have the ability to pay? Just do it!<sup>d</sup>

<sup>28</sup>When your friend comes to ask you for a favor, why would you say, “Perhaps tomorrow,” when you have the money right there in your pocket? Help him today!

<sup>29</sup>Why would you hold a grudge<sup>e</sup> in your heart toward your neighbor who lives right next door?

<sup>30</sup>And why would you quarrel with those who have done nothing wrong to you?

Is that a chip on your shoulder?<sup>f</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Don’t act like those bullies or learn their ways.

<sup>32</sup>Every violent thug is despised by the Lord,

but every tender lover finds friendship with God

and will hear his intimate secrets.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>33</sup>The wicked walk under God’s constant curse, but the righteous walk under a stream of his blessing, for they seek to do what is right.

<sup>34</sup>If you walk with the mockers you will learn to mock, but God’s grace and favor flow to the meek.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Stubborn fools fill their lives with disgrace, but glory and honor rest upon the wise.

### A Father’s Instruction

**4** Listen to my correction, my sons, for I speak to you as your father.<sup>i</sup> Let discernment enter your heart and you will grow wise with the understanding I impart.

<sup>2</sup>My revelation-truth<sup>j</sup> is a gift to you, so remain faithful to my instruction.

<sup>3</sup>For I, too, was once the delight of my father<sup>k</sup> and cherished by my mother—their beloved<sup>l</sup> child.

<sup>4</sup>Then my father taught me, saying, “Never forget my words.

*a* 3:25 As translated from the Septuagint.

*b* 3:26 Or “keeping your foot from being caught.”

*c* 3:27 The Septuagint is “Why would you withhold from the poor [those who need it]?”

*d* 3:27 The Hebrew text here literally means “Do not withhold wealth from its owners.” See Rom. 13:7.

*e* 3:29 Or “plot evil.”

*f* 3:30 See Rom. 12:18.

*g* 3:32 See Ps. 25:14.

*h* 3:34 See James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5.

*i* 4:1 Read and study this entire chapter as though it were Jesus Christ speaking to you. He is the Father of Eternity, and we are called his sons. See Isa. 9:6–7 and Rev. 21:6–7.

*j* 4:2 Literally “Torah.”

*k* 4:3 See Matt. 17:5 and John 3:35.

*l* 4:3 Or “unique.” See Luke 1–2.



If you do everything that I teach you, you will reign in life.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>5</sup>So make wisdom your quest—search for the revelation of life’s meaning.

Don’t let what I say go in one ear and out the other.

<sup>6</sup>Stick with wisdom and she will stick to you, protecting you throughout your days.

She will rescue all those who passionately listen to her voice.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Wisdom is the most valuable commodity—so buy it! Revelation-knowledge is what you need—so invest in it!

<sup>8</sup>Wisdom will exalt you when you exalt her truth.<sup>c</sup> She will lead you to honor and favor when you live your life by her insights.

<sup>9</sup>You will be adorned with beauty and grace,<sup>d</sup> and wisdom’s glory will wrap itself around you,<sup>e</sup> making you victorious in the race.

## Two Pathways

<sup>10</sup>My son, if you will take the time to stop and listen to me and embrace what I say, you will live a long and happy life full of understanding in every way.

<sup>11</sup>I have taken you by the hand in wisdom’s ways, pointing you to the path of integrity.

<sup>12</sup>Your progress will have no limits when you come along with me, and you will never stumble as you walk along the way.

<sup>13</sup>So receive my correction<sup>f</sup> no matter how hard it is to swallow, for wisdom will snap you back into place—her words will be invigorating life to you.

<sup>14</sup>Do not detour into darkness or even set foot on that path.

<sup>15</sup>Stay away from it; don’t even go there!

<sup>16</sup>For troublemakers are restless if they are not involved in evil. They are not satisfied until they have brought someone harm.

<sup>17</sup>They feed on darkness and drink until they’re drunk on the wine of wickedness.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>18</sup>But the lovers of God walk on the highway of light,<sup>h</sup> and their way shines brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

<sup>19</sup>But the wicked walk in thick darkness, like those who travel in fog, and yet don’t have a clue why they keep stumbling!

*a* 4:4 The lessons of wisdom are meant to be passed on from parents to children.

*b* 4:6 It is not enough to acquire wisdom; we must love her and listen wholeheartedly to her instruction.

*c* 4:8 The Septuagint says, “Build a fort for wisdom and she will lift you high.”

*d* 4:9 Literally “She will place a garland of grace on your head and a crown of beauty upon you.” A garland and a crown are metaphors for what is awarded a victor in a race. See 1 Cor. 9:24–25.

*e* 4:9 Or “wisdom’s laurel of glory shielding you.”

*f* 4:13 Wisdom will correct us and adjust our hearts to discipline. We must embrace the corrections of wisdom in order to mature spiritually.

*g* 4:17 Or “violence.”

*h* 4:18 Or “the glow of sunlight.”



**Healing Words**

- <sup>20</sup>Listen carefully, my dear child, to everything that I teach you, and pay attention to all that I have to say.
- <sup>21</sup>Fill your thoughts with my words until they penetrate deep into your spirit.<sup>a</sup>
- <sup>22</sup>Then, as you unwrap my words,<sup>b</sup> they will impart true life and radiant health into the very core of your being.
- <sup>23</sup>So above all, guard the affections of your heart,<sup>c</sup> for they affect all that you are. Pay attention to the welfare of your innermost being, for from there flows the wellspring<sup>d</sup> of life.
- <sup>24</sup>Avoid dishonest speech and pretentious words. Be free from using perverse words no matter what!

**Watch Where You're Going**

- <sup>25</sup>Set your gaze on the path before you. With fixed purpose, looking straight ahead, *ignore life's distractions.*<sup>e</sup>

- <sup>26</sup>Watch where you're going! Stick to the path of truth, and the road will be safe and smooth before you.
- <sup>27</sup>Don't allow yourself to be sidetracked for even a moment or take the detour that leads to darkness.

**Avoid Promiscuity**

- 5** Listen to me, my son, for I know what I'm talking about. Listen carefully to my advice
- <sup>2</sup>so that wisdom and discernment will enter your heart, and then the words you speak will express what you've learned.
- <sup>3</sup>Remember this: The lips of a seductress<sup>f</sup> seem sweet like honey, and her smooth words are like music in your ears.
- <sup>4</sup>But I promise you this: In the end all you'll be left with is a bitter conscience.<sup>g</sup> For the sting of your sin will pierce your soul like a sword.
- <sup>5</sup>She will ruin your life, drag you down to death, and lead you straight to hell.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 4:21 See Col. 3:16.

<sup>b</sup> 4:22 Or "discover my words."

<sup>c</sup> 4:23 The Hebrew word *levav* is the most common word for "heart." It includes our thoughts, our wills, our discernment, and our affections.

<sup>d</sup> 4:23 Although most translations have "the issues of life," the Hebrew word *yasa* is actually "seasons," especially springtime. Out of your heart flow the seasons of life. It is our hearts, not our ages or circumstances, that shape the seasons of our lives. If our hearts are tender to God, we can live in perpetual springtime.

<sup>e</sup> 4:25 Implied in the text. See Heb. 12:1–2.

<sup>f</sup> 5:3 Some Jewish expositors view this "seductress" as a metaphor for heresy. She seduces, deceives, and drags to hell. For the believer, the seductress can be a picture of the false anointing of the religious spirit that attempts to seduce us, weaken our message, and rob the anointing of God from our ministries. Of course, there is also a clear and dire warning for all to stay sexually pure or face the consequences.

<sup>g</sup> 5:4 Or "conscience bitter as wormwood." See Rev. 8:10–11.

<sup>h</sup> 5:5 Or "Sheol." This is the Aramaic and Hebrew word for the place of the dead. The Greeks called it Hades. Sheol is not eternal: it will be destroyed. See Hos. 13:14 and Rev. 20:14.

<sup>6</sup>She has prevented many from considering the paths of life.  
Yes, she will take you with her where you don't want to go,  
sliding down a slippery road  
and not even realizing where the two of you will end up!

<sup>7</sup>Listen to me, young men,  
and don't forget this one thing I'm telling you—  
run away from her as fast as you can!

<sup>8</sup>Don't even go near the door of her house  
unless you want to fall into her seduction.

<sup>9</sup>In disgrace you will relinquish your honor to another,  
and all your remaining years will be squandered—  
given over to the cruel one.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Why would you let strangers take away your strength<sup>b</sup>  
while the labors of your house go to someone else?

<sup>11</sup>For when you grow old you will groan in anguish and shame<sup>c</sup>  
as sexually transmitted diseases consume your body.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>12</sup>And then finally you'll admit that you were wrong and say,

"If only I had listened to wisdom's voice  
and not stubbornly demanded my own way,  
because my heart hated to be told what to do!

<sup>13</sup>Why didn't I take seriously the warning of my wise counselors?

Why was I so stupid to think that I could get away with it?

<sup>14</sup>Now I'm totally disgraced and my life is ruined!  
I'm paying the price—  
for the people of the congregation are now my judges."<sup>e</sup>

### Sex Reserved for Marriage

<sup>15</sup>My son, share your love with your wife alone.  
Drink from her well of pleasure and from no other.

<sup>16</sup>Why would you have sex with a stranger  
or with anyone other than her?

<sup>17</sup>Reserve this pleasure for you and her alone and do not share it with another.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Your sex life will be blessed<sup>g</sup>  
as you take joy and pleasure in the wife of your youth.

<sup>19</sup>Let her breasts be your satisfaction,<sup>h</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 5:9 This would be the devil, who torments the conscience as the result of this sin.

<sup>b</sup> 5:10 Or "wealth." This could also refer to spiritual strength and wealth.

<sup>c</sup> 5:11 The Hebrew word translated here as "groan" is also used for the roar of a lion or the ocean's roar.

<sup>d</sup> 5:11 Implied in the context of the topic of sexual promiscuity. The Hebrew word here means "diseases."

<sup>e</sup> 5:14 See John 8:1–11.

<sup>f</sup> 5:17 Because of the sudden change in the Hebrew text to the masculine gender ("stranger" or "another"), there is an inference that men having sex with men is forbidden, as well as sex with a woman who is not your wife.

<sup>g</sup> 5:18 The Hebrew phrase used here includes the word *fountain*, which is an obvious metaphor for the sex act. The root word for *fountain* can also refer to the eyes. It may be a poetic subtlety that your eyes should only be on your wife, not on the nakedness of another. See v. 19.

<sup>h</sup> 5:19 The Hebrew includes a picturesque metaphor of the wife being like a "friendly deer and a favored filly."

and let her embrace<sup>a</sup> intoxicate you at all times.

Be continually delighted and ravished with her love!

<sup>20</sup>My son, why would you be exhilarated by an adulteress—by embracing a woman<sup>b</sup> who is not yours?

<sup>21</sup>For God sees everything you do and his eyes are wide open as he observes every single habit you have.

<sup>22</sup>Beware that your sins don't overtake you and that the scars of your own conscience don't become the ropes that tie you up.

<sup>23</sup>Those who choose wickedness die for lack of self-control, for their foolish ways lead them astray, carrying them away as hostages—*kidnapped captives robbed of destiny.*

### Words of Wisdom

**6** My son, if you cosign a loan for an acquaintance and guarantee his debt, you'll be sorry that you ever did it!

<sup>2</sup>You'll be trapped by your promise and legally bound by the agreement. So listen carefully to my advice:

<sup>3</sup>Quickly get out of it if you possibly can!  
Swallow your pride, get over your embarrassment,

and go tell your "friend" you want your name<sup>c</sup> off that contract.

<sup>4</sup>Don't put it off, and don't rest until you get it done.

<sup>5</sup>Rescue yourself from future pain<sup>d</sup> and be free from it once and for all.

*You'll be so relieved that you did!<sup>e</sup>*

### Life Lessons

<sup>6</sup>When you're feeling lazy, come and learn a lesson from this tale of the tiny ant.

Yes, all you lazybones, come learn from the example of the ant and enter into wisdom.

<sup>7</sup>The ants have no chief, no boss, no manager—

no one has to tell them what to do.

<sup>8</sup>You'll see them working and toiling all summer long, stockpiling their food in preparation for winter.

<sup>9</sup>So wake up, sleepyhead. How long will you lie there?

When will you wake up and get out of bed?

<sup>10</sup>If you keep nodding off and thinking, "I'll do it later,"

or say to yourself, "I'll just sit back awhile and take it easy,"

just watch how the future unfolds!

<sup>11</sup>By making excuses you'll learn what it means to go without.

Poverty will pounce on you like a bandit!<sup>f</sup>

a 5:19 The Septuagint reads "let her share conversation with you."

b 5:20 Or "breasts."

c 6:3 There is an implication in the Hebrew that the one whose loan was cosigned for is no longer a friend. The Hebrew word can also be translated "apostate."

d 6:5 The Hebrew word means "trap."

e 6:5 The life lesson to learn is that even when considering something that seems to be good, there may be unexpected consequences that should be considered before obligating yourself.

f 6:11 Or "vagabond." The Hebrew phrase here is literally translated "one who walks (away)."

and move in as your roommate for life.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>12-13</sup>Here's another life lesson to learn from observing wayward and wicked men.<sup>b</sup>

You can tell they are lawless.

They're constant liars, proud deceivers,

full of clever ploys and convincing plots.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Their twisted thoughts are perverse, and they are always scheming to stir up trouble, and sowing strife with every step they take.

<sup>15</sup>But when calamity comes knocking on their door, suddenly and without warning they're undone—broken to bits, shattered, with no hope of healing.<sup>d</sup>

### Seven Things God Hates

<sup>16</sup>There are six evils God truly hates and a seventh<sup>e</sup> that is an abomination to him:

<sup>17</sup>Putting others down while considering yourself superior,

spreading lies and rumors, spilling the blood of the innocent, <sup>18</sup>plotting evil in your heart toward another, gloating over doing what's plainly wrong,

<sup>19</sup>spouting lies in false testimony, and stirring up strife *between friends*.<sup>f</sup>

These are entirely despicable to God!

<sup>20</sup>My son, obey your father's godly instruction and follow your mother's life-giving teaching.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Fill your heart with their advice and let your life be shaped by what they've taught you.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Their wisdom will guide you wherever you go and keep you from bringing harm to yourself.

Their instruction will whisper to you at every sunrise and direct you through a brand-new day.

<sup>23</sup>For truth<sup>i</sup> is a bright beam of light shining into every area of your life,

*a* 6:11 The life lesson from Solomon's parable is this: the ant only lives six months yet stores more food than it will ever consume. We should learn the wisdom of preparing for the future and frugality in the present. Don't put off for the future the preparations you should make today. Now is always better than later. Today is the day to choose what's right and serve the Lord.

*b* 6:12-13 The Hebrew word translated "wayward and wicked man" is actually "a man of Belial." This is a metaphor for a worthless man who worships other gods. The name Belial is found in numerous Dead Sea scrolls as a term for Satan.

*c* 6:12-13 The Hebrew gives a picture of those who "wink their eyes, shuffle their feet, and point their fingers." This is a figure of speech for the devious ways of the wicked.

*d* 6:15 The life lesson here is this: the clever and devious may look like they're getting ahead in life, but their path guarantees destruction, with no one to help them out of it.

*e* 6:16 The number seven is the number of fullness and completion. The poetic form here is stating that evil in its fullness is an abomination to God. The seven things are a description of the sin of man that stands in the temple of our bodies attempting to usurp God.

*f* 6:19 The Aramaic is "deception among brothers."

*g* 6:20 For the New Testament believer, our mother is the church, who nurtures us and feeds us life-giving words. See Gal. 4:21-31.

*h* 6:21 Or "Bind their words on your heart and tie them around your neck."

*i* 6:23 Or "Torah."

instructing and correcting you to  
discover the ways to godly living.

### Truth or Consequences

- <sup>24–25</sup> Truth will protect you from  
immorality  
and from the promiscuity of another  
man's wife.  
Your heart won't be enticed by her  
flatteries<sup>a</sup>  
or lust over her beauty—  
nor will her suggestive ways con-  
quer you.
- <sup>26</sup> Prostitutes reduce a man to  
poverty,<sup>b</sup>  
and the adulteress steals your soul—  
she may even cost you your life!<sup>c</sup>
- <sup>27</sup> For how can a man light his pants  
on fire and not be burned?
- <sup>28</sup> Can he walk over hot coals of fire<sup>d</sup>  
and not blister his feet?
- <sup>29</sup> What makes you think that you can  
sleep with another man's wife  
and not get caught?  
Do you really think you'll get away  
with it?  
Don't you know it will ruin your life?
- <sup>30</sup> You can almost excuse a thief if he  
steals to feed his own family.
- <sup>31</sup> But if he's caught, he still has to pay  
back what he stole sevenfold;  
his punishment and fine will cost  
him greatly.
- <sup>32</sup> Don't be so stupid as to think  
you can get away with your adultery.  
It will destroy your life,<sup>e</sup> and you'll  
pay the price  
for the rest of your days.

<sup>33</sup> You'll discover what humiliation,  
shame,  
and disgrace are all about,  
for no one will ever let you forget  
what you've done.

<sup>34</sup> A husband's jealousy makes a man  
furious;  
he won't spare you when he comes  
to take revenge.

<sup>35</sup> Try all you want to talk your way out  
of it—  
offer him a bribe and see if you can  
manipulate him  
with your money.  
Nothing will turn him aside  
when he comes to you with ven-  
geance in his eyes!

### Wisdom, Your True Love

- 7** Stick close to my instruction, my  
son,  
and follow all my advice.
- <sup>2</sup> If you do what I say you will live well.  
Guard your life with my  
revelation-truth,  
for my teaching is as precious as  
your eyesight.<sup>f</sup>
- <sup>3</sup> Treasure my instructions, and cherish  
them within your heart.<sup>g</sup>
- <sup>4</sup> Say to wisdom, "I love you,"  
and to understanding, "You're my  
sweetheart."
- <sup>5</sup> "May the two of you protect me, and  
may we never be apart!"  
For they will keep you from the  
adulteress,  
with her smooth words meant to  
seduce your heart.

a 6:24–25 Or "Don't let her captivate you with her fluttering eyelids."

b 6:26 Or "to beg for a loaf of bread."

c 6:26 The Hebrew phrase here is literally translated "she hunts for your precious soul."

d 6:28 A picture of the lusts of the flesh.

e 6:32 Or "The destroyer of your soul will do this."

f 7:2 Or "like you would the pupil of your eye." Literally "the little man of the eye," which is a figure of speech for your most prized possession.

g 7:3 Or "Write them upon the tablets of your heart."



<sup>6</sup>Looking out the window of my house  
one day

<sup>7</sup>I noticed among the mindless crowd  
a simple, naïve young man who was  
about to go astray.

<sup>8</sup>There he was, walking down the  
street.

Then he turned the corner,  
going on his way hurrying to the  
house of the harlot—  
the woman he had planned to meet.

<sup>9</sup>There he was in the twilight as dark-  
ness fell,  
convinced no one was watching  
as he entered the black shadows of  
hell.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>10</sup>That's when their rendezvous  
began.

A woman of the night appeared,  
dressed to kill the strength of any  
man.

She was decked out as a harlot,  
pursuing her amorous plan.

<sup>11</sup>Her voice was seductive, rebellious,  
and boisterous  
as she wandered far from what's  
right.

<sup>12</sup>Her type can be found soliciting on  
street corners  
on just about any night.

<sup>13</sup>She wrapped her arms around the  
senseless young man  
and held him tight—  
she enticed him with kisses that  
seemed so right.

Then, with insolence, she whispered  
in his ear,

<sup>14</sup>"Come with me. It'll be all right.  
I've got everything we need for a  
feast.

I'll cook you a wonderful dinner.<sup>b</sup>  
So here I am—I'm all yours!

<sup>15</sup>You're the very one I've looked for,  
the one I knew I wanted from the  
moment I saw you.

That's why I've come out here  
tonight,

so I could meet a man just like you.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>16</sup>I've spread my canopy bed with  
coverings,  
lovely multicolored Egyptian linens  
ready for you to lie down on.

<sup>17</sup>I've sprinkled the sheets with intoxi-  
cating perfume  
made from myrrh, aloes, and sweet  
cinnamon.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Come, let's get comfortable and take  
pleasure in each other  
and make love all night!

<sup>19</sup>There's no one home, for my hus-  
band's away on business.

<sup>20</sup>He left home loaded with money to  
spend,  
so don't worry.

He won't be back until another  
month ends."<sup>e</sup>

<sup>21-22</sup>He was swayed by her  
sophistication,  
enticed by her longing embrace.  
She led him down the wayward path  
right into sin and disgrace.

Quickly he went astray, with no  
clue  
where he was truly headed,

<sup>a</sup> 7:9 Implied from v. 27.

<sup>b</sup> 7:14 Or "offered peace offerings and paid my vows [in the temple]." This is a way of saying, "I have lots of meat left over from the sacrifices I've offered, enough for a great meal."

