

BOOK V
(Psalms 107-150)

PSALM 107

Read Psalm 107

This psalm seems to continue the theme of Psalm 106, though its more obscure imagery and greater detachment from specific narratives found in the Old Testament allow it to be still more readily interpreted in light of the experience of everyone who loses the path of righteousness and wanders in the “wilderness” of selfishness. God emerges as sovereign over all dangers as the provider of relief to his people.

Reflect: What areas of barrenness or confusion, upheaval or anxiety are there in my life? Are they perhaps evidence of my having strayed from the path God chose for me? In any event, he can steer me aright.

Pray: I ponder the merciful deeds of the Lord, and I give thanks.

Act: I will be ready to change course, even on my favorite projects, if the signs emerge that God wants me to do so.

Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Many Troubles

- 1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
those he redeemed from trouble
- 3 and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.^a
- 4 Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to an inhabited town;
- 5 hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.
- 6 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress;
- 7 he led them by a straight way,
until they reached an inhabited town.
- 8 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.
- 9 For he satisfies the thirsty,
and the hungry he fills with good things.
- 10 Some sat in darkness and in gloom,
prisoners in misery and in irons,
- 11 for they had rebelled against the words of God,
and spurned the counsel of the Most High.
- 12 Their hearts were bowed down with hard labor;
they fell down, with no one to help.
- 13 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress;
- 14 he brought them out of darkness and gloom,
and broke their bonds asunder.
- 15 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.
- 16 For he shatters the doors of bronze,
and cuts in two the bars of iron.
- 17 Some were sick^b through their sinful ways,
and because of their iniquities endured
affliction;
- 18 they loathed any kind of food,
and they drew near to the gates of death.
- 19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress;
- 20 he sent out his word and healed them,
and delivered them from destruction.
- 21 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to humankind.

^a Cn: Heb sea

^b Cn: Heb fools

- 22 And let them offer thanksgiving
sacrifices,
and tell of his deeds with songs of
joy.
- 23 Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the mighty
waters;
- 24 they saw the deeds of the LORD,
his wondrous works in the deep.
- 25 For he commanded and raised the
stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the sea.
- 26 They mounted up to heaven, they
went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their
calamity;
- 27 they reeled and staggered like
drunkards,
and were at their wits' end.
- 28 Then they cried to the LORD in their
trouble,
and he brought them out from
their distress;
- 29 he made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were
hushed.
- 30 Then they were glad because they
had quiet,
and he brought them to their
desired haven.
- 31 Let them thank the LORD for his
steadfast love,
for his wonderful works to
humankind.
- 32 Let them extol him in the
congregation of the people,
and praise him in the assembly of
the elders.
- 33 He turns rivers into a desert,
springs of water into thirsty
ground,
- 34 a fruitful land into a salty waste,
because of the wickedness of its
inhabitants.
- 35 He turns a desert into pools of water,
a parched land into springs of
water.
- 36 And there he lets the hungry live,
and they establish a town to live in;
- 37 they sow fields, and plant vineyards,
and get a fruitful yield.
- 38 By his blessing they multiply greatly,
and he does not let their cattle
decrease.
- 39 When they are diminished and
brought low
through oppression, trouble, and
sorrow,
- 40 he pours contempt on princes
and makes them wander in
trackless wastes;
- 41 but he raises up the needy out of
distress,
and makes their families like
flocks.
- 42 The upright see it and are glad;
and all wickedness stops its
mouth.
- 43 Let those who are wise give heed to
these things,
and consider the steadfast love of
the LORD.

PSALM 108

Praise and Prayer for Victory

A Song. A Psalm of David.

- 1 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is
steadfast;^a
I will sing and make melody.
Awake, my soul!^b
- 2 Awake, O harp and lyre!
I will awake the dawn.
- 3 I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the
peoples,
and I will sing praises to you among the nations.

^a Heb Mss Gk Syr: MT lacks *my heart is steadfast*

^b Compare 57.8: Heb *also my soul*

Read Psalm 108

Even though this psalm is virtually pasted together from different parts of Psalm 57 and Psalm 60, the new arrangement creates a prayer that is something new: in this new psalm, total confidence in God becomes the pre-established background against which everything is read. The references to dangers mentioned in those other psalms are not entirely absent here, but the initial praise casts them in a very different and better light.

