

PSALM 31

Psalm 31 is a song of lament, of trust and thanksgiving. It is also a plea for deliverance from grief and pain and from enemies and death. Although not as regularly recognized or as frequently quoted in the New Testament, Psalm 31 is similar to the messianic Psalm 22 in many ways. In fact, Jesus quoted from this psalm when, as He hung on the cross, near death, He cried out to His Father, “Into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46; Psalm 31:5).

The first part of the psalm (verses 1–18) forms a chiastic, or parallel, pattern that looks like this:

- A prayer (verses 1–5)
- B trust (verses 6–8)
- C lament (verses 9–13)
- B trust (verse 14)
- A prayer (verses 15–18)

The subsequent verses (19–24) comprise a song of thanksgiving and praise to God for His mercy in saving and redeeming those who trust in Him.

As has been the case with the last several psalms, there are many parallels here with Nephi’s Psalm in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 4:16–35). Compare, for example, Psalm 31:19 (“Oh how great is thy goodness, . . . which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee”) with 2 Nephi 4:17, 19 (“great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works . . . I know in whom I have trusted”).

The psalm ends with a spirited call to love and trust in the Lord:

O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth [or “repayeth”] the proud doer. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. (Psalm 31:24)

Related verses

Psalm 22; Luke 23:46; 2 Nephi 4

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