<sup>c</sup> 7:15 Compared to Song. 3:1-4, this seems to be a parodic reversal of the Shulamite who goes out into the city to seek a man, and when she finds him, embraces him. This account of the harlot seems to be the converse of the theme of Song of Songs.

<sup>d</sup> 7:17 Although these spices are found in the sacred anointing oil, the adulteress (religious system) has only a false anointing with no true power.

<sup>e</sup> 7:20 Or "He left with a bag of money and won't be back until the new moon."



taken like a dumb ox alongside the butcher.

She was like a venomous snake coiled to strike, so she set her fangs into him!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>23</sup>He's like a man about to be executed with an arrow right through his heart—like a bird that flies into the net, unaware of what's about to happen.

<sup>24</sup>So listen to me, you young men. You'd better take my words seriously!

<sup>25</sup>Control your sexual urges and guard your hearts against lust. Don't let your passions get out of hand and don't lock your eyes onto a beautiful woman.

Why would you want to even get close to temptation and seduction, to have an affair with her?

<sup>26</sup>She has pierced the souls of multitudes of men—many mighty ones have fallen and have been brought down by her.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>27</sup>If you're looking for the road to hell, just go looking for her house!<sup>c</sup>

### Wisdom Calling

**8**<sup>1-3</sup>Can't you hear the voice of Wisdom?<sup>d</sup>

From the top of the mountains of influence she speaks into the gateways of the glorious city.<sup>e</sup>

At the place where pathways merge, at the entrance of every portal,

<sup>a</sup> 7:21–22 The last sentence in this verse is arguably difficult to translate, with many variant options. The Aramaic is “taken like a dog to captivity.” The Hebrew can be translated “bounding like a stag to a trap.” Other ancient Jewish commentaries refer to this portion as “rushing like a venomous snake to discipline the foolish one,” meaning that with the swiftness of a snake striking its prey, a fool lunges into his own destruction.

<sup>b</sup> 7:26 The Aramaic is even more descriptive: “She has slain a multitude of mighty ones; they’ve all been killed by her.”

<sup>c</sup> 7:27 This parable (vv. 6–27) not only warns against the obvious evils of adultery and immorality, but also serves as a warning to the anointed young men in ministry not to be seduced by the religious system. Wisdom looks from the window (revelation and insight—see Ezek. 8) of her house (the true church of Jesus) and sees a young man (not fully mature—see 1 John 2:12–14) who has placed himself in the path of sin. This made him vulnerable to the seduction of the “harlot” system of a works-based religion that enticed him into her bed (partnership, covering, and ordination with her and her system—see Rev. 17–18) covered with Egyptian linens (Egypt is a picture of the world system that holds people in bondage). She is loud and stubborn (the old self-life never dealt with) and will not remain in her house (the true church of Jesus). She lives in the darkness of compromise and her ways are the ways of death. She doesn’t remain faithful to her husband (the Bridegroom-God). The two women of Proverbs are the harlot mentioned here and the virtuous woman found in chapter 31, who speak of two systems of worship. One is true and virtuous; the other is false and seductive.

<sup>d</sup> 8:1–3 Wisdom is personified throughout the book of Proverbs. Lady Wisdom is a figure of speech for God himself, who invites us to receive the best way to live, the excellent and noble way of life found in Jesus Christ. Jesus is wisdom personified, for he was anointed with the Spirit of Wisdom. See Isa. 11:1–2; 1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:3.

<sup>e</sup> 8:1–3 As translated from the Aramaic. The church is also a gateway, the house of God, the portal to heaven, and as Jesus calls it, a “city that stands on a hilltop” (see Matt. 5:14). Christ is the head of the church, where the wisdom of God is revealed. See 1 Cor. 1 and Eph. 3:10–12.

there she stands, ready to impart understanding,  
shouting aloud to all who enter,  
preaching her sermon to those who will listen.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4a</sup>I'm calling to you, sons of Adam,  
yes, and to you daughters as well.

<sup>5</sup>Listen to me and you will be prudent  
and wise.

For even the foolish and feeble can  
receive an understanding heart  
*that will change their inner being.*

<sup>6</sup>The meaning of my words will  
release within you revelation  
for you to reign in life.<sup>b</sup>

My lyrics will empower you to live  
by what is right.

<sup>7</sup>For everything I say is unquestion-  
ably true,  
and I refuse to endure the lies of  
lawlessness—  
my words will never lead you astray.

<sup>8</sup>All the declarations of my mouth can  
be trusted;  
they contain no twisted logic or  
perversion of the truth.

<sup>9</sup>All my words are clear and straight-  
forward to everyone  
who possesses spiritual  
understanding.

If you have an open mind, you will  
receive revelation-knowledge.

<sup>10</sup>My wise correction is more valuable  
than silver or gold.

The finest gold is nothing  
compared to the  
revelation-knowledge  
I can impart.”

<sup>11</sup>Wisdom is so priceless that it  
exceeds the value of any jewel.<sup>c</sup>  
Nothing you could wish for can  
equal her.

<sup>12a</sup>For I am Wisdom, and I am shrewd  
and intelligent.  
I have at my disposal  
living-understanding  
to devise a plan for your life.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Wisdom pours into you  
when you begin to hate every form  
of evil in your life,  
for that's what worship and fearing  
God is all about.  
Then you will discover  
that your pompous pride and per-  
verse speech  
are the very ways of wickedness that  
I hate!”

### The Power of Wisdom

<sup>14</sup>“You will find true success when you  
find me,  
for I have insight into wise plans  
that are designed just for you.  
I hold in my hands living-  
understanding,<sup>e</sup> courage, and  
strength.

<sup>15</sup>I empower kings to reign and rulers  
to make laws that are just.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 8:1–3 In chapter 7 it was the harlot calling out to the simple; here it is Lady Wisdom. True wisdom is easy to find—we only have to listen to her voice. Though it comes from above, it is found on street level. Creation and conscience are two voices that speak to our hearts. To discover wisdom, we don't need a brilliant intellect but a tender, attentive heart.

<sup>b</sup> 8:6 The Hebrew word is literally translated as “princely” or “noble” things. The implication is that these words of wisdom are for ruling and reigning in life.

<sup>c</sup> 8:11 Literally “corals” or “pearls.”

<sup>d</sup> 8:12 Or “to discover clever inventions.”

<sup>e</sup> 8:14 Or “I am living-understanding.”

<sup>f</sup> 8:15 We have been made kings and priestly rulers by the grace of redemption.

- <sup>16</sup>I empower princes to rise and take dominion,  
and generous ones to govern the earth.<sup>a</sup>
- <sup>17</sup>I will show my love to those who passionately love me.<sup>b</sup>  
For they will search and search continually until they find me.
- <sup>18</sup>Unending wealth and glory come to those who discover where I dwell.  
The riches of righteousness and a long, satisfying life will be given to them.<sup>c</sup>
- <sup>19</sup>What I impart has greater worth than gold and treasure,  
and the increase I bring benefits more than a windfall of income.
- <sup>20</sup>I lead you into the ways of righteousness  
to discover the paths of true justice.
- <sup>21</sup>Those who love me gain great wealth<sup>d</sup> and a glorious inheritance,  
and I will fill their lives with treasures.”

### Wisdom in the Beginning

- <sup>22a</sup>In the beginning I was there,  
for God possessed me<sup>e</sup> even before  
he created the universe.

- <sup>23</sup>From eternity past I was set in place,  
before the world began.  
I was anointed<sup>f</sup> from the beginning.
- <sup>24</sup>Before the oceans depths were poured out,  
and before there were any glorious fountains  
overflowing with water,<sup>g</sup>  
I was there, dancing!<sup>h</sup>
- <sup>25</sup>Even before one mountain had been sculpted  
or one hill raised up,  
I was already there, dancing!
- <sup>26</sup>When he created the earth, the fields,  
even the first atom of dust,  
I was already there.
- <sup>27</sup>When he hung the tapestry of the heavens  
and stretched out the horizon of the earth,  
<sup>28</sup>when the clouds and skies were set in place  
and the subterranean fountains began to flow strong,  
I was already there.
- <sup>29</sup>When he set in place the pillars of the earth  
and spoke the decrees of the seas,

a 8:16 As translated from many Hebrew manuscripts and the Septuagint. Other Hebrew manuscripts have “and all nobles who govern justly.” The word *nobles* can also be translated “generous ones.”

b 8:17 Wisdom is not found by the halfhearted. One must love wisdom to gain it. A superficial desire will yield only a superficial knowledge.

c 8:18 Or “riches and righteousness.” The phrase “a long, satisfying life” is from the Aramaic.

d 8:21 The Aramaic is “I will leave great hope as an inheritance to my friends.”

e 8:22 The Aramaic and the Septuagint read “The Lord created me at the beginning.” The Hebrew verb translated here as “possessed” has two basic meanings. One is “acquired,” the other is “created.” Poetically, it is a statement that the existence of Wisdom (Christ) was not independent of God at creation but was manifested and possessed by God as he created all things. Otherwise, it would sound like God was without wisdom before he created it.

f 8:23 The Hebrew word translated “anointed” here literally means “poured out” and is often used to describe the anointing oil poured out over a king.

g 8:24 The Hebrew uses the word *kabad*, which means “glory,” to describe the fountains. It could also be translated “fountains of glory” or “glorious fountains.”

h 8:24 Many translations have “I was born [or brought forth].” The Hebrew word for “born” is taken from a word that means “to kick and twirl” or “to dance.”

commanding the waves  
so that they wouldn't overstep their  
boundaries,

<sup>30</sup>I was there, close to the Creator's  
side<sup>a</sup> as his master artist.<sup>b</sup>

Daily he was filled with delight in  
me

as I playfully rejoiced before him.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>31</sup>I laughed and played,  
so happy with what he had made,  
while finding my delight in the chil-  
dren of men.<sup>d</sup>

### Wisdom Worth Waiting For

<sup>32a</sup>So listen, my sons and daughters,  
to everything I tell you,  
for nothing will bring you more joy  
than following my ways.

<sup>33</sup>Listen to my counsel,  
for my instruction will enlighten you.  
You'll be wise not to ignore it.

<sup>34</sup>If you wait at wisdom's doorway,<sup>e</sup>  
longing to hear a word for every day,  
joy will break forth within you as  
you listen for what I'll say.

<sup>35</sup>For the fountain of life pours into  
you every time that you find me,  
and this is the secret of growing in  
the delight  
and the favor of the Lord.

<sup>36</sup>But those who stumble and miss me  
will be sorry they did!

For ignoring what I have to say will  
bring harm to your own soul.

Those who hate me are simply flirt-  
ing with death!<sup>f</sup>

### Wisdom's Feast

**9** Wisdom<sup>g</sup> has built herself a  
palace<sup>h</sup>  
upon seven pillars to keep it  
secure.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>2</sup>She has made ready a banquet feast  
and the sacrifice has been killed.<sup>j</sup>  
She has mingled her wine, and the  
table's all set.<sup>k</sup>

<sup>3</sup>She has sent out her maidens,  
crying out from the high place,  
inviting everyone to come  
and eat until they're full.

<sup>a</sup> 8:30 See John 1:1.

<sup>b</sup> 8:30 Or "architect."

<sup>c</sup> 8:30 The Hebrew word translated here as "rejoiced" can also be translated as "joyfully play-  
ing" or "laughing."

<sup>d</sup> 8:31 What a beautiful picture we find here of Wisdom (Christ), who finds his fulfillment in us.  
See Pss. 8:4–9; 16:3; Eph. 2:10; 19–22; Heb. 2:10.

<sup>e</sup> 8:34 Or "Guard the door of my entrances."

<sup>f</sup> 8:36 To hate wisdom is not only a sign of stupidity, but it is also a mark of depravity.

<sup>g</sup> 9:1 Lady Wisdom is a poetic personification representing Christ, the Wisdom of God (1 Cor.  
1:30). This is a classic form of a synecdoche. The Hebrew word *chokmah* ("wisdom") can also  
mean "sacred sense." It is the understanding and insight given only by God.

<sup>h</sup> 9:1 There is a fascinating word play in the Hebrew text. The verb meaning "to build" and the  
word translated "son" come from the same root. "Build" is *banah* and "son" is *ben*. The house  
Wisdom is building is a son. You and I are sons of God who are being built into a spiritual  
house. There is also a verb in the Hebrew for "hewn" (as in stones). We are living stones raised  
up to be God's temple. See Ps. 127:1; Matt. 7:24–27; 16:18; Heb. 3:5–6.

<sup>i</sup> 9:1 The seven pillars of wisdom (plural, "wisdoms") point us to the seven days of creation, the  
seven spirits of God, and the seven components of heavenly wisdom given in James 3:17–18.

<sup>j</sup> 9:2 As translated from the Aramaic. The sacrifice points us to Calvary. Wisdom's pillar is a  
cross. The Hebrew phrase here literally means "she has prepared her meat."

<sup>k</sup> 9:2 Wisdom's feast will teach us the ways of God. We feed our hearts on revelation-truth that  
transforms us; then we implement with wise strategies the understanding we have learned at  
the feasting table.

<sup>4a</sup>Whoever wants to know me and receive my wisdom,  
<sup>5</sup>come and dine at my table and drink of my wine.  
<sup>6</sup>Lay aside your simple thoughts and leave your paths behind.  
 Agree with my ways, live in my truth,  
 and you will find righteousness.”  
<sup>7</sup>If you try to correct an arrogant cynic,  
 expect an angry insult in return.  
 And if you try to confront an evil man,  
 don’t be surprised if all you get is a slap in the face!  
<sup>8</sup>So don’t even bother to correct a mocker,  
 for he’ll only hate you for it.  
 But go ahead and correct the wise;  
 they’ll love you even more.<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>9</sup>Teach a wise man what is right and he’ll grow even wiser.  
 Instruct the lovers of God and they’ll learn even more.  
<sup>10</sup>The starting point for acquiring wisdom  
 is to be consumed with awe as you worship Yahweh.  
 To receive the revelation of the Holy One,<sup>b</sup>

you must come to the one who has living-understanding.  
<sup>11</sup>Wisdom will extend your life, making every year more fruitful than the one before.  
<sup>12</sup>So it is to your advantage to be wise.  
 But to ignore the counsel of wisdom is to invite trouble into your life.<sup>c</sup>

### A Spirit Named Foolish

<sup>13</sup>There is a spirit named Foolish, who is boisterous and brash; she’s seductive and restless.  
<sup>14</sup>And there she sits at the gateway to the high places,  
 on her throne overlooking the city.  
<sup>15</sup>She preaches to all who walk by her who are clueless as to what is happening.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>16</sup>“Come home with me.”  
 She invites those who are easily led astray, saying,  
<sup>17</sup>“Illicit sex is the best sex of all. Our secret affair will be sweeter than all others.”<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>18</sup>Little do they know when they answer her call  
 that she dwells among the spirits of the dead,  
 and all her guests soon become citizens of hell!<sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 9:8 See Ps. 141:5.

<sup>b</sup> 9:10 Literally “holy ones.”

<sup>c</sup> 9:12 The Aramaic adds here “The liar feeds on the wind and chases fantasies, for he has forsaken what is true to travel in a barren wilderness; forgetting the right paths, he leaves his own vineyard to walk with thirst and gather nothing.” The Septuagint adds here “If you forsake folly you will reign forever. Seek discretion and your understanding will bring you knowledge.”

<sup>d</sup> 9:15 Or “who are walking straight ahead on their paths.”

<sup>e</sup> 9:17 The Hebrew phrase here literally means “Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” This is an obvious metaphor of finding sexual pleasure with someone other than your spouse and trying to get away with it. Finding pleasure in your relationship with your spouse is like drinking from a pure, clean fountain. But stolen water from someone else’s fountain is yielding to foolishness. Adultery is always sin.

<sup>f</sup> 9:18 Older Aramaic and Septuagint manuscripts add a verse here not found in the Hebrew: “But turn away; linger not in the place or even look at her. Don’t drink from a strange fountain. Abstain and drink not from an alien fountain, so that you will enjoy a long life.”



## Wisdom for Today

**10** The wisdom of Solomon:<sup>a</sup>  
When wisdom comes to a son,  
joy comes to a father.

When a son turns from wisdom,  
a mother grieves.

<sup>2</sup>Gaining wealth through dishonesty<sup>b</sup>  
is no gain at all.

But honesty brings you a lasting  
happiness.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>3</sup>The Lord satisfies the longings of all  
his lovers,<sup>d</sup>  
but he withholds from the wicked  
what their souls crave.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Slackers will know what it means to  
be poor,  
while the hard worker becomes  
wealthy.

<sup>5</sup>Know the importance of the season  
you're in  
and a wise son you will be.  
But what a waste when an incompe-  
tent son  
sleeps through his day of  
opportunity!<sup>f</sup>

<sup>6</sup>The lover of God is enriched beyond  
belief,  
but the evil man only curses his  
luck.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>7</sup>The reputation of the righteous  
becomes a sweet memorial to him,  
while the wicked life only leaves a  
rotten stench.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>8</sup>The heart of the wise will easily  
accept instruction.

But those who do all the talking  
are too busy to listen and learn.  
They'll just keep stumbling ahead  
into the mess they created.

<sup>9</sup>The one who walks in integrity<sup>i</sup>  
will experience a fearless confidence  
in life,  
but the one who is devious  
will eventually be exposed.

<sup>10</sup>The troublemaker always has a  
clever plan  
and won't look you in the eye,  
but the one who speaks correction  
honestly  
can be trusted to make peace.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>11</sup>The teachings of the lovers of God  
are like  
living truth flowing from the foun-  
tain of life,  
but the words of the wicked  
hide an ulterior motive.<sup>k</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Hatred keeps old quarrels alive,<sup>l</sup>  
but love draws a veil over every insult<sup>m</sup>

*a* 10:1 The title of this section starting with Prov. 10 indicates a different form. Solomon's four hundred sayings of wisdom fill this section, going through 22:16. This compilation is an assorted collection of proverbs that is not easily outlined but is profound in its scope.

*b* 10:2 Or "the treasures of wickedness."

*c* 10:2 Or "Righteousness [honesty] delivers you from death."

*d* 10:3 Or "satisfies the souls of the righteous."

*e* 10:3 The Aramaic is "the property of the evil he demolishes."

*f* 10:5 Or "To gather in the summer is to be a wise son, but to sleep through the harvest is a disgrace."

*g* 10:6 The Hebrew is ambiguous and is literally translated "the mouth of the wicked covers violence."

*h* 10:7 Some Hebrew manuscripts and the Aramaic read "the name of the wicked will be extinguished."

*i* 10:9 Or "innocence." The Aramaic is "He who walks in perfection walks in hope."

*j* 10:10 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is "the babbling fool comes to ruin."

*k* 10:11 Or "hide violence."

*l* 10:12 The Aramaic is "Hatred stirs up judgment."

*m* 10:12 Love will cover up offenses against us, but never our own offenses.



and finds a way to make sin  
disappear.

<sup>13</sup>Words of wisdom flow from the one  
with true discernment.

But to the heartless, words of  
wisdom

become like rods beating their  
backside.

<sup>14</sup>Wise men don't divulge all that they  
know,<sup>a</sup>

but chattering fools blurt out words  
that bring them to the brink of ruin.

<sup>15</sup>A rich man's wealth becomes like a  
citadel of strength,<sup>b</sup>

but the poverty of the poor leaves  
their security in shambles.

<sup>16</sup>The lovers of God earn their wages  
for a life of righteousness,  
but the wages of the wicked are  
squandered on a life of sin.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>17</sup>If you readily receive correction,  
you are walking on the path to life.  
But if you reject rebuke,  
you're guaranteed to go astray.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>18</sup>The one who hides his hatred while  
pretending to be your friend  
is nothing but a liar.

But the one who slanders you  
behind your back  
proves that he's a fool, never to be  
trusted.

<sup>19</sup>If you keep talking, it won't be long  
before you're saying something  
really wrong.

Prove you're wise from the very  
start—

just bite your tongue and be strong!

<sup>20</sup>The teachings of the godly ones are  
like pure silver,  
bringing words of redemption to  
others,<sup>e</sup>

but the heart of the wicked is corrupt.

<sup>21</sup>The lovers of God feed many with  
their teachings,<sup>f</sup>

but the foolish ones starve

themselves

for lack of an understanding heart.

<sup>22</sup>True enrichment comes from the  
blessing of the Lord,  
with rest and contentment<sup>g</sup> in  
knowing

that it all comes from him.

<sup>23</sup>The fool<sup>h</sup> finds fun in planning to do  
wrong,  
but the wise delight in having  
discernment.

<sup>24</sup>The lawless are haunted by their  
fears

and what they dread will come upon  
them,<sup>i</sup>

but the longings of the lovers of God  
will all be fulfilled.

<sup>25</sup>The wicked are blown away by every  
stormy wind.

But when a catastrophe comes,  
the lovers of God have a secure  
anchor.

<sup>26</sup>To trust a lazy person to get a job  
done  
will be as irritating as smoke in your  
eyes—

as enjoyable as a toothache!