Reflect: When I take my concerns to God, how do I begin: with my praise, or with my complaints?

Pray: My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast!

Act: While taking my thanks and my pleas before God, I will think and speak first of my thanks.

Read Psalm 109

This is the prayer of one who has been falsely accused and who turns to God for vindication. As in so many of the psalms containing pleas arising out of dire circumstances, this psalm ends with praise of God who is acknowledged as already having heard and answered the plea.

Reflect: How much do I depend on human affirmation, so as to be too vulnerable when others misunderstand or unjustly criticize me? Have I forgotten that there is a higher judge?

Pray: Even if others curse, Lord, please bless!

Act: I will seek not so much to be thought good as to be good, knowing that human opinions are fickle and that God always knows the truth.

- 4 For your steadfast love is higher than the heavens,
and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.
- 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
and let your glory be over all the earth.
- 6 Give victory with your right hand, and answer me,
so that those whom you love may be rescued.
- 7 God has promised in his sanctuary:^a
“With exultation I will divide up Shechem,
and portion out the Vale of Succoth.
- 8 Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim is my helmet;
Judah is my scepter.
- 9 Moab is my washbasin;
on Edom I hurl my shoe;
over Philistia I shout in triumph.”
- 10 Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
- 11 Have you not rejected us, O God?
You do not go out, O God, with our armies.
- 12 O grant us help against the foe,
for human help is worthless.
- 13 With God we shall do valiantly;
it is he who will tread down our foes.

PSALM 109

Prayer for Vindication and Vengeance

To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.

- 1 Do not be silent, O God of my praise.
- 2 For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened
against me,
speaking against me with lying tongues.
- 3 They beset me with words of hate,
and attack me without cause.
- 4 In return for my love they accuse me,
even while I make prayer for them.^b
- 5 So they reward me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.
- 6 They say,^c “Appoint a wicked man against him;
let an accuser stand on his right.
- 7 When he is tried, let him be found guilty;
let his prayer be counted as sin.
- 8 May his days be few;
may another seize his position.
- 9 May his children be orphans,
and his wife a widow.
- 10 May his children wander about and beg;

^a Or by his holiness

^b Syr: Heb I prayer

^c Heb lacks They say

- may they be driven out of^a the ruins they inhabit.
- 11 May the creditor seize all that he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his toil.
- 12 May there be no one to do him a kindness, nor anyone to pity his orphaned children.
- 13 May his posterity be cut off; may his name be blotted out in the second generation.
- 14 May the iniquity of his father^b be remembered before the LORD, and do not let the sin of his mother be blotted out.
- 15 Let them be before the LORD continually, and may his^c memory be cut off from the earth.
- 16 For he did not remember to show kindness, but pursued the poor and needy and the brokenhearted to their death.
- 17 He loved to curse; let curses come on him.
He did not like blessing; may it be far from him.
- 18 He clothed himself with cursing as his coat, may it soak into his body like water, like oil into his bones.
- 19 May it be like a garment that he wraps around himself, like a belt that he wears every day.”
- 20 May that be the reward of my accusers from the LORD,
- of those who speak evil against my life.
- 21 But you, O LORD my Lord, act on my behalf for your name’s sake; because your steadfast love is good, deliver me.
- 22 For I am poor and needy, and my heart is pierced within me.
- 23 I am gone like a shadow at evening; I am shaken off like a locust.
- 24 My knees are weak through fasting; my body has become gaunt.
- 25 I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads.
- 26 Help me, O LORD my God! Save me according to your steadfast love.
- 27 Let them know that this is your hand; you, O LORD, have done it.
- 28 Let them curse, but you will bless. Let my assailants be put to shame;^d may your servant be glad.
- 29 May my accusers be clothed with dishonor; may they be wrapped in their own shame as in a mantle.
- 30 With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng.
- 31 For he stands at the right hand of the needy, to save them from those who would condemn them to death.

PSALM 110

Assurance of Victory for God’s Priest-King

Of David. A Psalm.

- 1 The LORD says to my lord,
“Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies your footstool.”
- 2 The LORD sends out from Zion
your mighty scepter.
Rule in the midst of your foes.

