

PSALMS

Introduction

The Psalms are the prayer of Israel. They are the expression of human experience addressed towards God. They are the expression of a people's life impelled by God. God's history is the life of the people, because he creates and suffers with the people. All these was transformed into prayers, alive and varied, on the hands of very different authors. Tradition attributes many psalms to king David: it is just a convention, the same as attributing to Solomon the wisdom compositions. An anonymous chain of poets, throughout centuries is a more realistic way to describe the authors of these writings.

The hymns sing praises and they are usually communitarian: their themes are the actions of God in creation and history. Close to them is thanksgiving for personal or communitarian favors. From needs spring up supplications, so varied in themes; the praying person motivates his petition so as to convince or to move God. At times, from supplications springs up an act of trust, based on past experiences or in God's promises.

The sinner confesses his sins and asks for forgiveness in the penitential psalms. Others we could call meditations because they deal about human life or about the history of Israel.

In what follows we will give the Hebraic numbering, adding in parenthesis the Greco Latin number. The psalms are also privileged prayer of the Christian community as well as of an individual. Many psalms were prayed by Jesus, thus giving them the plenitude of meaning hidden in them.

8

20 Lord, our Lord,
how great is your name throughout the earth!
And your glory in the heavens above.
3Even the mouths of children and infants
exalt your glory in front of your foes
and put to shame enemies and rebels.
4When I observe the heavens,
the work of your hands,
the moon and the stars you set in their place—
5what is the mortal that you be mindful of him,
the son of man, that you should care for him?
6Yet you made him a little lower than the angels;
you have crowned him with glory and honor.
7You made him rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet
8sheep and oxen without number
and even the beasts of the field,
9the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and all that swim the paths of the ocean.
10O Lord, our Lord,
how great is your name all over the earth!

1The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
2He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside the still waters,
3he restores my soul.
He guides me through the right paths
for his name's sake.
4Although I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil,
for you are beside me:
your rod and your staff comfort me.
5You spread a table before me
in the presence of my foes.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup is overflowing.
6Goodness and kindness will follow me
all the days of my life,
I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
as long as I live.

24 (23)

1The earth and its fullness belong to the Lord,
the world and all that dwell in it.
2He has founded it upon the ocean
and set it firmly upon the waters.
3Who will ascend the mountain of the Lord?
Who will stand in his holy place?
4Those with clean hands and pure heart,
who desire not what is vain,
and never swear to a lie.
5They will receive blessings from the Lord,
a reward from God, their savior.
6Such are the people who seek him,
who seek the face of Jacob's God.
7Lift up, O gateways, your lintels,
open up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may enter!
8Who is the King of glory?
The Lord, the strong, the mighty,
the Lord, valiant in battle.
9Lift up your lintels, O gateways,
open up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may enter!
10Who is the King of glory?
The Lord of Hosts,
he is the King of glory!

32 (31)

Blessed is the one whose sin is forgiven,
whose iniquity is wiped away.
2Blessed are those in whom the Lord sees no guilt
and in whose spirit is found no deceit.
3When I kept my sin secret,
my body wasted away,
I was moaning all day long.
4Your hand day and night lay heavy upon me;
draining my strength, parching my heart
as in the heat of a summer drought.
5Then I made known to you my sin
and uncovered before you my fault,
saying to myself,
“To the Lord I will now confess my wrong.”
And you, you forgave my sin,
you removed my guilt.
6So let the faithful ones pray
to you in time of distress;
the overflowing waters will not reach them.
7You are my refuge;
you protect me from distress
and surround me with songs of deliverance.
8I will teach you,
I will show you the way to follow.
I will watch over you and give you counsel.

51 (50)

3Have mercy on me, O God, in your love.
In your great compassion blot out my sin.
4Wash me thoroughly of my guilt;
cleanse me of evil.
5For I acknowledge my wrongdoings
and have my sins ever in mind.
6Against you alone have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.
You are right when you pass sentence
and blameless in your judgment.
7For I have been guilt-ridden from birth,
a sinner from my mother’s womb.