<sup>27</sup>Living in the worship and awe of  
God

*a* 10:14 Or "Those who are wise store up knowledge [like treasure]."

*b* 10:15 Or "his fortified city."

*c* 10:16 Or "their harvest of wickedness."

*d* 10:17 The Aramaic is even more blunt: "Reject rebuke and you're a moron!"

*e* 10:20 Or "The tongue of the just is like choice silver." Silver is a metaphor for redemption.

*f* 10:21 The Aramaic is "The lips of the righteous multiply mercy."

*g* 10:22 Or "with no labor or sorrow attached."

*h* 10:23 The word translated "fool" means "moron" in the Aramaic.

*i* 10:24 This speaks of the consequences of sin. There is a Judge who sees all that we do and will call us to account one day.

will bring you many years of contented living.  
So how could the wicked ever expect to have a long, happy life?

<sup>28</sup>Lovers of God have a joyful feast of gladness,  
but the ungodly see their hopes vanish right before their eyes.

<sup>29</sup>The beautiful ways of God are a safe resting place  
for those who have integrity.<sup>a</sup>  
But to those who work wickedness the ways of God spell doom.

<sup>30</sup>God's lover can never be greatly shaken.  
But the wicked will never inherit the covenant blessings.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>31</sup>The teachings of the righteous are loaded with wisdom,  
but the words of the evil ones are crooked and perverse.

<sup>32</sup>Words that bring delight pour from the lips of the godly,  
but the words of the wicked are duplicitous.

#### Living in Righteousness

**11** Dishonest business practice<sup>c</sup> is something that Yahweh truly hates.

But it pleases him when we apply the right standards of measurement.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>2</sup>When you act with presumption, convinced that you're right, don't be surprised if you fall flat on your face!  
But humility leads to wisdom.

<sup>3</sup>Integrity will lead you to success, but treachery will destroy your dreams.

<sup>4</sup>When judgment day comes, all the wealth of the world won't help you one bit.  
So be rich in righteousness, for that's the only thing that can save you in death.

<sup>5</sup>Those with good character walk on a smooth path, with no detour or deviation.  
But the wicked keep falling because of their own wickedness.

<sup>6</sup>Integrity will keep a good man from falling.  
But the unbeliever is trapped, held captive to his sinful desires.

<sup>7</sup>When an evil man dies, all hope is lost,  
for his misplaced confidence goes in the coffin, buried along with him.

<sup>8</sup>The righteous are snatched away from trouble, and the wicked show up in their place.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>9</sup>The teachings of hypocrites can destroy you,  
but revelation-knowledge will rescue the righteous.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>10</sup>The blessing that rests on the righteous releases strength and favor to the entire city,<sup>g</sup>  
but shouts of joy will be heard when the wicked one dies.

<sup>a</sup> 10:29 The Aramaic is "The way of Jehovah is power to the perfect."

<sup>b</sup> 10:30 Or "land." This is metaphor for all of the covenantal blessings.

<sup>c</sup> 11:1 The Hebrew phrase here literally means "scales of deception [false balances]."

<sup>d</sup> 11:1 The Hebrew phrase here literally means "a perfect stone." Stones were used as the legitimate weights of balance. Jesus is the perfect stone. See Rev. 2:17.

<sup>e</sup> 11:8 Haman is a classic example of this principle. See Est. 7:10; 9:24-25.

<sup>f</sup> 11:9 Or "the righteous will be strengthened."

<sup>g</sup> 11:10 As translated from the Aramaic and the Septuagint.

<sup>11</sup>The blessing of favor resting upon the righteous influences a city to lift it higher,<sup>a</sup> but wicked leaders tear it apart by their words.

<sup>12</sup>To quarrel with a neighbor is senseless.<sup>b</sup>  
Bite your tongue; be wise and keep quiet!

<sup>13</sup>You can't trust gossipers with a secret; they'll just go blab it all.  
Put your confidence instead in a trusted friend,  
for he will be faithful to keep it in confidence.

<sup>14</sup>People lose their way without wise leadership,  
but a nation succeeds and stands in victory  
when it has many good counselors to guide it.

<sup>15</sup>The evil man will do harm when confronted by a righteous man,  
because he hates those who await good news.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>16</sup>A gracious, generous woman will be honored with a splendid<sup>d</sup> reputation,  
but the woman who hates the truth lives with disgrace<sup>e</sup> and is surrounded by men

who are cutthroats, only greedy for money.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>17</sup>A man of kindness attracts favor,  
while a cruel man attracts nothing but trouble.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Evil people may get a short-term gain,<sup>h</sup>  
but to sow seeds of righteousness will bring a true and lasting reward.

<sup>19</sup>A son of righteousness<sup>i</sup> experiences the abundant life,  
but the one who pursues evil hurries to his own death.

<sup>20</sup>The Lord can't stand the stubborn heart bent toward evil,  
but he treasures those whose ways are pure.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Assault your neighbor and you will certainly be punished,<sup>k</sup>  
but God will rescue the children of the godly.

<sup>22</sup>A beautiful woman who abandons good morals  
is like a fine gold ring dangling from a pig's snout.

<sup>23</sup>True lovers of God are filled with longings  
for what is pleasing and good,  
but the wicked can only expect doom.

<sup>24</sup>Generosity brings prosperity,  
but withholding from charity brings poverty.

*a* 11:11 Jesus describes the church as a city. See Matt. 5:14.

*b* 11:12 Or "To disparage your neighbor is being heartless."

*c* 11:15 As translated from the Aramaic and the Septuagint. The Hebrew is "You'll be ruined if you cosign for a stranger, and a hater of handshakes will be safe."

*d* 11:16 Or "glorious."

*e* 11:16 As translated from the older Aramaic and Septuagint texts, but not included in newer Hebrew manuscripts. There is an additional line added by the Aramaic and the Septuagint: "The lazy will lack, but the diligent support themselves financially."

*f* 11:16 The Septuagint is "the diligent obtain wealth."

*g* 11:17 The Hebrew text indicates this trouble could be physical, related to one's health.

*h* 11:18 Or "wages of deception."

*i* 11:19 As translated from one Hebrew manuscript, the Aramaic, and the Septuagint. Most Hebrew manuscripts have "The one who pursues righteousness."

*j* 11:20 Or "wholehearted."

*k* 11:21 As translated from the Aramaic and the Targum (Hebrew-Aramaic commentary).

<sup>25</sup>Those who live to bless others  
will have blessings heaped upon  
them,  
and the one who pours out his life to  
pour out blessings  
will be saturated with favor.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>26</sup>People will curse the businessman  
with no ethics,  
but the one with a social  
conscience receives praise from  
all.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Living your life seeking what is good  
for others brings untold favor,  
but those who wish evil for others  
will find it coming back on them.

<sup>28</sup>Keep trusting in your riches and  
down you'll go!  
But the lovers of God rise up like  
flowers in the spring.

<sup>29</sup>The fool who brings trouble to his  
own family  
will be cut out of the will,  
and the family servant will do better  
than he.

<sup>30</sup>But a life lived loving God bears  
lasting fruit,  
for the one who is truly wise wins  
souls.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>31</sup>If the righteous are barely saved,  
what's in store for all the wicked?<sup>d</sup>

## It's Right to Live for God

**12** To learn the truth you must  
long to be teachable,<sup>e</sup>  
or you can despise correction and  
remain ignorant.

<sup>2</sup>If your heart is right, favor flows  
from the Lord,  
but a devious heart invites his  
condemnation.

<sup>3</sup>You can't expect success by doing  
what's wrong.  
But the lives of his lovers are deeply  
rooted and firmly planted.

<sup>4</sup>The integrity and strength of a virtu-  
ous wife<sup>f</sup>  
transforms her husband into an  
honored king.<sup>g</sup>  
But the wife who disgraces her  
husband  
weakens the strength of his  
identity.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>5</sup>The lovers of God are filled with  
good ideas  
that are noble and pure,  
but the schemes of the sinner  
are crammed with nothing but lies.

<sup>6</sup>The wicked use their words to  
ambush and accuse,<sup>i</sup>  
but the lovers of God speak to  
defend and protect.

*a* 11:25 The Hebrew phrase here literally means "The soul of blessing will grow fat."

*b* 11:26 The Hebrew phrase here literally means "The one who withholds produce will be cursed, but blessing will be on the head of the one who sells it."

*c* 11:30 As translated from the Hebrew. The Aramaic and the Septuagint read "the souls of violent ones will be removed."

*d* 11:31 As translated from the Septuagint. See 1 Peter 4:18.

*e* 12:1 There are times when even the wise need correction, but they will appreciate its value.

*f* 12:4 There is an amazing Hebrew word used here. It is more commonly used to describe warriors, champions, and mighty ones. Many translations read "an excellent wife." But the meaning of the Hebrew word *chayil* is better translated "an army that is wealthy," "strong," "mighty," "powerful," "with substance," "valiant," "virtuous," or "worthy."

*g* 12:4 Or "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband." By implication, her dignity makes him a king.

*h* 12:4 Or "she is like cancer in his bones." Bones are a metaphor for inner strength, our inner being, or identity.

*i* 12:6 Or "lie in wait for blood." This is a figure of speech for accusation.

<sup>7</sup>The wicked are taken out, gone for good,  
but the godly families shall live on.

<sup>8</sup>Everyone admires a man of principles,  
but the one with a corrupt heart is despised.

<sup>9</sup>Just be who you are and work hard for a living,  
for that's better than pretending to be important  
and starving to death.

<sup>10</sup>A good man takes care of the needs of his pets,  
while even the kindest acts of a wicked man are still cruel.

<sup>11</sup>Work hard at your job and you'll have what you need.  
Following a get-rich-quick scheme is nothing but a fantasy.

<sup>12</sup>The cravings of the wicked are only for what is evil,<sup>a</sup>  
but righteousness is the core motivation for the lovers of God,  
and it keeps them content and flourishing.<sup>b</sup>

#### **Wisdom Means Being Teachable**

<sup>13</sup>The wicked will get trapped by their words  
of gossip, slander, and lies.<sup>c</sup>  
But for the righteous, honesty is its own defense.

<sup>14</sup>For there is great satisfaction in speaking the truth,  
and hard work brings blessings back to you.

<sup>15</sup>A fool is in love with his own opinion,  
but wisdom means being teachable.

#### **Learning to Speak Wisely**

<sup>16</sup>If you shrug off an insult and refuse to take offense,  
you demonstrate discretion indeed.<sup>d</sup>

But the fool has a short fuse  
and will immediately let you know when he's offended.

<sup>17</sup>Truthfulness marks the righteous,  
but the habitual liar can never be trusted.

<sup>18</sup>Reckless words are like the thrusts of a sword,  
cutting remarks meant to stab and to hurt.  
But the words of the wise soothe and heal.

<sup>19</sup>Truthful words will stand the test of time,  
but one day every lie will be seen for what it is.

<sup>20</sup>Deception fills the hearts of those who plot harm,  
but those who plan for peace<sup>e</sup> are filled with joy.

<sup>21</sup>Calamity is not allowed to overwhelm the righteous,  
but there's nothing but trouble waiting for the wicked.

<sup>22</sup>Live in the truth and keep your promises,  
and the Lord will keep delighting in you,  
but he detests a liar.

<sup>23</sup>Those who possess wisdom don't feel the need  
to impress others with what they know,  
but foolish ones make sure their ignorance is on display.

*a* 12:12 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is "Thieves crave the loot of other thieves."

*b* 12:12 The meaning of the Hebrew text of v. 12 is uncertain.

*c* 12:13 The Hebrew is simply "sinful words," which implies gossip, slander, and lies.

*d* 12:16 Or "A shrewd man conceals his shame."

*e* 12:20 Or "counselors of peace."



<sup>24</sup>If you want to reign in life,<sup>a</sup>  
 don't sit on your hands.  
 Instead, work hard at doing what's  
 right,  
 for the slacker will end up working  
 to make someone else succeed.  
<sup>25</sup>Anxious fear brings depression,  
 but a life-giving word of  
 encouragement  
 can do wonders to restore joy to the  
 heart.<sup>b</sup>  
<sup>26</sup>Lovers of God give good advice to  
 their friends,<sup>c</sup>  
 but the counsel of the wicked will  
 lead them astray.  
<sup>27</sup>A passive person won't even com-  
 plete a project,  
 but a passionate person makes good  
 use  
 of his time, wealth, and energy.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>28</sup>Abundant life is discovered by walk-  
 ing in righteousness,  
 but holding on to your anger leads  
 to death.<sup>e</sup>

### Living Wisely

**13** A wise son or daughter desires  
 a father's discipline,  
 but the know-it-all never listens to  
 correction.

<sup>2</sup>The words of the wise are kind and  
 easy to swallow,  
 but the unbeliever just wants to pick  
 a fight and argue.  
<sup>3</sup>Guard your words and you'll guard  
 your life,  
 but if you don't control your tongue,  
 it will ruin everything.  
<sup>4</sup>The slacker wants it all and ends up  
 with nothing,  
 but the hard worker ends up with all  
 that he longed for.  
<sup>5</sup>Lovers of God hate what is phony  
 and false,  
 but the wicked are full of shame and  
 behave shamefully.<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>Righteousness is like a shield of  
 protection,  
 guarding those who keep their  
 integrity,  
 but sin is the downfall of the wicked.  
<sup>7</sup>One pretends to be rich but is poor.  
 Another pretends to be poor but is  
 quite rich.<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>8</sup>The self-assurance of the rich is their  
 money,<sup>h</sup>  
 but people don't kidnap and extort  
 the poor!  
<sup>9</sup>The virtues of God's lovers shine  
 brightly in the darkness,

<sup>a</sup> 12:24 The Hebrew word for "reign" (*mashal*) is the title of the book: Proverbs. See introduction and the footnote on Prov. 1:1.

<sup>b</sup> 12:25 This insightful proverb can also be translated "Stop worrying! Think instead of what brings you gladness." Our focus must never be on what we can't change but on the everlasting joy we have in Christ. Sometimes we have to find the life-giving word of encouragement rising up in our own hearts. This is the secret of finding perpetual encouragement by the Word that lives in us.

<sup>c</sup> 12:26 As translated from older Aramaic manuscripts. The Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>d</sup> 12:27 Implied in the text, paraphrased from an uncertain Hebrew phrase. An alternate translation would be "A lazy person won't get to roast the game he caught, but the wealth of a diligent person is precious."

<sup>e</sup> 12:28 As translated from the Septuagint and the Aramaic. The Hebrew is uncertain.

<sup>f</sup> 13:5 The Hebrew word used here literally means "to cause a stink" or "to emit an odor." This is a figure of speech for what is shameful.

<sup>g</sup> 13:7 It is never godly to be a phony. It's always better to be who you are and avoid pretense.

<sup>h</sup> 13:8 The Aramaic is "The salvation of the soul is a man's true wealth."



but the flickering lamp of the  
ungodly will be extinguished.

<sup>10</sup>Wisdom opens your heart to receive  
wise counsel,

but pride closes your ears to advice  
and gives birth only to quarrels and  
strife.

<sup>11</sup>Wealth quickly gained is quickly  
wasted<sup>a</sup>—

easy come, easy go!

But if you gradually gain wealth,  
you will watch it grow.

<sup>12</sup>When hope's dream seems to drag  
on and on,  
the delay can be depressing.

But when at last your dream comes  
true,

life's sweetness will satisfy your soul.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Despise the word, will you?

Then you'll pay the price and it  
won't be pretty!

But the one who honors the Father's  
holy instructions  
will be rewarded.

<sup>14</sup>When the lovers of God teach you  
truth,

a fountain of life opens up within you,  
and their wise instruction will  
deliver you from the ways of death.

<sup>15</sup>Everyone admires a wise, sensible  
person,

but the treacherous walk on the path  
of ruin.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Everything a wise and shrewd man  
does

comes from a source of  
revelation-knowledge.<sup>d</sup>

but the behavior of a fool puts fool-  
ishness on parade!<sup>e</sup>

<sup>17</sup>An undependable messenger causes  
a lot of trouble,  
but the trustworthy and wise  
messengers

release healing wherever they go.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Poverty and disgrace come to the one  
who refuses to hear criticism.<sup>g</sup>

But the one who is easy to correct is  
on the path of honor.

<sup>19</sup>When God fulfills your longings,  
sweetness fills your soul.

But the wicked refuse to turn from  
darkness

*to see their desires come to pass.*<sup>h</sup>

<sup>20</sup>If you want to grow in wisdom,  
spend time with the wise.

Walk with the wicked

and you'll eventually become just  
like them.

<sup>21</sup>Calamity chases the sin-chaser,  
but prosperity pursues the God-lover.

<sup>22</sup>The benevolent man leaves an  
inheritance  
that endures to his children's  
children,

but the wealth of the wicked is trea-  
sured up for the righteous.

<sup>23</sup>The lovers of God will live a long life  
and get to enjoy their wealth,  
but the ungodly will suddenly  
perish.<sup>i</sup>

*a* 13:11 Or "Wealth gained by fraud will dwindle."

*b* 13:12 Or "it is a tree of life."

*c* 13:15 As translated from the Aramaic and the Septuagint. The Hebrew is uncertain.

*d* 13:16 Or "A wise person thinks ahead."

*e* 13:16 The implication is that the fool is unable to finish anything he begins.

*f* 13:17 God's sons and daughters are peacemakers, healers, and faithful deliverers for others.

*g* 13:18 As translated from the Hebrew. The Septuagint is "Instruction removes poverty and disgrace."

*h* 13:19 Implied by the Hebrew parallelism of the text.

*i* 13:23 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is "In the fallow ground of the poor there is abundance of food, but injustice sweeps it away." The Aramaic is "Those who don't find the way of life destroy many years of wealth, and some are utterly destroyed." There is a vast difference in the three translations. This translation follows the Septuagint.

<sup>24</sup>If you withhold correction and punishment<sup>a</sup> from your children, you demonstrate a lack of true love. So prove your love and be prompt to punish them.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>25</sup>The lovers of God will have more than enough, but the wicked will always lack what they crave.

### The House of Wisdom

**14** Every wise woman encourages and builds up her family, but a foolish woman over time will tear it down by her own actions.

<sup>2</sup>Lovers of truth follow the right path because of their wonderment and worship of God. But the devious display their disdain for him.

<sup>3</sup>The words of a proud fool will all come back to haunt him. But the words of the wise will become a shield of protection around them.

<sup>4</sup>The only clean stable is an empty stable. So if you want the work of an ox and to enjoy an abundant harvest, you'll have a mess or two to clean up!

<sup>5</sup>An honest witness will never lie, but a deceitful witness lies with every breath.

<sup>6</sup>The intellectually arrogant seek for wisdom, but they never seem to discover what they claim they're looking for. For revelation-knowledge flows to the one

who hungers for understanding.

<sup>7</sup>The words of the wise are like weapons of knowledge.<sup>c</sup>

If you need wise counsel, stay away from the fool.

<sup>8</sup>For the wisdom of the wise will keep life on the right track, while the fool only deceives himself and refuses to face reality.

<sup>9</sup>Fools mock the need for repentance,<sup>d</sup> while the favor of God rests upon all his lovers.

<sup>10</sup>Don't expect anyone else to fully understand both the bitterness and the joys of all you experience in your life.

<sup>11</sup>The household of the wicked is soon torn apart, while the family of the righteous flourishes.

<sup>12</sup>You can rationalize it all you want and justify the path of error you have chosen, but you'll find out in the end that you took the road to destruction.

<sup>13</sup>Superficial laughter can hide a heavy heart, but when the laughter ends, the pain resurfaces.

<sup>14</sup>Those who turn from the truth get what they deserve, but a good person receives a sweet reward.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>15</sup>A gullible person will believe anything, but a sensible person will confirm the facts.

<sup>16</sup>A wise person is careful in all things and turns quickly from evil,

<sup>a</sup> 13:24 Or "spare the rod." Corporal punishment was common in premodern societies.

<sup>b</sup> 13:24 Or "The one who spares the rod hates his child."

<sup>c</sup> 14:7 As translated from the Aramaic.

<sup>d</sup> 14:9 Or "Fools mock guilt [or guilt offering]." The Septuagint is "The house of the transgressor owes purification."

<sup>e</sup> 14:14 As translated from Hebrew manuscripts. The Aramaic is "a good man will be filled from the awe of his soul."

while the impetuous fool moves ahead with overconfidence.

<sup>17</sup>An impulsive person has a short fuse and can ruin everything, but the wise show self-control.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>18</sup>The naïve demonstrate a lack of wisdom, but the lovers of wisdom are crowned with revelation-knowledge.

<sup>19</sup>Evil ones will pay tribute to good people and eventually come to be servants of the godly.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>20</sup>The poor are disliked even by their neighbors, but everyone wants to get close to the wealthy.

<sup>21</sup>It's a sin to despise one who is less fortunate than you,<sup>c</sup> but when you are kind to the poor, you will prosper and be blessed.

