

GOOD
NEWS
BIBLE
The
PSALMS

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The Psalms

Introduction

The book of *The Psalms* is the hymn book and prayer book of the Bible. Composed by different authors over a long period of time, these hymns and prayers were collected and used by the people of Israel in their worship, and eventually this collection was included in their scriptures.

These religious poems are of many kinds: there are hymns of praise and worship of God; prayers for help, protection, and salvation; pleas for forgiveness; songs of thanksgiving for God's blessings; and petitions for the punishment of enemies. These prayers are both personal and national; some portray the most intimate feelings of one person, while others represent the needs and feelings of all the people of God.

The psalms were used by Jesus, quoted by the writers of the New Testament, and became the treasured book of worship of the Christian Church from its beginning.

Outline of Contents

The 150 psalms are grouped into five collections, or books, as follows:

Psalms 1 —41

Psalms 42 —72

Psalms 73 —89

Psalms 90 —106

Psalms 107 —150

BOOK ONE

PSALMS 1 —41

Psalm 1

True Happiness

- 1 Happy are those
 who reject the advice of evil people,
 who do not follow the example of sinners
 or join those who have no use for God.
- 2 Instead, they find joy in obeying the Law of the LORD,
 and they study it day and night.
- 3 They are like trees that grow beside a stream,
 that bear fruit at the right time,
 and whose leaves do not dry up.
 They succeed in everything they do.

- 4 But evil people are not like this at all;
 they are like straw that the wind blows away.
- 5 Sinners will be condemned by God
 and kept apart from God's own people.
- 6 The righteous are guided and protected by the LORD,
 but the evil are on the way to their doom.

See also: 1.3: Jeremiah 17.8

Psalm 2

God's Chosen King

- 1 Why do the nations plan rebellion?
Why do people make their useless plots?
- 2 Their kings revolt,
their rulers plot together against the LORD
and against the king he chose.
- 3 "Let us free ourselves from their rule," they say;
"let us throw off their control."

- 4 From his throne in heaven the LORD laughs
and mocks their feeble plans.
- 5 Then he warns them in anger
and terrifies them with his fury.
- 6 "On Zion,^a my sacred hill," he says,
"I have installed my king."

- 7 "I will announce," says the king, "what the LORD has
declared.
He said to me: 'You are my son;
today I have become your father.
- 8 Ask, and I will give you all the nations;
the whole earth will be yours.
- 9 You will break them with an iron rod;
you will shatter them in pieces like a clay pot.' "

^a *Zion*: See Zion in Word List.

See also: **2.1–2:** Acts 4.25–26 **2.7:** Acts 13.33; Hebrews 1.5; 5.5
2.9: Revelation 2.26–27; 12.5; 19.15

- 10 Now listen to this warning, you kings;
learn this lesson, you rulers of the world:
- 11 Serve the LORD with fear;
- 12 tremble and bow down to him;^b
or else his anger will be quickly aroused,
and you will suddenly die.
Happy are all who go to him for protection.

Psalm 3

Morning Prayer for Help^c

- 1 I have so many enemies, LORD,
so many who turn against me!
- 2 They talk about me and say,
“God will not help him.”
- 3 But you, O LORD, are always my shield from danger;
you give me victory
and restore my courage.
- 4 I call to the LORD for help,
and from his sacred hill^d he answers me.

^b Probable text *tremble... him*; some other possible texts with *trembling kiss his feet* and with *trembling kiss the Son* and *tremble and kiss the mighty one*; Hebrews unclear.

^c Hebrew title: A psalm by David, after he ran away from his son Absalom.

^d sacred hill: See 2.6.

See also: 3 Title: 2 Samuel 15.13 —17.22

- 5 I lie down and sleep,
and all night long the LORD protects me.
- 6 I am not afraid of the thousands of enemies
who surround me on every side.
- 7 Come, LORD! Save me, my God!
You punish all my enemies
and leave them powerless to harm me.
- 8 Victory comes from the LORD —
may he bless his people.

Psalm 4

Evening Prayer for Help^e

- 1 Answer me when I pray,
O God, my defender!
When I was in trouble, you helped me.
Be kind to me now and hear my prayer.
- 2 How long will you people insult me?
How long will you love what is worthless
and go after what is false?
- 3 Remember that the LORD has chosen the righteous for
his own,
and he hears me when I call to him.

^e Hebrew title: A psalm by David.

- 4 Tremble with fear and stop sinning;
think deeply about this,
when you lie in silence on your beds.
- 5 Offer the right sacrifices to the LORD,
and put your trust in him.
- 6 There are many who pray:
“Give us more blessings, O LORD.
Look on us with kindness!”
- 7 But the joy that you have given me
is more than they will ever have
with all their corn and wine.
- 8 When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace;
you alone, O LORD, keep me perfectly safe.

Psalm 5

A Prayer for Protection^f

- 1 Listen to my words, O LORD,
and hear my sighs.
- 2 Listen to my cry for help,
my God and king!

I pray to you, O LORD;

^f *Hebrew title:* A psalm by David.