8I know you desire truth in the heart,
teach me wisdom in my inmost being.
9Cleanse me with hyssop and I shall be clean,
wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.
10Fill me with joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
11Turn your face away from my sins
and blot out all my offenses.
12Create in me, O God, a pure heart;
give me a new and steadfast spirit.
13Do not cast me out of your presence
nor take your holy spirit from me.
14Give me again the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with a willing spirit.
15Then I will show wrongdoers your ways
and sinners will return to you.
16Deliver me, O God, from the guilt of blood,
and of your justice I shall sing aloud.
17O Lord, open my lips,
and I will declare your praise.
18You take no pleasure in sacrifice;
were I to give a burnt offering,
you would not delight in it.
19O God, my sacrifice is a broken spirit;
a contrite heart you will not despise.
20Shower Zion with your favor:
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
21Then you will delight in fitting sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and bulls offered on your altar.

78 (77)

Give heed, O my people, to my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth!
2I will speak in parables,
I will talk of old mysteries
3which we have heard and known,
which our ancestors have told us.
4We will not keep them hidden from our children;
we will announce them to the coming generation:
the glorious deeds of the Lord,
his might and the wonders he has done.
5He issued decrees for Jacob
and set up a law in Israel,
which he commanded our ancestors

to teach their children,
6so the next generation would learn
and teach their own children.
7They would then put their trust in God,
and not forget his deeds and his commands.
8And not be like their ancestors,
stubborn and rebellious people,
a people of inconstant heart
whose spirit was fickle.
9Well-armed with bow,
the Ephraimites took flight
when the time came to do battle.
10It is because they did not keep
God's covenant
and refused to live by his law.
11They forgot the marvels he had done,
12what their ancestors had seen
in the land of Egypt,
in the fields of Zoan.
13He divided the sea and led them across;
he made the water stand like a wall.
14By day he led them with a cloud,
and by night with a fiery light.
15In the desert he split rocks
to give them abundant drink.
16He made streams come out of a rock
and caused water to flow like a river.
17Yet they sinned even more against him
and rebelled against the Most High
in the desert.
18They tested God,
demanding the food they craved.
19They blasphemed against God, saying:
'Can God spread a table in the desert?
20He made water flow out of the rock;
can he also give his people bread or meat?'
21When the Lord heard this he was enraged;
a fire raged against Jacob,
his anger flared against Israel,
22for they had no faith in God
nor trust in his deliverance.
23Yet he commanded the skies
above and opened the doors of heaven;
24he rained down manna upon them
and fed them with the heavenly grain.
25They ate and had more than their fill
of the bread of angels.
26Then from heaven he stirred the east wind,
and by his power let loose the south wind,

27to rain down meat on them like dust.
Birds as thick as the sand on the seashore
28fell inside their camp,
lying all around their tents.
29They ate till they were satisfied,
for he had given them what they craved.
36But they flattered him with their mouths,
they lied to him with their tongues,
37while their hearts were unfaithful;
they were untrue to his covenant.
38Even then, in his compassion,
he forgave their offenses
and did not destroy them.
Many a time he restrained his anger
and did not fully stir up his wrath.
39He remembered that they were but flesh,
a breeze that passes and never returns.
40How often did they rebel against him
in the wilderness,
how often did they grieve him in the desert!
41Again and again they tested him,
and provoked the Holy One of Israel.
42They did not remember his power
in redeeming them from the oppressor.
52Then he led forth his people like a flock,
and guided them like sheep through the desert.
53He led them safely, they did not fear,
but the sea engulfed their enemies.
54He brought them to his holy land,
to the mountain his right hand had won.

55He drove out peoples before them
and gave them the land as their inheritance;
they pitched their tents in it.
69He built his sanctuary like heaven,
like the earth he founded forever.
70He chose David his servant
and took him from the sheepfolds;
71from tending the sheep and their young,
he brought him to shepherd Jacob,
the people of Israel, his inheritance.
72And with upright heart David pastured them;
with skillful hands he led them.

1 Bless the Lord, my soul!
Clothed in majesty and splendor;
O Lord, my God, how great you are!
2 You are wrapped in light as with a garment;
you stretch out the heavens like a tent,
3 you build your upper rooms above the waters.
You make the clouds your chariot
and ride on the wings of the wind;
4 you make the winds your messengers,
and fire and flame your ministers.
5 You set the earth on its foundations,
and never will it be shaken.
6 You covered it with the ocean like a garment,
and waters spread over the mountains.
7 But at your rebuke the waters flee,
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
8 Brought to the mountains, they flow down again
to settle in the valleys.
9 You set a limit they could not cross,
never again to flood the earth.
10 You make springs gush forth in valleys
winding among mountains and hills,
11 giving drink to the beasts of the field,
quenching the thirst of wild donkeys.
12 Birds build their nests close by
and sing among the branches of trees.
13 You water the mountains from your abode
and fill the earth with the fruit of your work.
14 You make grass grow for cattle
and plants for man to cultivate,
that he may bring forth food from the earth:
15 wine to gladden his heart,
oil to make his face shine,
and bread to make him strong.
16 The Lord waters his trees to their fill,
the cedars of Lebanon which he planted.
17 The birds build their nests,
the stork has its home in the pine trees.
18 High mountains are for wild goats,
the cliffs a refuge for badgers.
19 You made the moon to mark the seasons,
and the sun that knows when to set;
20 when you bring the darkness of the night,
all the beasts of the forest begin to prowl:
21 the young lions roaring for their prey
claiming their food from God.
22 When the sun rises, the beasts steal away,
returning to rest in their dens.
23 Man then goes out to his work,