<sup>22</sup>Haven't you noticed how evil schemers always wander astray? But kindness and truth come to those who make plans to be pure in all their ways.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>23</sup>If you work hard at what you do, great abundance will come to you. But merely talking about getting rich

while living to only pursue your pleasures<sup>e</sup> brings you face-to-face with poverty.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>24</sup>The true net worth of the wise<sup>g</sup> is the wealth that wisdom imparts. But the way of life for the fool is his foolishness.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Speak the truth and you'll save souls, but in the spreading of lies treachery thrives.

<sup>26</sup>Confidence and strength flood the hearts of the lovers of God who live in awe of him, and their devotion provides their children with a place of shelter and security.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>27</sup>To worship God in wonder and awe opens a fountain of life within you, empowering you to escape death's domain.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>28</sup>A king glories in the number of his loyal followers, but a dwindling population spells ruin for any leader.

<sup>29</sup>When your heart overflows with understanding you'll be very slow to get angry. But if you have a quick temper, your impatience will be quickly seen by all.

*a* 14:17 As translated from the Aramaic. The Hebrew is "and a crafty schemer is hated." The Greek Septuagint is "a sensible man bears up under many things."

*b* 14:19 The Hebrew phrase literally means "they will come [or bow] at the gates of the righteous."

*c* 14:21 Implied in the Hebrew parallelism. The Hebrew phrase here literally means "your neighbor."

*d* 14:22 Both the Aramaic and the Septuagint insert a verse here that is not found in the Hebrew: "The followers of evil don't understand mercy and faith, but you'll find kindness and faith with those who do good."

*e* 14:23 As translated from the Septuagint.

*f* 14:23 There is an additional verse found here in the Aramaic that is missing from the Hebrew text: "The Lord Yahweh heals every sickness, but evil speaking makes you sick [harms you]."

*g* 14:24 Or "the crown of the wise."

*h* 14:24 The Aramaic word translated here as "foolishness" can also mean "insanity."

*i* 14:26 To live as a passionate lover of God will bring benefit even to your children.

*j* 14:27 Or "empowering you to turn from the deadly snares."

<sup>30</sup>A tender, tranquil heart will make you healthy,<sup>a</sup>  
but jealousy can make you sick.

<sup>31</sup>Insult your Creator, will you?  
That's exactly what you do every time you oppress the powerless!<sup>b</sup>

Showing kindness to the poor is equal to honoring your maker.

<sup>32</sup>The wicked are crushed by every calamity,  
but the righteous find a strong hope in the time of death.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>33</sup>Wisdom soothes the heart of the one with living-understanding,  
but the heart of the fool just stockpiles stupidity.

<sup>34</sup>A nation is exalted by the righteousness of its people,  
but sin heaps disgrace upon the land.

<sup>35</sup>A wise and faithful servant receives promotion from the king,  
but the one who acts disgracefully gets to taste the anger of the king.<sup>d</sup>

### Wisdom Far Better than Wickedness

**15** Respond gently when you are confronted  
and you'll defuse the rage of another.

Responding with sharp, cutting words<sup>e</sup> will only make it worse.  
Don't you know that being angry can ruin the testimony of even the wisest of men?<sup>f</sup>

<sup>2</sup>When wisdom speaks, understanding becomes attractive.

But the words of the fool make their ignorance look laughable.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>3</sup>The eyes of the Lord<sup>h</sup> are everywhere and he takes note of everything that happens.

He watches over his lovers,  
and he also sees the wickedness of the wicked.

<sup>4</sup>When you speak healing words,  
you offer others fruit from the tree of life.

But unhealthy, negative words do nothing but crush their hopes.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>5</sup>You're stupid to mock the instruction of a father,  
but welcoming correction will make you brilliant.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>6</sup>There is prosperity in the house of the righteous,<sup>k</sup>  
but the house of the wicked is filled with trouble,  
no matter how much money they have.

<sup>a</sup> 14:30 Or "A heart of healing is the life of the flesh."

<sup>b</sup> 14:31 Or "slander the poor." Every human being is made in God's image, including the poor.

<sup>c</sup> 14:32 As translated from the Masoretic Text. Our strong hope is that our lives will continue in the presence of God in the resurrection glory. Both the Septuagint and the Aramaic read quite differently: "but the righteous have a refuge in their integrity."

<sup>d</sup> 14:35 As translated from the Hebrew. The Septuagint reads "and by his good behavior shame is removed."

<sup>e</sup> 15:1 Or "painful words."

<sup>f</sup> 15:1 This sentence is found only in the Septuagint.

<sup>g</sup> 15:2 The Aramaic reads "The mouths of fools vomit a curse."

<sup>h</sup> 15:3 "The eyes of the Lord" can also be a metaphor for his prophets.

<sup>i</sup> 15:4 Or "perverse words are the crushing of the spirit."

<sup>j</sup> 15:5 The Septuagint adds a verse that is not found in the Hebrew: "In great righteousness there is great strength. But the ungodly will one day perish from the earth."

<sup>k</sup> 15:6 The Septuagint and the Aramaic read "There is power in the house of the righteous." Both concepts are valid.

<sup>7</sup>When wisdom speaks, revelation-knowledge is released,<sup>a</sup>  
but finding true wisdom in the word  
of a fool is futile.

<sup>8</sup>It is despicable to the Lord  
when people use the worship of the  
Almighty  
as a cloak for their sin,<sup>b</sup>  
but every prayer of the righteous is  
pleasing to his heart.

<sup>9</sup>The Lord detests the lifestyle of the  
wicked,  
but he loves those who pursue  
purity.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Severe punishment awaits the one  
who turns away from the truth,  
and those who rebel against correc-  
tion will die.

<sup>11</sup>Even hell itself holds no secrets from  
the Lord God,  
for before his eyes, all is exposed—  
and so much more the heart of  
every human being.

<sup>12</sup>The know-it-all never esteems the  
one who tries to correct him.  
He refuses to seek good advice from  
the wise.<sup>d</sup>

#### Living an Ascended Life

<sup>13</sup>A cheerful heart puts a smile on  
your face,  
but a broken heart leads to  
depression.

<sup>14</sup>Lovers of God<sup>e</sup> hunger after truth,  
but those without understanding  
feast on foolishness and don't even  
realize it.

<sup>15</sup>Everything seems to go wrong  
when you feel weak and depressed.  
But when you choose to be cheerful,  
every day will bring you more and  
more joy and fullness.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>16</sup>It's much better to live simply,  
surrounded in holy awe and worship  
of God,  
than to have great wealth with a  
home full of trouble.

<sup>17</sup>It's much better to have a meal of  
vegetables surrounded with love  
and grace  
than a steak where there is hate.

<sup>18</sup>A touchy, hot-tempered man picks  
a fight,  
but the calm, patient man knows  
how to silence strife.

<sup>19</sup>Nothing seems to work right<sup>g</sup> for the  
lazy man,  
but life seems smooth and easy  
when your heart is virtuous.

<sup>20</sup>When a son learns wisdom,  
a father's heart is glad.  
But the man who shames<sup>h</sup> his  
mother is a foolish son.

<sup>21</sup>The senseless fool treats life like a  
joke,  
but the one with living-  
understanding makes good  
choices.

<sup>22</sup>Your plans will fall apart right in  
front of you  
if you fail to get good advice.  
But if you first seek out multiple  
counselors,  
you'll watch your plans succeed.

*a* 15:7 Or "is scattered like seed."

*b* 15:8 Or "the sacrifice of the wicked"; that is, worshiping God with a wicked heart, only to hide sin. Our yielded hearts must be the sacrifice we offer to God.

*c* 15:9 The Aramaic reads "he shows mercy to the one who practices righteousness."

*d* 15:12 Another way to say this is "The one who hates authority has no love for being taught."

*e* 15:14 Or "The upright" (Aramaic).

*f* 15:15 The Septuagint reads quite differently: "And the good [heart] is always calm."

*g* 15:19 Or "The way is blocked with thorns."

*h* 15:20 Or "despises."



<sup>23</sup>Everyone enjoys giving great advice.  
But how delightful it is to say the  
right thing at the right time!

<sup>24</sup>The life-paths of the prudent lift  
them progressively heavenward,  
delivering them from the death  
spirals  
that keep tugging them downward.

<sup>25</sup>The Lord champions the widow's  
cause,<sup>a</sup>  
but watch him as he smashes down  
the houses of the haughty!

<sup>26</sup>The Lord detests wicked ways of  
thinking,<sup>b</sup>  
but he enjoys lovely and delightful  
words.

<sup>27</sup>The one who puts earning money  
above his family  
will have trouble at home,  
but those who refuse to exploit others  
will live *in peace*.

<sup>28</sup>Lovers of God think before they  
speak,  
but the careless blurt out wicked  
words meant to cause harm.

<sup>29</sup>The Lord doesn't respond to the  
wicked,  
but he's moved to answer the  
prayers of the righteous.

<sup>30</sup>Eyes that focus on what is beautiful  
bring joy to the heart,<sup>c</sup>  
and hearing a good report  
refreshes and strengthens the inner  
being.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Accepting constructive criticism  
opens your heart to the path of life,

making you right at home among  
the wise.

<sup>32</sup>Refusing constructive criticism  
shows  
you have no interest in improving  
your life,  
for revelation-insight only comes as  
you accept correction  
and the wisdom that it brings.

<sup>33</sup>The source of revelation-knowledge  
is found  
as you fall down in surrender before  
the Lord.

Don't expect to see Shekinah glory  
until the Lord sees your sincere  
humility.<sup>e</sup>

### Wisdom Exalts God

**16** Go ahead and make all the  
plans you want,  
but it's the Lord who will ultimately  
direct your steps.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>2</sup>We are all in love with our own  
opinions,  
convinced they're correct.  
But the Lord is in the midst of us,<sup>g</sup>  
testing and probing our every motive.

<sup>3</sup>Before you do anything,  
put your trust totally in God and not  
in yourself.<sup>h</sup>  
Then every plan you make will  
succeed.

<sup>4</sup>The Lord works everything together  
to accomplish his purpose.<sup>i</sup>  
Even the wicked are included in his  
plans—

<sup>a</sup> 15:25 Or "The Lord maintains the boundaries of the widow."

<sup>b</sup> 15:26 Or "the thoughts of the wicked."

<sup>c</sup> 15:30 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is "The light of the eyes brings joy."

<sup>d</sup> 15:30 The Hebrew here literally means "makes fat your bones." Bones picture our inner being.

<sup>e</sup> 15:33 Or "Before honor is humility." The Hebrew uses the word *kabod*, which is translated as "glory" 156 times in the Old Testament.

<sup>f</sup> 16:1 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew and Aramaic read "the Lord gives the right reply."

<sup>g</sup> 16:2 Or "in the midst of spirits."

<sup>h</sup> 16:3 Or "commit your business to God."

<sup>i</sup> 16:4 Or "for its answer."



he sets them aside for the day of disaster.

<sup>5</sup>Yahweh detests all the proud<sup>a</sup> of heart,  
for pride attracts his punishment—  
and you can count on that!

<sup>6</sup>You can avoid evil through surrendered worship  
and the fear of God,  
for the power of his faithful love  
removes sin's guilt and grip over you.

<sup>7</sup>When the Lord is pleased with the  
decisions you've made,  
he activates grace to turn enemies  
into friends.

<sup>8</sup>It is better to have little with a heart  
that loves justice  
than to be rich and not have God on  
your side.

<sup>9</sup>Within your heart you can make  
plans for your future,  
but the Lord chooses the steps you  
take to get there.

#### Living like a King

<sup>10</sup>A king speaks the revelation of  
truth,  
so he must be extraordinarily careful  
in the decrees that he makes.

<sup>11</sup>The Lord expects you to be fair in  
every business deal,  
for he is the one who sets the stan-  
dards for righteousness.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Kings and leaders despise  
wrongdoing,  
for the true authority to rule and  
reign  
is built on a foundation of  
righteousness.

<sup>13</sup>Kings and leaders love to hear godly  
counsel,  
and they love those who tell them  
the truth.

<sup>14</sup>The anger of a king releases the  
messenger of death,<sup>c</sup>  
but a wise person will know how to  
pacify his wrath.

<sup>15</sup>Life-giving light streams from the  
presence of a king,<sup>d</sup>  
and his favor is showered upon  
those who please him.

<sup>16</sup>Everyone wants gold, but wisdom's  
worth<sup>e</sup> is far greater.  
Silver is sought after,  
but a heart of understanding yields  
a greater return.

<sup>17</sup>Repenting from evil places you on  
the highway of holiness.  
Protect purity and you protect your  
life.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Your boast becomes a prophecy of a  
future failure.  
The higher you lift yourself up in  
pride,<sup>g</sup>  
the harder you'll fall in disgrace.

<sup>19</sup>It's better to be meek and lowly and  
live among the poor

<sup>a</sup> 16:5 The Hebrew word for "proud" is *gavah*, which comes from a root word that means "locust" (as a reference to a locust swarm that devours all the crops). Pride is like a locust swarm that always hinders a true spiritual harvest within us.

<sup>b</sup> 16:11 Or "Honesty with scales and balances is the way of the Lord, for all the stones in the bag are established by him."

<sup>c</sup> 16:14 See 1 Kings 2:25, 29–34, 46.

<sup>d</sup> 16:15 The Septuagint reads "The king's son is in the light of life."

<sup>e</sup> 16:16 The Septuagint is "nests of wisdom."

<sup>f</sup> 16:17 There are two proverbs inserted here in the Septuagint that are not found in the Hebrew or Aramaic: "Receive instruction and you'll be prosperous; he who listens to correction shall be made wise." "He who guards his ways preserves his own soul; he who loves his life will watch his words."

<sup>g</sup> 16:18 Or "overconfidence."

than to live high and mighty among the rich and famous.

- <sup>20</sup>One skilled in business discovers prosperity, but the one who trusts in God is blessed beyond belief!

### Walking with Wisdom

- <sup>21</sup>The one with a wise heart is called “discerning,” and speaking sweetly to others makes your teaching even more convincing.

- <sup>22</sup>Wisdom is a deep well of understanding opened up within you as a fountain of life for others, but it’s senseless to try to instruct a fool.

- <sup>23</sup>Winsome words pour from a heart of wisdom, adding value to all you teach.

- <sup>24</sup>Nothing is more appealing than speaking beautiful, life-giving words.

For they release sweetness to our souls and inner healing to our spirits.<sup>a</sup>

- <sup>25</sup>Before every person there is a path that seems like the right one to take, but it leads straight to hell!<sup>b</sup>

- <sup>26</sup>Life motivation comes from the deep longings of the heart, and the passion to see them fulfilled urges you onward.<sup>c</sup>

- <sup>27</sup>A wicked scoundrel wants to dig up dirt on others,

only to spread slander and shred their reputation.

- <sup>28</sup>A twisted person spreads rumors; a whispering gossip ruins good friendships.

- <sup>29</sup>A vicious criminal can be persuasive, enticing others to join him as partners in crime, but he leads them all down a despicable path.

- <sup>30</sup>It’s easy to tell when a wicked man is hatching some crooked scheme—it’s written all over his face. His looks betray him as he gives birth to his sin.

- <sup>31</sup>Old age with wisdom will crown you with dignity and honor,<sup>d</sup> for it takes a lifetime of righteousness to acquire it.

- <sup>32</sup>Do you want to be a mighty warrior?

It’s better to be known as one who is patient and slow to anger.<sup>e</sup>

Do you want to conquer a city? Rule over your temper before you attempt to rule a city.

- <sup>33</sup>We may toss the coin and roll the dice, but God’s will is greater than luck.<sup>f</sup>

### Wisdom’s Virtues

- 17** A simple, humble life with peace and quiet is far better than an opulent lifestyle with nothing but quarrels and strife at home.

- <sup>2</sup>A wise, intelligent servant will be honored above a shameful son.

a 16:24 Or “healing to the bones.” Bones are a metaphor for our inner being.

b 16:25 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is “the ways of death.”

c 16:26 The meaning of the Hebrew in this verse is uncertain.

d 16:31 Or “Gray hair is a crown of splendor.” In the Hebrew culture the old were honored above all, especially if they acquired wisdom. See Lev. 19:32.

e 16:32 The Septuagint is “It’s better to be forgiving than strong.”

f 16:33 Or “Into the center the lot is cast and from Yahweh is all its judgment.” The casting of lots was a common form of divination in premodern societies.

He'll even end up having a portion  
left to him in his master's will.

<sup>3</sup>In the same way that gold and silver  
are refined by fire,  
the Lord purifies your heart by the  
tests and trials of life.

<sup>4</sup>Those eager to embrace evil listen to  
slander,  
for a liar loves to listen to lies.

<sup>5</sup>Mock the poor, will you?  
You insult your Creator every time  
you do!

If you make fun of others'  
misfortune,  
you'd better watch out—your pun-  
ishment is on its way.

<sup>6</sup>Grandparents have the crowning  
glory of life:  
grandchildren!

And it's only proper for children to  
take pride in their parents.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>7</sup>It is not proper for a leader to lie and  
deceive,  
and don't expect excellent words to  
be spoken by a fool.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Wise instruction<sup>c</sup> is like a costly gem.  
It turns the impossible into success.

<sup>9</sup>Love overlooks the mistakes of  
others,  
but dwelling on the failures of oth-  
ers devastates friendships.

<sup>10</sup>One word of correction breaks open  
a teachable heart,  
but a fool can be corrected a hun-  
dred times  
and still not know what hit him.

<sup>11</sup>Rebellion thrives in an evil man,  
so a messenger of vengeance<sup>d</sup> will  
be sent to punish him.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>12</sup>It's safer to meet a grizzly bear  
robbed of her cubs  
than to confront a reckless fool.

<sup>13</sup>The one who returns evil for good  
can expect to be treated the same  
way for the rest of his life.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Don't be one who is quick to quarrel,  
for an argument is hard to stop,  
and you never know how it will end,  
so don't even start down that road!<sup>g</sup>

<sup>15</sup>There is nothing God hates more  
than condemning the one who is  
innocent  
and acquitting the one who is guilty.

<sup>16</sup>Why pay tuition to educate a fool?  
For he has no intention of acquiring  
true wisdom.

<sup>17</sup>A dear friend will love you no matter  
what,  
and a family sticks together through  
all kinds of trouble.

<sup>18</sup>It's stupid to run up bills you'll never  
be able to pay  
or to cosign for the loan of your  
friend.

*Save yourself the trouble* and don't  
do either one.

<sup>19</sup>If you love to argue,  
then you must be in love with sin.  
For the one who loves to boast<sup>h</sup> is  
only asking for trouble.

<sup>20</sup>The one with a perverse heart never  
has anything good to say,<sup>i</sup>

*a* 17:6 Or "fathers." There is an additional verse found in the Septuagint that is inserted here: "A whole world of riches belongs to the faithful, but the unfaithful don't get even a cent."

*b* 17:7 Two absurd things are to find a fool in leadership and to have a leader in foolishness.

*c* 17:8 "Instruction" is taken from the Aramaic and the Septuagint. The Hebrew reads "bribe."

*d* 17:11 Or "merciless angels."

*e* 17:11 This could mean an evil spirit or calamities and sorrows.

*f* 17:13 Or "evil will haunt his house."

*g* 17:14 The Aramaic for this verse reads "To shed blood provokes the judgment of a ruler."

*h* 17:19 Or "he who builds a high gate." The gate becomes a picture of the mouth. This is a figure of speech for proud boasting.

*i* 17:20 Or "can expect calamity."

and the chronic liar tumbles into constant trouble.

<sup>21</sup>Parents of a numbskull will have many sorrows,  
for there's nothing about his lifestyle that will make them proud.

<sup>22</sup>A joyful, cheerful heart brings healing to both body and soul.  
But the one whose heart is crushed struggles with sickness and depression.

<sup>23</sup>When you take a secret bribe,  
your actions reveal your true character,  
for you pervert the ways of justice.

<sup>24</sup>Even the face of a wise man shows his intelligence.  
But the wandering eyes of a fool will look for wisdom everywhere except right in front of his nose.

<sup>25</sup>A father grieves over the foolishness of his child,  
and bitter sorrow fills his mother.

<sup>26</sup>It's horrible to persecute a holy lover of God  
or to strike an honorable man for his integrity!

<sup>27</sup>Can you bridle your tongue when your heart is under pressure?  
That's how you show that you are wise.  
An understanding heart keeps you cool, calm, and collected,  
no matter what you're facing.

<sup>28</sup>When even a fool bites his tongue<sup>a</sup>  
he's considered wise.  
So shut your mouth when you are provoked—  
it will make you look smart.

## Wisdom Gives Life

**18** An unfriendly person isolates himself  
and seems to care only about his own issues.

For his contempt of sound judgment makes him a recluse.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Senseless people find no pleasure in acquiring true wisdom,  
for all they want to do is impress you with what they know.

<sup>3</sup>An ungodly man is always cloaked with disgrace,  
as dishonor and shame are his companions.

<sup>4</sup>Words of wisdom<sup>c</sup> are like a fresh, flowing brook—  
like deep waters that spring forth from within,  
bubbling up inside the one with understanding.

<sup>5</sup>It is atrocious when judges show favor to the guilty  
and deprive the innocent of justice.