See also: 4.4: Ephesians 4.26

- 3 you hear my voice in the morning;
at sunrise I offer my prayer^g
and wait for your answer.
- 4 You are not a God who is pleased with wrongdoing;
you allow no evil in your presence.
- 5 You cannot stand the sight of the proud;
you hate all wicked people.
- 6 You destroy all liars
and despise violent, deceitful people.
- 7 But because of your great love
I can come into your house;
I can worship in your holy Temple
and bow down to you in reverence.
- 8 LORD, I have so many enemies!
Lead me to do your will;
make your way plain for me to follow.
- 9 What my enemies say can never be trusted;
they only want to destroy.
Their words are flattering and smooth,
but full of deadly deceit.
- 10 Condemn and punish them, O God;
may their own plots cause their ruin.
Drive them out of your presence
because of their many sins
and their rebellion against you.

^g *prayer; or sacrifice.*

See also: 5.9: Romans 3.13

- 11 But all who find safety in you will rejoice;
they can always sing for joy.
Protect those who love you;
because of you they are truly happy.
- 12 You bless those who obey you, LORD;
your love protects them like a shield.

Psalm 6

A Prayer for Help in Time of Trouble^h

- 1 LORD, don't be angry and rebuke me!
Don't punish me in your anger!
- 2 I am worn out, O LORD; have pity on me!
Give me strength; I am completely exhausted
- 3 and my whole being is deeply troubled.
How long, O LORD, will you wait to help me?
- 4 Come and save me, LORD;
in your mercy rescue me from death.
- 5 In the world of the dead you are not remembered;
no one can praise you there.
- 6 I am worn out with grief;
every night my bed is damp from my weeping;
my pillow is soaked with tears.

^h *Hebrew title:* A psalm by David.

See also: 6.1: Psalms 38.1

- 7 I can hardly see;
my eyes are so swollen
from the weeping caused by my enemies.
- 8 Keep away from me, you evil people!
The LORD hears my weeping;
- 9 he listens to my cry for help
and will answer my prayer.
- 10 My enemies will know the bitter shame of defeat;
in sudden confusion they will be driven away.

Psalm 7

A Prayer for Justiceⁱ

- 1 O LORD, my God, I come to you for protection;
rescue me and save me from all who pursue me,
- 2 or else like a lion they will carry me off
where no one can save me,
and there they will tear me to pieces.
- 3-4 O LORD, my God, if I have wronged anyone,
if I have betrayed a friend
or without cause done violence to my enemy^j —
if I have done any of these things —

ⁱ Hebrew title: A song which David sang to the LORD because of Cush the Benjaminite.

^j without... enemy; or shown mercy to someone who wronged me unjustly.

See also: 6.8: Matthew 7.23; Luke 13.27

- 5 then let my enemies pursue me and catch me,
let them cut me down and kill me
and leave me lifeless on the ground!
- 6 Rise in your anger, O LORD!
Stand up against the fury of my enemies;
rouse yourself and help me!
Justice is what you demand,
- 7 so bring together all the peoples round you,
and rule over them from above.^k
- 8 You are the judge of the whole human race.
Judge in my favour, O LORD;
you know that I am innocent.
- 9 You are a righteous God
and judge our thoughts and desires.
Stop the wickedness of evildoers
and reward those who are good.
- 10 God is my protector;
he saves those who obey him.
- 11 God is a righteous judge
and always condemns the wicked.
- 12 If they do not change their ways,
God will sharpen his sword.
He bends his bow and makes it ready;
- 13 he takes up his deadly weapons
and aims his burning arrows.

^k Probable text *rule over them from above*; Hebrew *return above over them*.

See also: 7.9: Revelation 2.23

- 14 See how wicked people think up evil;
they plan trouble and practise deception.
- 15 But in the traps they set for others,
they themselves get caught.
- 16 So they are punished by their own evil
and are hurt by their own violence.
- 17 I thank the LORD for his justice,
I sing praises to the LORD, the Most High.

Psalm 8

God's Glory and Human Dignity¹

- 1 O LORD, our LORD,
your greatness is seen in all the world!
Your praise reaches up to the heavens;
- 2 it is sung by children and babies.
You are safe and secure from all your enemies;
you stop anyone who opposes you.
- 3 When I look at the sky, which you have made,
at the moon and the stars, which you set in their
places —
- 4 what are human beings, that you think of them;
mere mortals, that you care for them?

¹ *Hebrew title:* A psalm by David.

See also: 8.2: Matthew 21.16 8.4: Job 7.17–18; Psalms 144.3;
Hebrews 2.6–8

- 5 Yet you made them inferior only to yourself;^m
you crowned them with glory and honour.
- 6 You appointed them rulers over everything you made;
you placed them over all creation:
- 7 sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too;
- 8 the birds and the fish
and the creatures in the seas.
- 9 O LORD, OUR LORD,
your greatness is seen in all the world!

Psalm 9

Thanksgiving to God for his Justiceⁿ

- 1 I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all the wonderful things you have done.



“I will praise you, LORD” (9.1)

^m yourself; or the gods, or the angels.

ⁿ Hebrew title: A psalm by David.

See also: 8.6: 1 Corinthians 15.27; Ephesians 1.22; Hebrews 2.8