and toils till evening comes.
24How varied O Lord, are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all—
the earth full of your creatures.
25Behold the sea, wide and vast,
teeming with countless creatures,
living things both great and small,
26a strange world reserved for the ships,
for Leviathan, the dragon you made to play with.
27They all look to you
for their food in due time.
28You give it to them,
and they gather it up;
you open your hand,
they are filled with good things.
29When you hide your face they vanish,
you take away their breath, they expire
and return to dust.
30When you send forth your spirit,
they are created,
and the face of the earth is renewed.

31May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works!
32He looks on the earth, and it quakes;
he touches the mountain, and it smokes.
33I will sing to the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to God while I live.
34May my song give him pleasure,
as the Lord gives me delight.
35May sinners vanish from the earth,
and may the wicked be no more.
Bless the Lord, my soul!

105 (104)

1Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;
make known his works among the nations.
2Sing to him, sing his praise,
proclaim all his wondrous deeds.
3Glory in his holy name;
let those who seek the Lord rejoice.
4Look to the Lord and be strong;
seek his face always.
5Remember his wonderful works,
his miracles and his judgments,

6you descendants of his servant Abraham,
you sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!
7He is the Lord our God;
his judgments reach the whole world.
8He remembers his covenant forever,
his promise to a thousand generations,
9the covenant he made with Abraham,
the promise he swore to Isaac.
10He confirmed his decree to Jacob,
to Israel his eternal covenant:
11‘To you I will give the land of Canaan
as part of your inheritance.’
12When they were few in number,
strangers in the land,
13wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another,
14he allowed no one to oppress them,
and for their sake he rebuked kings:
15“Touch not my anointed ones,”
he warned, “do my prophets no harm!”
16Then he sent a famine
and ruined the crop that sustained the land;
17he sent a man ahead of them, Joseph,
who was sold as a slave;
18his feet in shackles, his neck in irons
19till what he foretold came to pass,
and the Lord’s word proved him true.
20The king sent for him, set him free,
the ruler of the peoples released him.
21He put him in charge of his household
and made him ruler of all his possessions,
22that he might train his princes
and teach his elders wisdom.
23Then Israel came to Egypt,
Jacob settled in the land of Ham.
24The Lord made his people fruitful
and much stronger than their foes,
25whose hearts he turned to hate his people,
to deal deceitfully with his servants.
37He led Israel out of the alien land,
laden with silver and gold,
and none were left behind.
38Egypt was glad when they departed,
so filled were they with dread.
39He spread a cloud as covering,
and fire to give them light at night.
40They asked for food;
he gave them quails and fed them
with bread from heaven.

41He opened the rock, and water gushed out,
flowing like a river through the desert.
42For he remembered his promise to Abraham,
his servant.
43So he led forth his people with joy,
his chosen ones with singing.
44He gave them the lands of the nations,
and let them take the fruit of others' toil,
45that they might keep his statutes
and remain obedient to his laws.

106 (105)

Alleluia!

1Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his love endures forever.
2Who can count the Lord's mighty deeds,
or declare all his praises?
3Blessed are they who always do just and right.
4Remember me, O Lord,
when you show favor to your people;
rescue me when you deliver them;
5let me see the triumph of your faithful,
let me share the joy of your nation,
and join your people in praising you.
6We have sinned like our ancestors;
we have done wrong and acted wickedly.
7When they were in Egypt,
our ancestors had no regard
for your wondrous deeds;
they forgot the abundance of your love;
they rebelled against the Most High
by the Sea of Reeds.
8Yet he saved them for his name's sake,
to make his mighty power known.
9He rebuked the sea, and it dried up;
he led them through the deep as on dry land.
10He saved them from hostility,
freeing them from the hand of the enemy.
11Waters covered their pursuers,
and none of them was left alive.
12Then they believed his promises
and all at once sang his praises.
13But soon they forgot his works
and did not wait for his counsel.