<sup>6</sup>A senseless man jumps headfirst into an argument;  
he's just asking for a beating for his reckless words.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>7</sup>A fool has a big mouth that only gets him into trouble,  
and he'll pay the price for what he says.

<sup>8</sup>The words of a gossip merely reveal the wounds of his own soul,<sup>e</sup>  
and his slander penetrates into the innermost being.

<sup>9</sup>The one who is too lazy to look for work

<sup>a</sup> 17:28 The Septuagint is "When an unthinking man asks a question."

<sup>b</sup> 18:1 There are alternate possible translations of this verse in the Hebrew; for example, "An idle man meditates on his lusts and mocks wise instruction."

<sup>c</sup> 18:4 Or "Words that touch the heart."

<sup>d</sup> 18:6 The Aramaic is "his rash words call for death."

<sup>e</sup> 18:8 Scholars are somewhat uncertain about an exact translation of this phrase. The Aramaic is "The words of a lazy man lead him to fear and evil."

is the same one who wastes his life away.

<sup>10</sup>The character of God is a tower of strength,<sup>a</sup>

for the lovers of God delight to run into his heart and be exalted on high.

<sup>11</sup>The rich, in their conceit, imagine that their wealth is enough to protect them.

It becomes their confidence in a day of trouble.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>12</sup>A man's heart is the proudest when his downfall is nearest, for he won't see glory until the Lord sees humility.

<sup>13</sup>Listen before you speak, for to speak before you've heard the facts will bring humiliation.

<sup>14</sup>The will to live sustains you when you're sick,<sup>c</sup> but depression crushes courage and leaves you unable to cope.

<sup>15</sup>The spiritually hungry are always ready to learn more, for their hearts are eager to discover new truths.

<sup>16</sup>Would you like to meet a very important person?

Take a generous gift.

It will do wonders to gain entrance into his presence.

<sup>17</sup>There are two sides to every story.

The first one to speak sounds true until you hear the other side and they set the record straight.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>18</sup>A coin toss<sup>e</sup> resolves a dispute and can put an argument to rest between formidable opponents.

<sup>19</sup>It is easier to conquer a strong city than to win back a friend whom you've offended.

Their walls go up, making it nearly impossible to win them back.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Sharing words of wisdom is satisfying to your inner being. It encourages you to know that you've changed someone else's life.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Your words are so powerful that they will kill or give life, and the talkative person will reap the consequences.

<sup>22</sup>When a man finds a wife, he has found a treasure! For she is the gift of God to bring him joy and pleasure.

But the one who divorces a good woman

loses what is good from his house.<sup>h</sup>

*To choose an adulteress is both stupid and ungodly.<sup>i</sup>*

<sup>23</sup>The poor plead for help from the rich,

*a* 18:10 The Hebrew word *migdal*, translated as "tower of strength," has a homonym that can be translated "bed of flowers."

*b* 18:11 The Aramaic is "The wealth of the rich is a strong city, and its glory casts a broad shadow."

*c* 18:14 The Septuagint is "A wise servant can calm a man's anger."

*d* 18:17 The text implies that a legal testimony in a courtroom may seem to be correct until cross-examination begins.

*e* 18:18 The Hebrew is "Casting lots."

*f* 18:19 Or "A brother supported by a brother is like a high, strong city. They hold each other up like the bars of a fortress."

*g* 18:20 Or "A man's belly is filled with the fruits of his mouth, and by the harvest of his lips he will be satisfied."

*h* 18:22 The reference to divorce is not found in the Hebrew text but is included in both the Aramaic and the Septuagint.

*i* 18:22 As translated from the Septuagint.



but all they get in return is a harsh response.

<sup>24</sup>Some friendships don't last for long,<sup>a</sup> but there is one loving friend who is joined to your heart<sup>b</sup> closer than any other!

### Wisdom Exalted

**19** It's better to be honest, even if it leads to poverty, than to live as a dishonest fool.

<sup>2</sup>The best way to live is with revelation-knowledge, for without it, you'll grow impatient and run right into error.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>3</sup>There are some people who ruin their own lives and then blame it all on God.

<sup>4</sup>Being wealthy means having lots of "friends," but the poor can't keep the ones they have.

<sup>5</sup>Perjury won't go unpunished, and liars will get all that they deserve.

<sup>6</sup>Everyone wants to be close to the rich and famous, but a generous person has all the friends he wants!

<sup>7</sup>When a man is poor, even his family has no use for him. How much more will his "friends" avoid him—for though he begs for help, they won't respond.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Do yourself a favor and love wisdom. Learn all you can, then watch your life flourish and prosper!

<sup>9</sup>Tell lies and you're going to get caught, and the habitual liar is doomed.

<sup>10</sup>It doesn't seem right when you see a fool living in the lap of luxury or a prideful servant ruling over princes.

<sup>11</sup>An understanding person demonstrates patience, for mercy<sup>e</sup> means holding your tongue.

When you are insulted, be quick to forgive and forget it, for you are virtuous when you overlook an offense.

<sup>12</sup>The rage of a king is like the roar of a lion, but his sweet favor is like a gentle, refreshing rain.

<sup>13</sup>A rebellious son breaks a father's heart, and a nagging wife can drive you crazy!

<sup>14</sup>You can inherit houses and land from your parents, but a good<sup>f</sup> wife only comes as a gracious gift from God!

<sup>15</sup>Go ahead—be lazy and passive. But you'll go hungry if you live that way.

<sup>16</sup>Honor God's holy instructions and life will go well for you. But if you despise his ways and choose your own plans, you will die.

<sup>17</sup>Every time you give to the poor you make a loan to the Lord.

a 18:24 Or "A man with too many friends may be broken to pieces."

b 18:24 The Hebrew word used here can be translated "joined together," "stick close," "to cleave," "to pursue," or "to overtake."

c 19:2 Or "sin."

d 19:7 The Aramaic and the Septuagint add a sentence not found in the Hebrew: "The one who is malicious with his words is not to be trusted."

e 19:11 The word translated "mercy" (merciful) here is found only in the Septuagint.

f 19:14 Literally "prudent" or "understanding" wife.



Don't worry—you'll be repaid in full for all the good you've done.

<sup>18</sup>Don't be afraid to discipline your children while they're still young enough to learn.

Don't indulge your children or be swayed by their protests.

<sup>19</sup>A hot-tempered man has to pay the price for his anger.

If you bail him out once, you'll do it a dozen times.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Listen well to wise counsel and be willing to learn from correction so that by the end of your life you'll be known for your wisdom.

<sup>21</sup>A person may have many ideas concerning God's plan for his life, but only the designs of God's purpose will succeed in the end.

<sup>22</sup>A man is charming when he displays tender mercies to others. And a lover of God who is poor and promises nothing is better than a rich liar who never keeps his promises.

<sup>23</sup>When you live a life of abandoned love, surrendered before the awe of God, here's what you'll experience: Abundant life. Continual protection.<sup>b</sup> And complete satisfaction!

<sup>24</sup>There are some people who pretend they're hurt—deadbeats who won't even work to feed themselves.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>25</sup>If you punish the insolent who don't know any better, they will learn not to mock.

But if you correct a wise man, he will grow even wiser.

<sup>26</sup>Children who mistreat their parents are an embarrassment to their family and a public disgrace.

<sup>27</sup>So listen, my child.

Don't reject correction or you will certainly wander from the ways of truth.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>28</sup>A corrupt witness makes a mockery of justice, for the wicked never play by the rules.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Judgment is waiting for those who mock the truth, and foolish living invites a beating.

### Are You Living Wisely?

**20** A drunkard is obnoxious, loud, and argumentative; you're a fool to get intoxicated with strong drink.

<sup>2</sup>The rage of a king is like the roar of a lion.

Do you really want to go and make him angry?

<sup>3</sup>A person of honor<sup>f</sup> will put an argument to rest.

Only the stupid want to pick a fight.

<sup>4</sup>If you're too lazy to plant seed, it's too bad when you have no harvest on which to feed.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>5</sup>A man of deep understanding will give good advice, drawing it out from the well within.

a 19:19 There is an implication in the Hebrew that he will get into legal trouble. An alternate translation of this verse could be "An evil-minded man will be injured; if you rescue him, his anger will only intensify."

b 19:23 Or "You will not be remembered for evil."

c 19:24 Or "the lazy man buries his fork in his plate and won't even lift it to his mouth."

d 19:27 Or "Stop listening to instruction that contradicts what you know is truth."

e 19:28 Or "the heart of the wicked feeds on evil."

f 20:3 Or "It is the glory of a man." It's better to keep a friend than to win a fight.

g 20:4 The Aramaic and the Septuagint read "Rebuke a lazy man and he still has no shame, yet watch him go beg at harvest time."

<sup>6</sup>Many will tell you they're your loyal friends,  
but who can find one who is truly trustworthy?<sup>a</sup>

<sup>7</sup>The lovers of God will walk in integrity,  
and their children are fortunate to have godly parents as their examples.

<sup>8</sup>A righteous king sits on his judgment seat.

He scatters evil away from his kingdom  
by his wise discernment.

<sup>9</sup>Which one of us can truly say,  
"I am free from sin in my life,  
for my heart is clean and pure"?<sup>b</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Mark it down:  
God hates it when you demonstrate  
a double standard—  
one for "them" and one for "you."

<sup>11</sup>All children show what they're really like by how they act.  
You can discern their character,  
whether they are pure or perverse.

<sup>12</sup>Lovers of God have been given eyes  
to see  
and ears to hear from God.

<sup>13</sup>If you spend all your time sleeping,  
you'll grow poor.  
So wake up, sleepyhead! Don't sleep  
on the job.  
And then there will be plenty of food  
on your table.

<sup>14</sup>The buyer says, as he haggles over  
the price,  
"That's junk. It's worthless!"  
Then he goes out and brags,

"Look at the great bargain I got!"

<sup>15</sup>You may have an abundance of  
wealth,  
piles of gold and jewels,  
but there is something of far greater  
worth:  
speaking revelation-words of  
knowledge.

<sup>16</sup>Anyone stupid enough to guarantee  
a loan for a stranger<sup>c</sup>  
deserves to have his property held  
as security.

<sup>17</sup>What you obtain dishonestly may  
seem sweet at first,  
but sooner or later you'll live to  
regret it.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>18</sup>If you solicit good advice, then your  
plans will succeed.  
So don't charge into battle without  
wisdom,  
for wars are won by skillful strategy.

<sup>19</sup>A blabbermouth will reveal your  
secrets,  
so stay away from people who can't  
keep their mouths shut.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>20</sup>If you despise your father or mother,  
your life will flicker out like a lamp,  
extinguished into the deepest  
darkness.

<sup>21</sup>If an inheritance is gained too early  
in life,  
it will not be blessed in the end.

<sup>22</sup>Don't ever say, "I'm going to get  
even with them  
if it's the last thing I do!"  
Wrap God's grace around your heart  
and he will be the one to vindicate  
you.

a 20:6 Or "A compassionate man is hard to find, but it's even harder to find one who is faithful."

b 20:9 The Hebrew word translated "clean" can also mean "perfect" or "holy." The word translated "pure" can also mean "clear," "bright," "shining," or "unmixed." Through God's grace, by the blood of Jesus, believers have been purified, made holy, and set free from our sins.

c 20:16 Some manuscripts have "a promiscuous woman."

d 20:17 Or "The bread of falsehood may taste sweet at first, but afterward you'll have a mouth full of gravel."

e 20:19 The Aramaic adds a line: "One who is faithful in spirit hides a matter."

<sup>23</sup>The Lord hates double standards—  
that's hypocrisy at its worst!<sup>a</sup>

<sup>24</sup>It is the Lord who directs your  
life,  
for each step you take is ordained  
by God

to bring you closer to your destiny.  
So much of your life, then, remains  
a mystery!<sup>b</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Be careful in making a rash promise  
before God,  
or you may be trapped by your vow  
and live to regret it.

<sup>26</sup>A wise king is able to discern  
corruption  
and remove wickedness from his  
kingdom.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>27</sup>The spirit God breathed into man<sup>d</sup> is  
like a living lamp,  
a shining light  
searching into the innermost cham-  
ber of our being.

<sup>28</sup>Good leadership<sup>e</sup> is built on love and  
truth,  
for kindness and integrity  
are what keep leaders in their posi-  
tion of trust.

<sup>29</sup>We admire the young for their  
strength and beauty,  
but the dignity of the old is their  
wisdom.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>30</sup>When you are punished severely,  
you learn your lesson well—  
for painful experiences do wonders  
to change your life.

### God Is the Source of Wisdom

**21** It's as easy for God to steer a  
king's heart<sup>g</sup> for his purposes  
as it is for him to direct the course of  
a stream.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>2</sup>We may think we're right all the time,  
but God thoroughly examines our  
motives.

<sup>3</sup>It pleases God more when we  
demonstrate godliness and justice  
than when we merely offer him a  
sacrifice.

<sup>4</sup>Arrogance, superiority, and pride are  
the fruits of sin.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Brilliant ideas pay off and bring you  
prosperity,  
but making hasty, impatient  
decisions  
will only lead to financial loss.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>6</sup>You can make a fortune dishonestly,  
but your crime will hold you in the  
snares of death!<sup>k</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Violent rebels don't have a chance,  
for their rejection of truth and their  
love of evil  
will drag them deeper into darkness.

<sup>a</sup> 20:23 Or "The Lord hates differing weights, and dishonest scales are wicked."

<sup>b</sup> 20:24 The Aramaic reads "So what man is capable of ordering his way?"

<sup>c</sup> 20:26 Or "A wise king winnows the wicked and turns his chariot wheel over them."

<sup>d</sup> 20:27 Implied by the Hebrew word *nishmat*, also used in Gen. 2:7.

<sup>e</sup> 20:28 Or "A king's throne."

<sup>f</sup> 20:29 Or "their gray hair."

<sup>g</sup> 21:1 Don't forget, we have been made kings and priests by the blood of the Lamb. See 1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10.

<sup>h</sup> 21:1 Because a leader's decisions affect so many people, God will intervene and steer them as a farmer steers the course of a stream to irrigate his fields.

<sup>i</sup> 21:4 Or "the tillage of the wicked." The Aramaic and the Septuagint have "the lamp of the wicked."

<sup>j</sup> 21:5 The Aramaic is "The thoughts of the chosen one are trusting, but those of the evil one lead to poverty." This verse is missing from the Septuagint.

<sup>k</sup> 21:6 As translated from the Aramaic and the Septuagint. The Hebrew is "the money will vanish into thin air."

<sup>8</sup>You can discern that a person is guilty by his devious actions and the innocence of a person by his honest, sincere ways.

<sup>9</sup>It's better to live all alone in a rickety shack than to share a castle with a crabby spouse.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>10</sup>The wicked always crave what is evil; they'll show no mercy and get no mercy.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Senseless people learn their lessons the hard way, but the wise are teachable.

<sup>12</sup>A godly, righteous person<sup>c</sup> has the ability to bring the light of instruction to the wicked even though he despises what the wicked do.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>13</sup>If you close your heart to the cries of the poor, then I'll close my ears when you cry out to me!

<sup>14</sup>Try giving a secret gift to the one who is angry with you and watch his anger disappear. A kind, generous gift goes a long way to soothe the anger of one who is livid.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>15</sup>When justice is served, the lovers of God celebrate and rejoice, but the wicked begin to panic.

<sup>16</sup>When you forsake the ways of wisdom, you will wander into the realm of dark spirits.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>17</sup>To love pleasure for pleasure's sake will introduce you to poverty. Indulging in a life of luxury<sup>g</sup> will never make you wealthy.

<sup>18</sup>The wicked bring on themselves the very suffering they planned for others, for their treachery comes back to haunt them.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>19</sup>It's better to live in a hut in the wilderness than with a crabby, scolding spouse!

<sup>20</sup>In wisdom's house you'll find delightful treasures and the oil of the Holy Spirit.<sup>i</sup> But the stupid<sup>j</sup> squander what they've been given.

<sup>21</sup>The lovers of God who chase after righteousness will find all their dreams come true: an abundant life drenched with favor and a fountain that overflows with satisfaction.<sup>k</sup>

*a* 21:9 The Septuagint reads "It's better to live in the corner of an attic than in a large home plastered with unrighteousness."

*b* 21:10 The Hebrew is "they show no mercy," while the Septuagint reads "they'll receive no mercy." This translation merges both concepts.

*c* 21:12 The Hebrew is "a righteous one," which can also speak of God, "the Righteous One."

*d* 21:12 As translated from the Septuagint. There are many examples of this in the Bible: Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon, and the follower of Jesus today who is living among unbelievers.

*e* 21:14 The Aramaic and Septuagint translate this "He who withholds a gift arouses anger."

*f* 21:16 Or "the congregation of the Rephaites." The Rephaites were a pagan tribe of giants and have been equated with spirits of darkness. See Gen. 14:5 and Deut. 2:11.

*g* 21:17 Or "loving wine and oil."

*h* 21:18 Or "The evil become the ransom payment for the righteous and the faithless for the upright."

*i* 21:20 The Hebrew word for "oil" is an emblem of the Holy Spirit.

*j* 21:20 Or "a fool of a man."

*k* 21:21 Or "righteousness."

- <sup>22</sup>A warrior filled with wisdom ascends into the high place and releases breakthrough, bringing down the strongholds of the mighty.<sup>a</sup>
- <sup>23</sup>Watch your words and be careful what you say, and you'll be surprised by how few troubles you'll have.
- <sup>24</sup>An arrogant man is inflated with pride—  
nothing but a snooty scoffer in love with his own opinion.  
Mr. Mocker is his name!<sup>b</sup>
- <sup>25–26</sup>Taking the easy way out is the habit of a lazy man, and it will be his downfall.  
All day long he thinks about all the things that he craves, for he hasn't learned the secret that the generous man has learned:  
extravagant giving never leads to poverty.<sup>c</sup>
- <sup>27</sup>To bring an offering to God with an ulterior motive is detestable, for it amounts to nothing but hypocrisy.
- <sup>28</sup>No one believes a notorious liar, but the guarded words of an honest man stand the test of time.
- <sup>29</sup>The wicked are shameless and stubborn,

- but the lovers of God have a holy confidence.
- <sup>30</sup>All your brilliant wisdom and clever insight will be of no help at all if the Lord is against you.
- <sup>31</sup>You can do your best to prepare for the battle,<sup>d</sup> but ultimate victory comes from the Lord God.

### How to Live a Life of Wisdom

- 22** A beautiful reputation is more to be desired than great riches,<sup>e</sup> and to be esteemed by others is more honorable than to own immense investments.<sup>f</sup>
- <sup>2</sup>The rich and the poor have one thing in common:  
the Lord God created each one.
- <sup>3</sup>A prudent person with insight foresees danger coming and prepares himself for it.<sup>g</sup> But the senseless rush blindly forward and suffer the consequences.
- <sup>4</sup>Laying your life down in tender surrender before the Lord will bring life, prosperity, and honor as your reward.
- <sup>5</sup>Twisted and perverse lives are surrounded by demonic influence.<sup>h</sup>

*a* 21:22 Or “demolishing their strength of confidence.”

*b* 21:24 The Septuagint adds a line: “He who holds a grudge is a sinner.”

*c* 21:25–26 This is implied in the context and is necessary to complete the meaning of the proverb. The last line of this verse in the Septuagint reads “the righteous lavish on others mercy and compassion.”

*d* 21:31 Or “The horse is prepared for the battle.”

*e* 22:1 The Hebrew is simply “name preferred to wealth.” The Aramaic indicates it could be “the name [of God].”

*f* 22:1 Or “silver and gold.” Remember, it is Solomon, one of the richest men to ever live, who penned these words.

*g* 22:3 Wise people solve problems before they happen.

*h* 22:5 Or “thorns and snares.” This becomes a metaphor for demonic curses and troubles. Thorns are associated with the fall of Adam. Jesus wore a crown of thorns and took away our curse. The snares picture the temptations of evil that the devil places in our path.



If you value your soul, stay far away from them.

<sup>6</sup>Dedicate your children to God and point them in the way that they should go,<sup>a</sup> and the values they've learned from you will be with them for life.

<sup>7</sup>If you borrow money with interest, you'll end up serving the interests of your creditors,<sup>b</sup> for the rich rule over the poor.

<sup>8</sup>Sin is a seed that brings a harvest; you'll reap a heap of trouble with every seed you plant.

For your investment in sins pays a full return—the full punishment you deserve!<sup>c</sup>

<sup>9</sup>When you are generous<sup>d</sup> to the poor, you are enriched with blessings in return.

<sup>10</sup>Say goodbye to a troublemaker and you'll say goodbye to quarrels, strife, tension, and arguments, for a troublemaker traffics in shame.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>11</sup>The Lord loves those whose hearts are holy,

and he is the friend of those whose ways are pure.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>12</sup>God passionately watches<sup>g</sup> over his deep reservoir<sup>h</sup> of revelation-knowledge, but he subverts the lies of those who pervert the truth.

<sup>13</sup>A slacker always has an excuse for not working—like “I can’t go to work. There’s a lion outside!

*And murderers too!”<sup>i</sup>*

<sup>14</sup>Sex with an adulteress is like falling into the abyss.

Those under God’s curse jump right in to their own destruction.

<sup>15</sup>Although rebellion<sup>j</sup> is woven into a young man’s heart, tough discipline can make him into a man.

<sup>16</sup>There are two kinds of people headed toward poverty: those who exploit the poor and those who bribe the rich.<sup>k</sup>

#### Sayings of the Wise Sages

<sup>17</sup>Listen carefully and open your heart.<sup>l</sup>

*a* 22:6 Or “train them in the direction they are best suited to go.” Some Jewish scholars teach this means understanding your children’s talents and then seeing that they go into that field.

*b* 22:7 The Septuagint reads “the servant will lend to his own master.”

*c* 22:8 As translated from the Septuagint.

*d* 22:9 The Hebrew word translated here as “generous” actually means “to have a bountiful eye.” It is a figure of speech for generosity, a life of helping others.

*e* 22:10 As translated from the Aramaic.

*f* 22:11 As translated from the Septuagint. Followers of Jesus enjoy a relationship with our holy King as we live in the light and love to please him.

*g* 22:12 Or “the eyes of the Lord [watch].” In the church today, prophets become eyes in the body of Christ. They see and reveal God’s heart for his people.

*h* 22:12 Although the concept of a reservoir is not found in the Hebrew, this translation adds it for poetic nuance.

*i* 22:13 This humorous verse uses both satire and a metaphor. There’s always an excuse for not working hard. The Aramaic text adds “And murderers too!”

*j* 22:15 The Aramaic word used here means “senseless.”

*k* 22:16 The Hebrew is literally “Oppressing the poor is gain; giving to the rich is loss. Both end up only in poverty.”

*l* 22:17 From this verse to 24:22 we have a collection of proverbs that lead to virtue. They are especially designed for the young person about to enter a career and start a family.



Drink in the wise revelation that I impart.

<sup>18</sup>You'll become winsome and wise when you treasure the beauty of my words.

And always be prepared to share them at the appropriate time.

<sup>19</sup>For I'm releasing these words to you this day, yes, even to you, so that your living hope will be found in God alone, for he is the only one who is always true.

<sup>20-21</sup>Pay attention to these excellent sayings of three-fold things.<sup>a</sup> For within my words you will discover true and reliable revelation. They will give you serenity<sup>b</sup> so that you can reveal the truth of the word of the one who sends you.

<sup>22</sup>Never oppress the poor or pass laws with the motive of crushing the weak.

<sup>23</sup>For the Lord will rise to plead their case and humiliate the one who humiliates the poor.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>24-25</sup>Walk away from an angry man or you'll embrace a snare in your soul<sup>d</sup> by becoming bad-tempered just like him.

<sup>26</sup>Why would you ever guarantee a loan for someone else or promise to be responsible for someone's debts?

<sup>27</sup>For if you fail to pay you could lose your shirt!<sup>e</sup>

<sup>28</sup>The previous generation has set boundaries in place. Don't you dare move them just to benefit yourself!<sup>f</sup>

<sup>29</sup>If you are uniquely gifted in your work, you will rise and be promoted. You won't be held back—you'll stand before kings!

### Wisdom Will Protect You

**23** When you've been invited to dine with a very important leader, consider your manners and keep in mind whom you're with.

<sup>2</sup>Be careful to curb your appetite and catch yourself

<sup>a</sup> 22:20–21 As translated from the Aramaic. Most translators find this verse difficult to convey. The Hebrew can be “I have written excellent things,” “I have written three times,” “I write thirty sayings [proverbs],” “I have written you previously,” or “I have written you generals.” The Septuagint reads “You should copy these things three times.” If the Proverbs contain keys to understanding riddles and mysteries (see Prov. 1:2–6), then we have one of those keys given to us here. God speaks in threes, for he is a triune God. We have a body, soul, and spirit. God lived in a three-room house (the outer court, the Holy Place, and the chamber of the Most Holy Place). These three-fold dimensions are throughout the Bible.

<sup>b</sup> 22:20–21 *Serenity* is only found in the Aramaic.

<sup>c</sup> 22:23 As translated from the Aramaic. The Hebrew is “he will rob the soul of the one who robs the poor.”

<sup>d</sup> 22:24–25 As translated from the Aramaic.

<sup>e</sup> 22:27 Or “bed.”

<sup>f</sup> 22:28 This refers to moving property lines of your neighbors to take more land, or it could mean moving landmarks and memorials placed there by ancestors. It also speaks to the moral boundaries that the previous generation modeled—they are to be upheld.

- before you fall into the trap of wanting all you see.<sup>a</sup>
- <sup>3</sup>Don't crave their delicacies, for they may have another motive in having you sit at their table.
- <sup>4</sup>Don't compare yourself to the rich.<sup>b</sup> Surrender your selfish ambition and evaluate them properly.
- <sup>5</sup>For no sooner do you start counting your wealth than it sprouts wings and flies away like an eagle in the sky—here today, gone tomorrow!
- <sup>6</sup>Be sensible when you dine with a stingy man<sup>c</sup> and don't eat more than you should.<sup>d</sup>
- <sup>7</sup>For as he thinks within himself, so is he.<sup>e</sup>  
He will grudgingly say, "Go ahead and eat all you want," but in his heart he resents the fact that he has to pay for your meal.
- <sup>8</sup>You'll be sorry you ate anything at all,<sup>f</sup> and all your compliments will be wasted.
- <sup>9</sup>A rebellious fool will despise your wise advice,
- so don't even waste your time—save your breath!
- <sup>10</sup>Never move a long-standing boundary line or attempt to take land that belongs to the fatherless.
- <sup>11</sup>For they have a mighty protector, a loving redeemer,<sup>g</sup> who watches over them, and he will stand up for their cause.
- <sup>12</sup>Pay close attention to the teaching that corrects you, and open your heart to every word of instruction.
- <sup>13</sup>Don't withhold appropriate discipline from your child. Go ahead and punish him when he needs it.<sup>h</sup>  
Don't worry—it won't kill him!
- <sup>14</sup>A good spanking could be the very thing that teaches him a lifelong lesson!<sup>i</sup>
- <sup>15</sup>My beloved child, when your heart is full of wisdom, my heart is full of gladness.
- <sup>16</sup>And when you speak anointed words,<sup>j</sup> we are speaking mouth to mouth!<sup>k</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 23:2 Or "put a knife to your throat." When you spend time with an important person, think about his needs, not your own, and favor will come on your life.

<sup>b</sup> 23:4 As translated from the Septuagint.

<sup>c</sup> 23:6 The Hebrew here literally means "an evil eye," which is a metaphor for a stingy man.

<sup>d</sup> 23:6 Or "don't crave his delicacies."

<sup>e</sup> 23:7 The Aramaic, the Septuagint, and a few Hebrew manuscripts read "Eating with him is like eating with someone with a hair in his throat—his mind is not with you!"

<sup>f</sup> 23:8 Or "You'll vomit up the little you've eaten."

<sup>g</sup> 23:11 The Hebrew word here is *goel*, which means "kinsman-redeemer." The Aramaic word means "Savior." This shows powerfully how God will take up the grievances of the oppressed.

<sup>h</sup> 23:13 The Hebrew is "strike them with the rod."

<sup>i</sup> 23:14 Or "rescues him from death." The Hebrew word is *Sheol*.

<sup>j</sup> 23:16 Or "speak what is right."

<sup>k</sup> 23:16 This is taken from the Septuagint, and it literally means "Your lips shall speak with my lips." The Hebrew is "My kidneys [soul] will rejoice." See Num. 12:6–8, which reveals that God spoke with Moses "mouth to mouth" (literal Hebrew).

<sup>17</sup>Don't allow the actions of evil men to cause you to burn with anger.<sup>a</sup>  
Instead, burn with unrelenting passion  
as you worship God in holy awe.

<sup>18</sup>Your future is bright and filled with a living hope  
that will never fade away.

<sup>19</sup>As you listen to me, my beloved child,  
you will grow in wisdom and your heart  
will be drawn into understanding,  
which will empower you to make right decisions.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Don't live in the excesses of drunkenness or gluttony,  
or waste your life away by partying all the time,<sup>c</sup>

<sup>21</sup>because drunkards and gluttons sleep their lives away  
and end up broke!

<sup>22</sup>Give respect to your father and mother,  
for without them you wouldn't even be here.  
And don't neglect them when they grow old.

<sup>23</sup>Embrace the truth<sup>d</sup> and hold it close.  
Don't let go of wisdom, instruction,  
and life-giving understanding.

<sup>24</sup>When a father observes his child living in godliness,  
he is ecstatic with joy—nothing makes him prouder!

<sup>25</sup>So may your father's heart burst with joy  
and your mother's soul be filled with gladness because of you.

<sup>26</sup>My son, give me your heart  
and embrace fully what I'm about to tell you.

<sup>27</sup>Stay far away from prostitutes  
and you'll stay far away from the pit of destruction.

For sleeping with a promiscuous woman is like falling into a trap  
that you'll never be able to escape!

<sup>28</sup>Like a robber hiding in the shadows  
she's waiting to claim another victim—  
another husband unfaithful to his wife.

<sup>29</sup>Who has anguish? Who has bitter sorrow?

Who constantly complains and argues?

Who stumbles and falls and hurts himself?

Who's the one with bloodshot eyes?

<sup>30</sup>It's the one who drinks too much  
and is always looking for a brew.  
Make sure it's never you!

<sup>31</sup>And don't be drunk with wine<sup>e</sup>  
but be known as one who enjoys the company  
of the lovers of God,<sup>f</sup>

<sup>32</sup>for drunkenness brings the sting of a serpent,

*a* 23:17 The Hebrew word used here describes an emotion of intense passion. Many translate it "envy" ("Do not envy the sinner"), but that does not describe it fully. Another possible translation would be "zeal."

*b* 23:19 The Aramaic is "set up my doctrines in your heart."

*c* 23:20 Translated from the Aramaic and the Septuagint.

*d* 23:23 The Hebrew word here literally means "create the truth" or "give birth to truth" or "possess the truth." This Hebrew word is also used for God as the Creator. See Gen. 14:19, 22.

*e* 23:31 As translated from the Septuagint.

*f* 23:31 As translated from the Septuagint and a marginal reading of the Hebrew. The Aramaic is "Meditate on righteousness." The Septuagint adds a line not found in Hebrew or Aramaic that describes the unflattering life of a drunk: "You will walk around naked as a pestle!"

like the fangs of a viper<sup>a</sup> spreading  
poison into your soul.

<sup>33</sup>It will make you hallucinate,  
mumble,  
and speak words that are perverse.

<sup>34</sup>You'll be like a seasick sailor being  
tossed to and fro,  
dizzy and out of your mind.

<sup>35</sup>You'll awake only to say, "What hit  
me?  
I feel like I've been run over by a  
truck!"  
Yet off you'll go, looking for another  
drink!

### Wisdom's Warning

**24** Don't envy the wealth of the  
wicked or crave their company.

<sup>2</sup>For they're obsessed with causing  
trouble  
and their conversations are corrupt.

<sup>3</sup>Wise people are builders<sup>b</sup>—  
they build families, businesses,  
communities.  
And through intelligence and insight  
their enterprises are established and  
endure.

<sup>4</sup>Because of their skilled leadership,  
the hearts<sup>c</sup> of people are filled with  
the treasures of wisdom  
and the pleasures of spiritual wealth.

<sup>5</sup>Wisdom can make anyone into a  
mighty warrior,<sup>d</sup>  
and revelation-knowledge increases  
strength.

<sup>6</sup>Wise strategy is necessary to wage war,  
and with many astute advisers  
you'll see the path to victory more  
clearly.

<sup>7</sup>Wisdom is a treasure too lofty for a  
quarreling fool<sup>e</sup>—  
he'll have nothing to say when lead-  
ers gather together.

<sup>8</sup>There is one who makes plans to do  
evil—  
Master Schemer is his name.

<sup>9</sup>If you plan to do evil, it's as wrong as  
doing it.

And everyone detests a troublemaker.  
<sup>10</sup>If you faint when under pressure,  
you have need of courage.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Go and rescue the perishing! Be  
their savior!

Why would you stand back and  
watch them stagger to their death?

<sup>12</sup>And why would you say, "But it's  
none of my business"?

The one who knows you completely  
and judges your every motive  
is also the keeper of souls—and not  
just yours!

He sees through your excuses and  
holds you responsible  
for failing to help those whose lives  
are threatened.

<sup>13</sup>Revelation-knowledge is a delicacy,  
sweet like flowing honey that melts  
in your mouth.

Eat as much of it as you can, my  
friend!

*a* 23:32 Or "horned serpent" or "dragon." This is an emblem of the poison of demonic power that can cause addictions and rule over the soul.

*b* 24:3 Or "A house is built by wisdom." The house is more than a structure with roof and a floor. It becomes a metaphor for families, churches, businesses, and enterprises.

*c* 24:4 Or "inner chambers."

*d* 24:5 Or "Wisdom makes anyone into a hero." The Aramaic and the Septuagint read "It's better to be wise than to be strong."

*e* 24:7 The Hebrew is actually "Wisdom is coral to a fool." That is, it is unattainable, deep, and hidden.

*f* 24:10 Or "your strength is limited." Our weakness often becomes an excuse to quit, but strength and courage come as the result of faithfulness under pressure. Some interpret this to mean "If you fail to help others in their time of need, you will grow too weak to help yourself."

<sup>14</sup>For then you will perceive what is true wisdom,  
your future will be bright,<sup>a</sup>  
and this hope living within you will never disappoint you.

<sup>15</sup>Listen up, you wicked, irreverent ones—  
don't harass the lovers of God<sup>b</sup>  
and don't invade their resting place.

<sup>16</sup>For the lovers of God may suffer adversity  
and stumble seven times,  
but they will continue to rise over and over again.  
But the unrighteous are brought down by just one calamity  
*and will never be able to rise again.*<sup>c</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Never gloat when your enemy meets disaster,  
and don't be quick to rejoice if he falls.

<sup>18</sup>For the Lord, who sees your heart,  
will be displeased with you and will pity your foe.

<sup>19</sup>Don't be angrily offended over evil-doers or be agitated by them.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>20</sup>For the wicked have no life and no future—  
their light of life will die out.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>21</sup>My child, stand in awe of Yahweh!  
Give counsel to others,  
but don't mingle with those who are rebellious.

<sup>22</sup>For sudden destruction will fall upon them  
and their lives will be ruined in a moment.

And who knows what retribution they will face!<sup>f</sup>

### Revelation from the Wise

<sup>23</sup>Those enlightened with wisdom have spoken these proverbs:  
Judgment must be impartial,  
for it is always wrong to be swayed by a person's status.

<sup>24</sup>If you say to the guilty, "You are innocent,"  
the nation will curse you and the people will revile you.

<sup>25</sup>But when you convict the guilty,  
the people will thank you and reward you with favor.

<sup>26</sup>Speaking honestly is a sign of true friendship.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Go ahead, build your career and give yourself to your work.  
But if you put me first, you'll see your family built up!<sup>h</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Why would you be a false accuser and slander with your words?

<sup>29</sup>Don't ever spitefully say, "I'll get even with him!  
I'll do to him what he did to me!"

<sup>30-31</sup>One day I passed by the field of a lazy man,  
and I noticed the vineyards of a slacker.  
I observed nothing but thorns,  
weeds, and broken-down walls.

<sup>32</sup>So I considered their lack of wisdom,  
and I pondered the lessons I could learn from this:

*a* 24:14 The Septuagint is "your death will be good."

*b* 24:15 Or "the righteous."

*c* 24:16 Implied in the text, as it completes the parallelism.

*d* 24:19 The Septuagint is "Don't rejoice with those who do evil or be jealous of them."

*e* 24:20 Not only will they die out, but the implication is they will also have no posterity.

*f* 24:22 Verses 21 and 22 are translated from the Aramaic.

*g* 24:26 The Hebrew is literally "An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips." In the culture of the day, kissing was a sign of authentic friendship and a mark of relationship, which was often expressed in public among friends.

*h* 24:27 As translated from the Septuagint.



<sup>33-34</sup>Professional work habits prevent poverty from becoming your permanent business partner. And: If you put off until tomorrow the work you could do today, tomorrow never seems to come.

**25** Solomon's proverbs, published by the scribes of King Hezekiah:

<sup>2</sup>God conceals the revelation of his word<sup>a</sup> in the hiding place of his glory.<sup>b</sup> But the honor of kings<sup>c</sup> is revealed by how they thoroughly search out the deeper meaning of all that God says.

<sup>3</sup>The heart of a king is full of understanding, like the heavens are high and the ocean is deep.

<sup>4</sup>If you burn away the impurities from silver, a sterling vessel will emerge from the fire.

<sup>5</sup>And if you purge corruption from the kingdom, a king's reign will be established in righteousness.

<sup>6</sup>Don't boast in the presence of a king or promote yourself by taking a seat at the head table

and pretending that you're someone important.

<sup>7</sup>For it is better for the king to say to you, "Come, you should sit at the head table," than for him to say in front of everyone, "Please get up and move—you're sitting in the place of the prince."

<sup>8</sup>Don't be hasty to file a lawsuit. By starting something you wish you hadn't, you could be humiliated when you lose your case.

<sup>9</sup>Don't reveal another person's secret just to prove a point in an argument, or you could be accused of being a gossip

<sup>10</sup>and gain a reputation for being one who betrays the confidence of a friend.

<sup>11</sup>Winsome words spoken at just the right time are as appealing as apples gilded in gold surrounded with silver.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>12</sup>When you humbly receive wise correction, it adorns your life with beauty<sup>e</sup> and makes you a better person.

<sup>13</sup>A reliable, trustworthy messenger refreshes the heart of his master,<sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 25:2 Many translate this "a matter," whereas the Hebrew is *dabar*, which is translated more than eight hundred times in the Old Testament as "word."

<sup>b</sup> 25:2 There is beautiful poetry in the Hebrew text. The word for "hide" is *cathar*, and the word for "word" is *dabar*. The Hebrew is actually "*Kabod* [glory] *cathar* [hidden] *dabar* [word]."

<sup>c</sup> 25:2 We have been made kings and priests, royal lovers of God, because of God's grace and Christ's redeeming blood. See 1 Peter 2:9 and Rev. 5:8-10.

<sup>d</sup> 25:11 The Aramaic reads "The one who speaks the word is an apple of gold in a setting of silver." The Septuagint is "A wise word is like a golden apple in a pendant of rubies." Each one of God's promises are like apples gilded in gold. When we are full of his Spirit, we can speak and prophesy words of encouragement that are spoken at the right time for the blessing of others.

<sup>e</sup> 25:12 Or "an earring of gold, an ornament of fine gold." An earring pierces the ear and is an emblem of a listening heart.

<sup>f</sup> 25:13 Or "employer."



like a gentle snowfall at harvest time.

- <sup>14</sup>Clouds that carry no water and a wind that brings no refreshing rain<sup>a</sup>—  
that's what you're like when you boast  
of a gift that you don't have.<sup>b</sup>

#### Wisdom Practices Self-Control

- <sup>15</sup>Use patience and kindness when you want to persuade leaders and watch them change their minds right in front of you.  
For your gentle wisdom will quell the strongest resistance.<sup>c</sup>
- <sup>16</sup>When you discover something sweet, don't overindulge and eat more than you need,  
for excess in anything can make you sick of even a good thing.
- <sup>17</sup>Don't wear out your welcome by staying too long at the home of your friends,  
or they may get fed up with always having you there  
and wish you hadn't come.
- <sup>18</sup>Lying about and slandering people are as bad as hitting them with a club,  
or wounding them with an arrow,

or stabbing them with a sword.

- <sup>19</sup>You can't depend on an unreliable person  
when you really need help.  
It can be compared to biting down on an abscessed tooth  
or walking with a sprained ankle.
- <sup>20</sup>When you sing a song of joy to someone suffering  
in the deepest grief and heartache, it can be compared to disrobing in the middle of a blizzard  
or rubbing salt in a wound.
- <sup>21</sup>Is your enemy hungry? Buy him lunch.<sup>d</sup>  
Win him over with your kindness.
- <sup>22</sup>Your surprising generosity will awaken his conscience<sup>e</sup>  
and God will reward you with favor.
- <sup>23</sup>As the north wind brings a storm, saying things you shouldn't brings a storm to any relationship.
- <sup>24</sup>It's better to live all alone in a run-down shack  
than to share a castle with a crabby spouse!<sup>f</sup>
- <sup>25</sup>Like a drink of cool water refreshes a weary, thirsty soul,  
so hearing good news revives the spirit.

*a* 25:14 The symbols of clouds, wind, and rain are significant. Clouds are often a metaphor for the people of God filled with glory (see Heb. 12:1; Rev. 1:7). Wind is an emblem of the Holy Spirit bringing new life (see John 3:6–8). Rain often points to teaching the revelation-truths that refresh and water the seeds of spiritual growth (see Isa. 55:10–11). God's anointed people are to be clouds carried by the wind of the Holy Spirit that bring refreshing truths to his people. When we are empty and false, we are clouds without rain. See also 2 Peter 2:17 and Judah 12.