14They gave way to wanton craving
and tempted God in the desert.
15He gave them what they wanted,
then sent them a wasting disease.
16In the camp they grew envious
of Moses and Aaron,
the holy one of the Lord.
17So the earth opened, swallowed Dathan,
and buried the company of Abiram;
18fire broke out against them,
burning up the wicked.
19They made a calf at Horeb
and worshiped the molten image.
20They exchanged the glory of God
for the image of a bull that eats grass.
21They forgot their Savior God,
who had done great things in Egypt,
22wonderful works in the land of Ham,
and awesome deeds by the Sea of Reeds.
23So he spoke of destroying them,
but Moses, his chosen one,
stood in the breach before him
to shield them from destruction.
24Yet they despised the promised land,
for they had no faith in his word.
25They grumbled in their tents
and would not listen to the voice of the Lord.
26So he swore to them with his hand raised
that he would let them perish in the desert,
27scatter their descendants among the nations
and disperse them over the lands.
28They joined the rites of Baal-peor
and ate sacrifices to lifeless gods.
29Their deeds provoked the Lord to anger,
and a plague broke out among them.
30But Phinehas stood up and intervened,
and the plague came to an end.
31This was credited to his uprightness,
making him remembered for all ages.
32Angered by them at Meribah's waters,
the Lord took it out on Moses
33for the rash words he uttered,
when they rebelled against God.
34They dared not destroy the pagans,
as the Lord commanded;
35they mingled with these nations
and learned to do as they did.
36In serving the idols of the pagans,
they were trapped

37into sacrificing children to demons,
38shedding the innocent blood
of their sons and daughters
to the idols of Canaan,

polluting the country with blood.
39They defiled themselves by what they did,
playing the harlot in their worship.
40The anger of the Lord grew intense
and he abhorred his inheritance.
41He handed them over to the nations,
and their foes ruled them with arrogance.
42Brought by the enemy into subjection,
they suffered the agony of oppression.
43He delivered them many a time,
but they went on defying him
and sinking deeper into their sin.
44But he heard their cry of affliction
and looked on them with compassion.
45Remembering his covenant,
he relented for their sake,
because of his great love.
46He let them be pitied by all those
who held them captive.
47Save us, O Lord, our God,
gather us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to you
and praise your holy name.

48Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel,
from eternity to eternity.
Let all the people say:
“Amen!” Praise the Lord!

132 (131)

1Remember David, O Lord,
and all his readiness.
11The Lord swore to David
a promise, and he will remain true to it:
‘I will keep your descendance
on your throne.
12If your sons keep my covenant

and the decrees I have taught them,
their sons, too,
will sit forever upon your throne.’
13For the Lord has chosen Zion;
he has desired it for his dwelling:
14‘This is my resting place forever;
this I prefer, here will I dwell.
15I will bless its fruits,
its bread, and the poor will be satisfied.
16I will clothe its priests with glory
and its faithful will sing in gladness.
17From here a savior shall come forth,
a son of David;
here shall shine forever the lamp of my anointed.
18In shame will I clothe his enemies,
but upon his head a crown shall shine.’

136 (135)

1Alleluia!
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
his kindness endures forever.
2Give thanks to the God of gods,
his kindness endures forever.
3Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
his kindness endures forever.
4He alone does great marvels,
his kindness endures forever.
5In wisdom he made the heavens,
his kindness endures forever.
6He set the earth upon the waters,
his kindness endures forever.
7He made the great lights,
his kindness endures forever,
8the sun to rule over the day,
his kindness endures forever,
9the moon and stars to rule the night,
his kindness endures forever.

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1Alleluia! Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heavenly heights.
2Praise him, all his angels; praise him,
all his heavenly hosts.

3Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars.
4Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.
5Let them praise the name of the Lord,
at whose command they were made.
6He established them forever
and gave each a fixed and lasting duty.
7Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea creatures and all the depths,
8clouds and snow, hail and lightning,
storm winds that do his bidding,
9you mountains and all you hills,
you fruit trees and cedars,
10you wild beasts and tame animals,
you creeping things and winged fowl.
11Kings of the earth and nations,
princes and all rulers of the world,
12young men and maidens, old and young together,
13let them praise the name of the Lord.
For his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.
14He has given his people glory;
he has given a praise to his faithful,
to Israel, the people close to him.
Alleluia.