*b* 25:14 Or “boast of a promised gift you never intend to give.” The Hebrew is literally “to make yourself shine in a gift of falsehood.”

*c* 25:15 Or “Soft words break bones.”

*d* 25:21 Or “Is he thirsty? Give him a drink.”

*e* 25:22 Or “You will heap coals of fire on his head.” His heart will be moved and his shame exposed.

*f* 25:23 Or “words of gossip.”

*g* 25:24 With the exception of one Hebrew letter, this verse is identical to 21:9. See footnote. The Aramaic reads “than to live with a contentious woman in a house of divisions.”

<sup>26</sup>When a lover of God gives in and compromises with wickedness, it can be compared to contaminating a stream with sewage or polluting a fountain.

<sup>27</sup>It's good to eat sweet things, but you can take too much. It's good to be honored, but to seek words of praise<sup>a</sup> is not honor at all.

<sup>28</sup>If you live without restraint and are unable to control your temper, you're as helpless as a city with broken-down defenses, open to attack.

### Don't Be a Fool

**26** It is totally out of place to promote and honor a fool, just like it's out of place to have snow in the summer and rain at harvest time.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>2</sup>An undeserved curse will be powerless to harm you.

It may flutter over you like a bird, but it will find no place to land.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Guide a horse with a whip, direct a donkey with a bridle, and lead a rebellious fool with a beating on his backside!

<sup>4</sup>Don't respond to the words of a fool with more foolish words, or you will become as foolish as he is!

<sup>5</sup>Instead, if you're asked a silly question, answer it with words of wisdom<sup>d</sup>

so the fool doesn't think he's so clever.

<sup>6</sup>If you choose a fool to represent you, you're asking for trouble.

It will be as bad for you as cutting off your own feet!

<sup>7</sup>You can never trust the words of a fool, just like a crippled man can't trust his legs to support him.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Give honor to a fool and watch it backfire—like a stone tied to a slingshot.

<sup>9</sup>The statements of a fool will hurt others<sup>f</sup> like a thorn bush brandished by a drunk.

<sup>10</sup>Like a reckless archer shooting arrows at random is the impatient employer who hires just any fool who comes along—

someone's going to get hurt!<sup>g</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Fools are famous for repeating their errors, like dogs are known to return to their vomit.

<sup>12</sup>There's only one thing worse than a fool, and that's the smug, conceited man always in love with his own opinions.

### Don't Be Lazy

<sup>13</sup>The lazy loafer says, "I can't go out and look for a job—

<sup>a</sup> 25:27 This line is translated from the Aramaic.

<sup>b</sup> 26:1 Both snow and rain are good in their proper season but harmful in the wrong season. So is it harmful to the fool if you promote and honor him prematurely.

<sup>c</sup> 26:2 There is an implication in some Hebrew manuscripts that the curse will go back and land on the one who wrongly spoke it, like a bird going back to its nest.

<sup>d</sup> 26:5 As translated from the Aramaic.

<sup>e</sup> 26:7 As translated from the Aramaic.

<sup>f</sup> 26:9 As translated from the Aramaic.

<sup>g</sup> 26:10 Implied in the context. This is a difficult verse to translate, and it reads quite differently in the Aramaic and the Septuagint. The Aramaic is "A fool suffers much, like a drunkard crossing the sea." The Septuagint reads "Every fool endures much hardship and his fury comes to nothing."

there may be a lion out there roaming wild in the streets!”

<sup>14</sup>As a door is hinged to the wall, so the lazy man keeps turning over, hinged to his bed!

<sup>15</sup>There are some people so lazy they won't even work to feed themselves.

<sup>16</sup>A self-righteous person<sup>a</sup> is convinced he's smarter than seven wise counselors who tell him the truth.

<sup>17</sup>It's better to grab a stray dog by its ears than to meddle in a quarrel<sup>b</sup> that's none of your business.

### Watch Your Words

<sup>18-19</sup>The one who is caught lying to his friend, who says, “I didn't mean it, I was only joking,” can be compared to a madman randomly shooting off deadly weapons.

<sup>20</sup>It takes fuel to have a fire—a fire dies down when you run out of fuel. So quarrels disappear when the gossip ends.

<sup>21</sup>Add fuel to the fire and the blaze goes on. So add an argumentative man to the mix, and you'll keep strife alive.

<sup>22</sup>Gossip is so delicious, and how we love to swallow it! For slander<sup>c</sup> is easily absorbed into our innermost being.

<sup>23</sup>Smooth talk<sup>d</sup> can hide a corrupt heart just like a pretty glaze covers a cheap clay pot.

<sup>24</sup>Kind words can be a cover to conceal hatred of others, for hypocrisy loves to hide behind flattery.

<sup>25</sup>So don't be drawn in by the hypocrite, for his gracious speech is a charade, nothing but a masquerade covering his hatred and evil on parade.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Don't worry—he can't keep the mask on for long.

One day his hypocrisy will be exposed before all the world.

<sup>27</sup>Go ahead, set a trap for others—and then watch as it snaps back on you!

Start a landslide and you'll be the one who gets crushed.

<sup>28</sup>Hatred is the root of slander<sup>f</sup> and insecurity the root of flattery.<sup>g</sup>

### Heed Wisdom's Warnings

**27** Never brag about the plans you have for tomorrow, for you don't have a clue what tomorrow may bring to you.

<sup>2</sup>Let someone else honor you for your accomplishments, for self-praise is never appropriate.

<sup>3</sup>It's easier to carry a heavy boulder and a ton of sand than to be provoked by a fool and have to carry that burden!

<sup>4</sup>The rage and anger of others can be overwhelming, but it's nothing compared to jealousy's fire.

a 26:16 Or “sluggard.” This speaks of a person who lives in fantasy and not reality.

b 26:17 Or “to become furious because of a quarrel that's not yours.”

c 26:22 Or “complaining.”

d 26:23 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is “Burning words.”

e 26:25 The Hebrew is “seven abominations hide in his heart.” This is a figure of speech for the fullness of evil, a heart filled to the brim with darkness.

f 26:28 Or “A slanderer hates his victims.”

g 26:28 Or “A flattering mouth works ruin.” The Aramaic is “Malicious words work trouble.”

<sup>5</sup>It's better to be corrected openly  
 if it stems from hidden love.  
<sup>6</sup>You can trust a friend who wounds  
 you with his honesty,<sup>a</sup>  
 but your enemy's pretended flattery<sup>b</sup>  
 comes from insincerity.  
<sup>7</sup>When your soul is full, you turn  
 down even the sweetest honey.  
 But when your soul is starving,  
 every bitter thing becomes sweet.<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>8</sup>Like a bird that has fallen from its  
 nest  
 is the one who is dislodged from his  
 home.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>9</sup>Sweet friendships<sup>e</sup> refresh the soul  
 and awaken our hearts with joy,  
 for good friends are like the anoint-  
 ing oil  
 that yields the fragrant incense of  
 God's presence!<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>10</sup>So never give up on a friend or  
 abandon a friend of your father—  
 for in the day of your brokenness<sup>g</sup>  
 you won't have to run to a relative  
 for help.  
 A friend nearby is better than a rela-  
 tive far away.  
<sup>11</sup>My son, when you walk in wisdom,  
 my heart is filled with gladness,  
 for the way you live is proof  
 that I've not taught you in vain.<sup>h</sup>  
<sup>12</sup>A wise, shrewd person discerns the  
 danger ahead

and prepares himself,  
 but the naïve simpleton never looks  
 ahead  
 and suffers the consequences.  
<sup>13</sup>Cosign for one you barely know and  
 you will pay a great price!  
 Anyone stupid enough to guarantee  
 the loan of another  
 deserves to have his property seized  
 in payment.  
<sup>14</sup>Do you think you're blessing your  
 neighbors  
 when you sing at the top of your  
 lungs early in the morning?  
 Don't be fooled—  
 they'll curse you for doing it!<sup>i</sup>  
<sup>15</sup>An endless drip, drip, drip, from a  
 leaky faucet<sup>j</sup>  
 and the words of a cranky, nagging  
 wife have the same effect.  
<sup>16</sup>Can you stop the north wind from  
 blowing  
 or grasp a handful of oil?  
 That's easier than to stop her from  
 complaining.  
<sup>17</sup>It takes a grinding wheel to sharpen  
 a blade,  
 and so one person sharpens the  
 character of another.  
<sup>18</sup>Tend an orchard and you'll have  
 fruit to eat.  
 Serve the Master's interests  
 and you'll receive honor that's sweet.

a 27:6 Or "Amen [effective and faithful] are the wounds of love." This could be a reference to the wounds Jesus endured because of his love for us.

b 27:6 Or "kisses."

c 27:7 When we are full of many things and many opinions, the sweet word of God, like revelation honey, is spurned. Instead, we eat and fill our souls with things that can never satisfy.

d 27:8 Or "banished from his place," as translated from the Aramaic.

e 27:9 Or "counsel."

f 27:9 The Hebrew text refers to the sacred anointing oil and the incense that burns in the Holy Place.

g 27:10 As translated from the Aramaic.

h 27:11 Or "that I may answer those who reproach me."

i 27:14 Or "He who sings in a loud voice early in the morning, thinking he's blessing his neighbor, is no different from he who pronounces a curse."

j 27:15 Or "a constant drip on a rainy day."

<sup>19</sup>Just as no two faces are exactly alike,  
so every heart is different.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Death and destruction are never filled,  
and the desires of men's hearts are  
insatiable.

<sup>21</sup>Fire is the way to test the purity of  
silver and gold,  
but the character of a man is tested  
by giving him a measure of fame.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>22</sup>You can beat a fool half to death  
and still never beat the foolishness  
out of him.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>23</sup>A shepherd should pay close atten-  
tion to the faces of his flock  
and hold close to his heart the con-  
dition of those he cares for.

<sup>24</sup>A man's strength, power, and riches<sup>d</sup>  
will one day fade away;  
not even nations<sup>e</sup> endure forever.

<sup>25–27</sup>Take care of your responsibilities  
and be diligent in your business  
and you will have more than enough—  
an abundance of food, clothing, and  
plenty for your household.<sup>f</sup>

even though no one threatens them.  
But the innocent lovers of God,  
because of righteousness,  
will have the boldness<sup>g</sup> of a young,  
ferocious lion!

<sup>2</sup>A rebellious nation is thrown into  
chaos,<sup>h</sup>  
but leaders anointed with wisdom  
will restore law and order.

<sup>3</sup>When a pauper<sup>i</sup> oppresses the  
destitute,  
it's like a flash flood that sweeps  
away their last hope.

<sup>4</sup>Those who turn their backs on what  
they know is right<sup>j</sup>  
will no longer be able to tell right  
from wrong.

But those who love the truth  
strengthen their souls.<sup>k</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Justice never makes sense to men  
devoted to darkness,  
but those tenderly devoted to the Lord  
can understand justice perfectly.

<sup>6</sup>It's more respectable to be poor and  
pure than rich and perverse.

<sup>7</sup>To be obedient to what you've been  
taught<sup>l</sup>  
proves you're an honorable child,

## Lovers of God

### 28 Guilty criminals experience paranoia

a 27:19 As translated from the Aramaic and the Septuagint.

b 27:21 Or "by the things he praises."

c 27:22 Or "If you pound a fool in a mortar with a pestle like dried grain, still his foolishness will not depart from him."

d 27:24 The Hebrew says merely "riches," while the Aramaic adds "power [dominion]" and the Septuagint adds "strength." This translation combines them.

e 27:24 Or "a crown" or "diadem [dominion]."

f 27:25–27 An agricultural analogy is used in the Hebrew and Aramaic. The analogy of a farming enterprise has been changed to business here in order to transfer meaning. It is literally "Gather the hay of the field and hills, and new grass will appear. Lambs will provide clothing, goats will pay for the price of the field, and there will be enough goat's milk for you, your family, and your servant girls."

g 28:1 Or "confidence."

h 28:2 Or "A rebellious nation will have one leader after another."

i 28:3 This pauper can also be one who is spiritually poor. Some Jewish expositors believe it refers to corrupt judges.

j 28:4 The Hebrew word is "the Torah." See vv. 7, 9.

k 28:4 As translated from the Aramaic. The Septuagint is "build a wall to protect themselves."

l 28:7 Or "the Torah."



but to socialize with the lawless  
 brings shame to your parents.  
<sup>8</sup>Go ahead and get rich on the backs  
 of the poor,  
 but all the wealth you gather will  
 one day be given  
 to those who are kind to the needy.  
<sup>9</sup>If you close your heart and refuse to  
 listen to God's instruction,<sup>a</sup>  
 even your prayer will be despised.  
<sup>10</sup>Those who tempt the lovers of God  
 with an evil scheme  
 will fall into their own traps.  
 But the innocent who resist tempta-  
 tion will experience reward.  
<sup>11</sup>The wealthy in their conceit pre-  
 sume to be wise,  
 but a poor person with discernment  
 can see right through them.  
<sup>12</sup>The triumphant joy of God's lovers  
 releases great glory.<sup>b</sup>  
 But when the wicked rise to power,  
 everyone goes into hiding.<sup>c</sup>  
<sup>13</sup>If you cover up your sin you'll never  
 do well.  
 But if you confess your sins and  
 forsake them,  
 you will be kissed by mercy.  
<sup>14</sup>Overjoyed is the one who with ten-  
 der heart trembles before God,  
 but the stubborn, unyielding heart  
 will experience even greater evil.

<sup>15</sup>Ruthless rulers can only be compared  
 to raging lions and roaming bears.<sup>d</sup>  
<sup>16</sup>Abusive leaders fail to employ  
 wisdom,  
 but leaders who despise corruption<sup>e</sup>  
 will enjoy a long and full life.<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>17</sup>A murderer's conscience will tor-  
 ment him—  
 a fugitive haunted by guilt all the  
 way to the grave  
 with no one to support him.  
<sup>18</sup>The pure will be rescued from failure,  
 but the perverse will suddenly fall  
 into ruin.  
<sup>19</sup>Work hard and you'll have all you  
 desire,  
 but chase a fantasy<sup>g</sup> and you could  
 end up with nothing.  
<sup>20</sup>Life's blessings drench the honest  
 and faithful person,  
 but punishment rains down upon  
 the greedy and dishonest.  
<sup>21</sup>Giving favoritism to the rich and  
 powerful is disgusting,  
 and this is done by the type of judge  
 who would betray a man for a bribe.<sup>h</sup>  
<sup>22</sup>A greedy man<sup>i</sup> is in a race to get rich,  
 but he forgets that he could lose  
 what's most important  
 and end up with nothing.<sup>j</sup>  
<sup>23</sup>If you correct someone with con-  
 structive criticism,

*a* 28:9 Or "the Torah."

*b* 28:12 As translated from the Aramaic.

*c* 28:12 Or "people become victims."

*d* 28:15 David, before he killed Goliath, went after the lion and the bear. See 1 Sam. 17:34–37. These beasts represented demonic forces of evil over the land. Daniel also mentions the world's ruthless leaders as lions and bears. See Dan. 7:1–8.

*e* 28:16 Or "injustice."

*f* 28:16 Or "enjoy a long reign."

*g* 28:19 Or "an empty dream." The Septuagint is "the one who pursues leisure."

*h* 28:21 As translated from the Aramaic.

*i* 28:22 Both the Aramaic and Hebrew have "The man with an evil eye." This is a figure of speech for a stingy or greedy man. A person who shuts his heart to the poor is said to have an evil eye. A person with a good eye is someone who looks on the poor with generosity.

*j* 28:22 As translated from the Aramaic. The Aramaic text sounds very similar to what Jesus says about gaining the world but losing our souls. See Mark 8:36.



in the end he will appreciate it more than flattery.

<sup>24</sup>A person who would reject his own parents<sup>a</sup> and say, “What’s wrong with that?” is as bad as a murderer.

<sup>25</sup>To make rash, hasty decisions shows that you are not trusting the Lord.

But when you rely totally on God, you will still act carefully and prudently.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Self-confident know-it-alls<sup>c</sup> will prove to be fools. But when you lean on the wisdom from above, you will have a way to escape the troubles of your own making.

<sup>27</sup>You will never go without if you give to the poor.

But if you’re heartless, stingy, and selfish,<sup>d</sup> you invite curses upon yourself.

<sup>28</sup>When wicked leaders rise to power, good people go into hiding. But when they fall from power, the godly take their place.

### Don’t Be Stubborn

**29** Stubborn people who repeatedly refuse to accept correction will suddenly be broken and never recover.

<sup>2</sup>Everyone rejoices when the lovers of God flourish,

but the people groan when the wicked rise to power.

<sup>3</sup>When you love wisdom, your father is overjoyed.

But when you associate with prostitutes, you waste your wealth in exchange for disgrace.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>4</sup>A godly leader who values justice is a great strength and example to the people.

But the one who sells his influence for money tears down what is right.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Flattery can often be used as a trap to hide ulterior motives and take advantage of you.

<sup>6</sup>The wicked always have a trap laid for others, but the lovers of God escape as they sing and shout in joyous triumph!

<sup>7</sup>God’s righteous people will pour themselves out for the poor,<sup>g</sup> but the ungodly make no attempt to understand or help the needy.

### You Can’t Argue with a Fool

<sup>8</sup>Arrogant cynics love to pick fights, but the humble and wise love to pursue peace.

<sup>9</sup>There’s no use arguing with a fool,<sup>h</sup> for his ranting and raving prevent you from making a case and settling the argument in a calm way.

*a* 28:24 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is “the one who steals from his own parents.”

*b* 28:25 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is “The greedy person stirs up trouble, but the one who trusts in the Lord will prosper.”

*c* 28:26 Or “those who trust their instincts.”

*d* 28:27 Or “if you hide your eyes from the poor.”

*e* 29:3 See Luke 15:11–24.

*f* 29:4 See 1 Tim. 6:10.

*g* 29:7 The Hebrew text implies standing up for the legal rights of the poor.

*h* 29:9 The Hebrew implies an argument in a court of law.

<sup>10</sup>Violent men hate those with integrity,  
but the lovers of God esteem those  
who are holy.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>11</sup>You can recognize fools by the way  
they give full vent to their rage  
and let their words fly!  
But the wise bite their tongues and  
hold back all they could say.

<sup>12</sup>When leaders listen to false  
accusations,  
their associates become scoundrels.

<sup>13</sup>Poor people and their oppressors  
have only one thing in common—  
God made them both.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>14</sup>The best insurance for a leader's  
longevity  
is to demonstrate justice for the  
poor.

<sup>15</sup>Experiencing many corrections and  
rebukes will make you wise.  
But if left to your own ways, you'll  
bring disgrace to your parents.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>16</sup>When the wicked are in power, law-  
lessness abounds.  
But the patient lovers of God will  
one day watch in triumph  
as their stronghold topples!

<sup>17</sup>Correct your child and one day you'll  
find he has changed  
and will bring you great delight.

<sup>18</sup>When there is no clear prophetic  
vision,<sup>d</sup>  
people quickly wander astray.<sup>e</sup>  
But when you follow the revelation  
of the Word,  
heaven's bliss fills your soul.

<sup>19</sup>A stubborn servant can't be cor-  
rected by words alone.  
For even if he understands, he pays  
no attention to you.

<sup>20</sup>There's only one kind of person who  
is worse than a fool:  
the impetuous one who speaks with-  
out thinking first.

<sup>21</sup>If you pamper your servants,  
don't be surprised when they expect  
to be treated as sons.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>22</sup>The source of strife is found in an  
angry heart,  
for sin surrounds the life of a furious  
man.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>23</sup>Lift yourself up with pride and you  
will soon be brought low,<sup>h</sup>  
but a meek and humble spirit will  
add to your honor.

<sup>24</sup>You are your own worst enemy  
when you partner with a thief,  
for a curse of guilt will come upon you  
when you fail to report a crime.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Fear and intimidation is a trap that  
holds you back.

*a* 29:10 As translated from the Septuagint.

*b* 29:13 A figure of speech in Hebrew that can literally be translated "God gave them both the gift of eyesight." The Septuagint is "The contracts between lenders and debtors are observed by the Lord."

*c* 29:15 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is "your mother."

*d* 29:18 The Hebrew word used here can refer to a "vision of the night," "dream," "oracle," or "revelation." The Septuagint reads "where there is no prophetic seer [or interpreter]."

*e* 29:18 Or "let loose," "strip," or "made themselves naked." The Septuagint reads "the people become lawless."

*f* 29:21 Or "If you pamper your servant when he is young, he'll become a weakling in the end." The Septuagint reads "If you live in luxury as a child, you'll become a domestic [servant] and at last will be grieved with yourself." The Aramaic states, "You'll be uprooted in the end."

*g* 29:22 The Hebrew word translated as "a furious man" can also mean "lord of fury" or "Baal of wrath."

*h* 29:23 Or "to depression."

*i* 29:24 Or "when under oath to testify but you do not talk."

But when you place your confidence  
in the Lord,  
you will be seated in the high place.

<sup>26</sup>Everyone curries favor with leaders.  
But God is the judge, and justice  
comes from him.

<sup>27</sup>The wicked hate those who live a  
godly life,  
but the righteous hate injustice  
wherever it's found.

### The Mysterious Sayings of Agur

**30** These are the collected sayings  
of the prophet Agur, Jakeh's  
son<sup>a</sup>—

the amazing revelation<sup>b</sup> he imparted  
to Ithiel and Ukal.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>2</sup>God, I'm so weary and worn out,  
I feel more like a beast than a man.

*I was made in your image,<sup>d</sup>*  
but I lack understanding.

<sup>3</sup>I've yet to learn the wisdom  
that comes from the full and inti-  
mate knowledge of you,  
the Holy One.

### Six Questions

<sup>4</sup>Who is it that travels back and  
forth

from the heavenly realm to the  
earth?<sup>e</sup>

Who controls the wind<sup>f</sup> as it blows  
and holds it in his fists?

Who tucks the rain into the cloak of  
his clouds?

Who stretches out the skyline from  
one vista to the other?

What is his name?

And what is the name of his Son?

Who can tell me?

### A Pure Heart Is Filled with God's Word

<sup>5</sup>Every promise from the faithful God  
is pure and proves to be true.

He is a wraparound shield of protec-  
tion for all his lovers  
who run to hide in him.

<sup>6</sup>Never add to his words,  
or he will have to rebuke you and  
prove that you're a liar.

<sup>7</sup>God, there are two things I'm asking  
you for before I die, only two:

<sup>8</sup>Empty out of my heart everything  
that is false—

every lie, and every crooked thing.

And give me neither undue poverty  
nor undue wealth—

*a* 30:1 This section of Proverbs is attributed to Agur, who gave these oracles to his protégés Ithiel and Ukal. Agur means "to gather a harvest." He was the son of Jakeh, which means "blameless" or "obedient." Jakeh could be another name for David, Solomon's father. Many Jewish expositors believe that Agur was a pseudonym for Solomon. Nothing more is mentioned about Agur in the Bible than what we have here, which is typical for other prophets mentioned in the Scriptures. Some believe he could be the "master of the collection of sayings" referred to in Eccl. 12:11.

*b* 30:1 Or "mighty prophecy."

*c* 30:1 The name Ithiel can mean "God is with me" or "God has arrived." This was fulfilled by Christ, for his birth was the advent, the arrival of God to the earth in human form. Ukal means "I am able" or "I am strong and mighty." When placed together, the meaning of these Hebrew names could read "Gather a harvest of sons who are blameless and obedient. They will have God with them, and they will be strong and mighty." This chapter contains some of the most mystical and mysterious sayings found in Proverbs, with hints of revelation from the book of Job.

*d* 30:2 Implied in the text, which is extraordinarily difficult to translate with certainty.

*e* 30:4 Jesus solves this riddle in John 3:13. Only Jesus Christ is the master of heavenly knowledge and wisdom. See also Eph. 4:7–10.

*f* 30:4 The Hebrew word *ruach* (wind) is also the term used for the Holy Spirit.

but rather, feed my soul with the measure of prosperity that pleases you.

<sup>9</sup>May my satisfaction be found in you. Don't let me be so rich that I don't need you or so poor that I have to resort to dishonesty just to make ends meet. Then my life will never detract from bringing glory to your name.

<sup>10</sup>Never defame a servant before his master, for you will be the guilty one and a curse will come upon you.

<sup>11</sup>There is a generation rising that curses their fathers and speaks evil of their mothers.

<sup>12</sup>There is a generation rising that considers themselves to be pure in their own eyes,<sup>a</sup> yet they are morally filthy,<sup>b</sup> unwashed, and unclean.

<sup>13</sup>There is a generation rising that is so filled with pride, they think they are superior and look down on others.

<sup>14</sup>There is a generation rising that uses their words like swords to cut and slash those who are different.

They would devour the poor, the needy, and the afflicted from off the face of the earth!

<sup>15</sup>There are three words to describe the greedy:

"Give me more!"

There are some things that are never satisfied.

Forever craving more, they're unable to say, "That's enough!"

Here are four:

<sup>16</sup>the grave, yawning for another victim, the barren womb, ever wanting a child, thirsty soil, ever longing for rain, and a raging fire, devouring its fuel. They're all insatiable.

<sup>17</sup>The eye that mocks his father and dishonors his elderly mother<sup>c</sup> deserves to be plucked out by the ravens of the valley and fed to the young vultures!<sup>d</sup>

#### Four Mysteries

<sup>18</sup>There are four marvelous mysteries that are too amazing to unravel<sup>e</sup>—who could fully explain them?<sup>f</sup>

<sup>19</sup>The way an eagle flies in the sky,<sup>g</sup> the way a snake glides on a boulder,<sup>h</sup>

<sup>a</sup> 30:12 See Judg. 21:25.

<sup>b</sup> 30:12 The Hebrew uses the word *excrement*.

<sup>c</sup> 30:17 As translated from the Septuagint.

<sup>d</sup> 30:17 This is a figure of speech for demonic powers that will remove their vision. Ravens and vultures are unclean birds associated with demonic powers in Hebrew poetry.

<sup>e</sup> 30:18 The Hebrew uses a poetic style of saying there are three mysteries, then saying there are four in order to emphasize their great importance. There could be within this poetic device a pointing to the fourth as the key, or the most important.

<sup>f</sup> 30:18 Notice that each of these four examples have to do with movement and mystery.

<sup>g</sup> 30:19 This is a picture of the overcoming life that soars above its problems and limitations with the wings of an eagle. It could also be a hint of the prophetic revelation that comes to God's servants mysteriously and supernaturally. See Isa. 40:31 and 1 Cor. 2:9–13.

<sup>h</sup> 30:19 The snake becomes a picture of our sin that was placed on the Rock, Jesus Christ. See Num. 21:6–9; John 3:14–15; 2 Cor. 5:21.

the path of a ship as it passes  
through the sea,<sup>a</sup>  
and the way a bridegroom falls in  
love with his bride.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Here is the deceptive way of the  
adulterous woman:<sup>c</sup>  
she takes what she wants and then  
says,  
“I’ve done nothing wrong.”

#### Four Intolerable Things

<sup>21</sup>There are four intolerable events  
that<sup>d</sup> are simply unbearable to  
observe:  
<sup>22</sup>when an unfaithful servant becomes  
a ruler,  
when a scoundrel comes into great  
wealth,  
<sup>23</sup>when an unfaithful woman marries  
a good man,

and when a mistress replaces a  
faithful wife.

#### Four Creatures Small and Wise

<sup>24</sup>The earth has four creatures that are  
very small but very wise:<sup>e</sup>  
<sup>25</sup>The feeble ant has little strength,  
yet look how it diligently gathers its  
food in the summer  
to last throughout the winter.<sup>f</sup>  
<sup>26</sup>The delicate rock-badger isn’t all  
that strong,  
yet look how it makes a secure  
home, nestled in the rocks.<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>27</sup>The locusts have no king to lead  
them,  
yet they cooperate as they move  
forward by bands.<sup>h</sup>  
<sup>28</sup>And the small lizard<sup>i</sup> is easy to  
catch

*a* 30:19 This is a picture of the way our lives, like a ship, sail on the high seas of mystery until we reach our destiny. Our lives contain mysteries, such as where God decided that we were to be born, how we were raised, and the companions who join us until we reach our desired haven. See Ps. 107:23–30.

*b* 30:19 The Hebrew word translated “bride” can also mean “virgin,” pointing to a wedding, thus implying the use of “bridegroom” instead of “man.” (Consider Ruth and Boaz.) More important, this is a beautiful metaphor for the mystery of the love of our heavenly Bridegroom (Jesus), who romances his bride and sweeps us off our feet. Love is a mystery. See also 2 Cor. 11:2 and Eph. 5:32.

*c* 30:20 The adulterous woman of Proverbs is a metaphor for the corrupt religious system. See Rev. 17–18.

*d* 30:21 See the first footnote for v. 18. These four events each depict a promotion undeserved, a displacing of one who is virtuous with one who is corrupt. Each promotion indicates that they will carry their corruption with them. The unfaithful servant will likely become a tyrant. The fool who becomes wealthy will squander his wealth. The unfaithful woman (or “hated woman”) will continue her immorality even after she’s married. The girlfriend who replaced the faithful wife will likely find another man one day.

*e* 30:24 Or “They are the epitome of wisdom.”

*f* 30:25 To prepare for the future is a mark of true wisdom.

*g* 30:26 This becomes a picture of the believer. Though feeling weakness at times, we can make our home in the high place, inside the cleft of the Rock. See John 14:1–3.

*h* 30:27 The locust army points us to Joel 1–2. There is an awakening army coming to devour the works of the enemy. Their King, though invisible, guides them from on high as one army.

*i* 30:28 Or “spider.”



as it clings to the walls with its hands,  
yet it can be found inside a king's palace.<sup>a</sup>

#### Four Stately Things

<sup>29</sup>There are four stately monarchs<sup>b</sup>  
who are impressive to watch as they go forth:

<sup>30</sup>the lion, the king of the jungle, who is afraid of no one,

<sup>31</sup>the rooster strutting boldly among the hens,<sup>c</sup>

the male goat out in front leading the herd,

and a king leading his regal procession.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>32</sup>If you've acted foolishly by drawing attention to yourself,  
or if you've thought about saying something stupid,  
you'd better shut your mouth.

<sup>33</sup>For such stupidity may give you a bloody nose!

Stirring up an argument only leads to an angry confrontation.<sup>e</sup>

#### Inspired Word

**31** King Lemuel's<sup>f</sup> royal words of wisdom:

These are the inspired words my mother taught me.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Listen, my dear son, son of my womb. You are the answer to my prayers, my son.

<sup>3</sup>So keep yourself sexually pure from the promiscuous, wayward woman.

Don't waste the strength of your anointing

on those who ruin kings—  
you'll live to regret it!<sup>h</sup>

<sup>4</sup>For you are a king, Lemuel,  
and it's never fitting for a king to be drunk on wine

or for rulers to crave alcohol.

<sup>5</sup>For when they drink they forget justice

and ignore the rights of those in need,  
*those who depend on them for leadership.*

<sup>6-7</sup>Strong drink is given to the terminally ill,

<sup>a</sup> 30:28 Though we may see ourselves as insignificant (like the small lizard), God can place us in significant places where we can be used for him.

<sup>b</sup> 30:29 See the first footnote on v. 18.

<sup>c</sup> 30:31 As translated from the Septuagint.

<sup>d</sup> 30:31 Or "a king surrounded by his band of soldiers." The Hebrew text is abstruse.

<sup>e</sup> 30:33 Or "Churning milk makes butter, and punching the nose brings blood, so stirring up anger produces quarrels." The Hebrew contains a word play with the word *anger*, which is almost identical to the word for "nose."

<sup>f</sup> 31:1 Jewish legend is that King Lemuel was a pseudonym for Solomon, which would make his mother mentioned here to be Bathsheba. There is no other mention of Lemuel in the Scriptures. The Hebrew word translated "inspired words" is *massa*, which some have surmised was a place, meaning "Lemuel, King of Massa."

<sup>g</sup> 31:1 The Septuagint is "These are words spoken by God, and through a king came an answer divine."

<sup>h</sup> 31:3 As translated from the Septuagint.



who are suffering at the brink of death.

Wine is for those in depression in order to drown their sorrows. Let them drink and forget their poverty and misery.

<sup>8</sup>But you are to be a king who speaks up on behalf of the disenfranchised and pleads for the legal rights of the defenseless and those who are dying.

<sup>9</sup>Be a righteous king, judging on behalf of the poor and interceding for those most in need.<sup>a</sup>

### The Radiant Bride

<sup>10</sup>Who could ever find a wife like this one<sup>b</sup>—

she is a woman of strength and mighty valor!<sup>c</sup>

She's full of wealth and wisdom.

The price paid for her was greater<sup>d</sup> than many jewels.

<sup>11</sup>Her husband has entrusted his heart to her,<sup>e</sup>

for she brings him the rich spoils of victory.

<sup>12</sup>All throughout her life she brings him what is good and not evil.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>13</sup>She searches out continually to possess that which is pure and righteous.<sup>g</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> 31:9 See James 1:27.

<sup>b</sup> 31:10 Starting with verse 10 through the end of the book, we have a Hebrew acrostic poem. It is alphabetical in structure, with each of the twenty-two verses beginning with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The implication is that the perfections of this woman would exhaust the entire language. The subject is the perfect bride, the virtuous woman. This woman is both a picture of a virtuous wife and an incredible allegory of the end-time victorious bride of Jesus Christ, full of virtue and grace.

<sup>c</sup> 31:10 The Hebrew word used to describe this virtuous wife is *khayil*. The meaning of this word cannot be contained by one English equivalent word. It is often used in connection with military prowess. This is a warring wife. *Khayil* can be translated “mighty;” “wealthy;” “excellent;” “morally righteous;” “full of substance, integrity, abilities, and strength;” “mighty like an army.” The wife is a metaphor for the last-days church, the virtuous, overcoming bride of Jesus Christ. The word *khayil* is most often used to describe valiant men. See Ex. 18:21, where it is used for the mighty ones Moses was to commission as elders and leaders among the people. Because many of the cultural terms and metaphors used in this passage are not understood or even used in today's English-speaking world, this translation makes them explicit.

<sup>d</sup> 31:10 Or “her worth.” The price paid for her was the sacred blood of the Lamb of God, her Bridegroom.

<sup>e</sup> 31:11 Or “has great confidence in her.”

<sup>f</sup> 31:12 The virtuous bride will not bring disgrace to his name. Jesus will not be ashamed to display her to the world.

<sup>g</sup> 31:13 Or “wool and linen [flax].” Wool is a metaphor often used as a symbol of what is pure. See Isa. 1:18; Dan. 7:9; Rev. 1:14. Linen was made from flax and always speaks of righteousness. The priests of the Old Testament wore linen garments as they went before God's presence to offer sacrifices. The curtains of the tabernacle were likewise made of linen, signifying God's righteousness. See Ex. 28:39–43 and Rev. 19:8. The virtuous bride of Christ in the last days will be seeking for only what is pure and righteous in the eyes of her Bridegroom.

She delights in the work of her hands.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>14</sup>She gives out revelation-truth<sup>b</sup> to feed others.

She is like a trading ship bringing divine supplies<sup>c</sup> from the merchant.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Even in the night season<sup>e</sup> she arises/ and sets food on the table for hungry ones in her house and for others.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>16</sup>She sets her heart upon a field<sup>g</sup> and takes it as her own.

She labors there to plant the living vines.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>17</sup>She wraps herself in strength,<sup>i</sup> might, and power in all her works.

<sup>18</sup>She tastes and experiences a better substance,<sup>k</sup> and her shining light will not be extinguished, no matter how dark the night.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>19</sup>She stretches out her hands to help the needy<sup>m</sup> and she lays hold of the wheels of government.<sup>n</sup>

*a* 31:13 Or “eagerly works with her hands.” The hands, with their five fingers, speak of the five ministries of the present work of Christ on the earth: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These are often referred to as the five-fold ministries. Her delight is to equip others and help those in need.

*b* 31:14 Or “bread.” This is a consistent emblem of spiritual food.

*c* 31:14 Or “supplies from far away.” The implication is that the supplies come from another realm. She is bringing heavenly manna for those she feeds.

*d* 31:14 Or “like merchant ships bringing goods.” Like a ship loaded with cargo, the bride of Christ brings heavenly treasures to others. The use of the term *merchant* points to Jesus Christ. He is described as a merchant in Matt. 13:45 in the parable of the extraordinary pearl. The “pearl” is the church or the believer, which cost all that Jesus had (his blood) to purchase us.

*e* 31:15 She is interceding in the night, laboring in a night season to help others.

*f* 31:15 The Hebrew word translated “arise” can also mean “to rise up in power.” We are told to “rise up in splendor and be radiant, for your light has dawned” in Isa. 60:1, which uses the same Hebrew word for “arise.” The bride of Christ will arise with anointing to feed and bless the people of God.

*g* 31:15 Or “female servants.” The servants are a metaphor for other churches and ministries.

*h* 31:16 Or “a land” or “a country.”

*i* 31:16 Or “By the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.” (The Septuagint is “possession.”) For “hands,” see the second footnote for v. 13. This vineyard becomes a metaphor for the local church. We are the branches of the Vine (Christ). See John 15:1–8. She is passionate about bringing forth fruit. She becomes a missionary to the nations, planting churches and bringing new life.

*j* 31:17 Or “She girds her loins with strength and makes her shoulders strong.” This is a figure of speech for being anointed with power to do the works of Jesus. See John 14:12.

*k* 31:18 Or “good merchandise.”

*l* 31:18 Her prayer life (“light”) overcomes her circumstances, even in a culture where darkness prevails.

*m* 31:19 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew uses a term for “distaff” (a weaver’s staff), which is taken from a root word for “prosperity.” The poetic nuance of this phrase is that she uses her prosperity to bless the needy.

*n* 31:19 Or “Her hands grasp the spindle.” The word translated as “spindle” can also mean “governmental circuits” or “wheels.” There is a hint here of the wheels mentioned in Ezek. 1. The throne of God’s government sits on flaming wheels. See Dan. 7:9.

<sup>20</sup>She is known by her extravagant generosity to the poor, for she always reaches out her hands<sup>a</sup> to those in need.

<sup>21</sup>She is not afraid of tribulation,<sup>b</sup> for all her household is covered in the dual garments<sup>c</sup> of righteousness and grace.

<sup>22</sup>Her clothing is beautifully knit together<sup>d</sup>—  
a purple gown of exquisite linen.

<sup>23</sup>Her husband is famous and admired by all, sitting as the venerable judge of his people.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Even her works of righteousness<sup>f</sup> she does<sup>g</sup> for the benefit of her enemies.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Bold power and glorious majesty<sup>i</sup> are wrapped around her as she laughs with joy over the latter days.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Her teachings are filled with wisdom and kindness as loving instruction pours from her lips.<sup>k</sup>

<sup>27</sup>She watches over the ways of her household<sup>l</sup> and meets every need they have.

<sup>28</sup>Her sons and daughters arise<sup>m</sup> in one accord to extol her virtues,<sup>n</sup> and her husband arises to speak of her in glowing terms.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>29</sup>“There are many valiant and noble ones,<sup>p</sup>

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*a* 31:20 Notice the mention of her hands. See the second footnote for v. 13.

*b* 31:21 Or “snow.” This is a figure of speech for the fear of a cold winter season.

*c* 31:21 As translated from the Septuagint. The Hebrew is “everyone is covered in scarlet [blood].” Grace has brought righteousness to those in her house (under her ministry).

*d* 31:22 This clothing speaks of the ministries of the body of Christ, woven and knit together by the Holy Spirit. See Eph. 4:15–16 and Col. 2:2.

*e* 31:23 Or “sitting at the city gates among the elders of the land.” Judgment was rendered at the gates of a city in that day. It was their courtroom. Our heavenly King is also the Judge. So famous, so glorious, yet he is our Bridegroom.

*f* 31:24 Or “linen.” See the second footnote for v. 13 regarding linen as a symbol for righteousness.

*g* 31:24 Or “sells them.” The root word for “sell” can also mean “surrender.”

*h* 31:24 Or “aprons or belts for the Canaanites.” The Canaanites were the traditional enemies of the Hebrews.

*i* 31:25 Or “Beauty, honor, and excellence.”

*j* 31:25 The virtuous and victorious bride has no fear for the days to come. She contemplates eternity and her forever union with the Bridegroom.

*k* 31:26 The Septuagint is “she opens her mouth carefully and lawfully.”

*l* 31:27 Or “She is a watchman over her house [family].”

*m* 31:28 The Hebrew word translated “arise” can also mean “to rise up with power.” The Septuagint is “She raises her children so they will grow rich.”

*n* 31:28 Or “Hooray, hooray for our mother!”

*o* 31:28 For more of how the heavenly Bridegroom loves his bride, read the Song of Songs.

*p* 31:29 Or “Many daughters have obtained wealth because of her.” These valiant and noble ones (daughters) represent the church of previous generations who remained faithful in their pursuit of Jesus. But this final generation will be the bridal company of the lovers of God who do mighty exploits and miracles on the earth.

but you have ascended above them  
all!"<sup>a</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Charm can be misleading,  
and beauty is vain and so quickly  
fades,  
but this virtuous woman lives in the  
wonder, awe,  
and fear of the Lord.

She will be praised *throughout*  
*eternity*.

<sup>31</sup>So go ahead and give her the credit  
that is due,  
for she has become a radiant woman,  
and all her loving works of righ-  
teousness deserve to be admired  
at the gateways of every city!<sup>b</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> 31:29 Or "you are first in his eyes." See Song. 6:8–9.

<sup>b</sup> 31:31 The Septuagint could be translated "her husband is praised at the city gates."