^a Gk: Heb *and seek*

^b Cn: Heb *fathers*

^c Gk: Heb *their*

^d Gk: Heb *They have risen up and have been put to shame*

Read Psalm 110

This royal psalm reflects God's establishment of his appointed king on Mt. Zion. The Christian tradition has seen this psalm as a foreshadowing of the priestly and royal prerogatives of Jesus Christ, son of David and eternal High Priest. The king, who has princely power from the day of his birth, is given victory over all his enemies and rules over all the nations.

Reflect: The power of the just sovereign is not won by human coercion, but bestowed by God.

Pray: Lord, my King, teach me to rely on your power rather than on my own.

Act: Perhaps there are some parts of me that are still resisting the will and the laws of Zion's king. I will surrender.

Read Psalm 111

This is an alphabetic psalm; each of its strophes begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. One by one, the psalmist enumerates God's deeds and the signs of his goodness. Many of the praises are expressed in general terms, while two—the miraculous feeding of God's people and his gift of the land to them—are mentioned explicitly.

Reflect: If I were to compose an alphabetic verse mentioning the things for which I have ever thanked or praised God, would I make it through the whole alphabet?

Pray: Your praise, Lord, endures forever, and I am only now beginning!

Act: I will learn to live by the "fear of the LORD"—that reverent awareness of who he is and what his love requires of me.

- 3 Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains.^a
From the womb of the morning, like dew, your youth^b will come to you.
- 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."^c
- 5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.
- 6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter heads over the wide earth.
- 7 He will drink from the stream by the path; therefore he will lift up his head.

PSALM 111

Praise for God's Wonderful Works

- 1 Praise the LORD!
I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
- 2 Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.
- 3 Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.
- 4 He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful.
- 5 He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.
- 6 He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.
- 7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.
- 8 They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.
- 9 He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name.
- 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it^d have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever.

^a Another reading is *in holy splendor*

^b Cn: Heb *the dew of your youth*

^c Or *forever, a rightful king by my edict*

^d Gk Syr: Heb *them*

Read Psalms 112, 113

Through the language of praise, these psalms reveal much about God: how he blesses the just, who will have nothing to fear under his protection, and cares even more extravagantly for the poor—to “make them sit with princes” and provides new life and new hope through children.

Reflect: What is my attitude toward the poor? Is it harmonious with what is reflected in these psalms?

Pray: Lord, help me to see myself and others as you see us, and to act accordingly.

Act: Grateful for all that the Lord has given me, I will give to someone who has less, knowing that perhaps this is the way that the Lord intends to give a gift to them.

PSALM 112

Blessings of the Righteous

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Happy are those who fear the LORD,
who greatly delight in his commandments.
- 2 Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.
- 3 Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.
- 4 They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright;
they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.
- 5 It is well with those who deal generously and lend,
who conduct their affairs with justice.
- 6 For the righteous will never be moved;
they will be remembered forever.
- 7 They are not afraid of evil tidings;
their hearts are firm, secure in the LORD.
- 8 Their hearts are steady, they will not be afraid;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.
- 9 They have distributed freely, they have given to
the poor;
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn is exalted in honor.
- 10 The wicked see it and are angry;
they gnash their teeth and melt away;
the desire of the wicked comes to nothing.

PSALM 113

God the Helper of the Needy

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Praise, O servants of the LORD;
praise the name of the LORD.
- 2 Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time on and forevermore.
- 3 From the rising of the sun to its setting
the name of the LORD is to be praised.
- 4 The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens.
- 5 Who is like the LORD our God,
who is seated on high,
6 who looks far down
on the heavens and the earth?
7 He raises the poor from the dust,
and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
8 to make them sit with princes,
with the princes of his people.
9 He gives the barren woman a home,
making her the joyous mother of children.
Praise the LORD!

Read Psalms 114, 115

These psalms recall the miraculous deeds by which God led his people out of Egypt, and the trust that such deeds engendered within God's people. These stories remain forever meaningful to the people as a pledge of God's continual guidance and protection.

Reflect: Do I derive from the stories of God's protection of his people in the past the same confidence that accounts for the telling and singing of the same story throughout the centuries?

Pray: I take comfort, Lord, for the same reason that the earth trembles at your sight: all of your mighty deeds are done for the sake of your people.

Act: I will strive to be aware of my lack of trust in God's continuing protection, and even more, of my attempts to find protection in "idols"—such as money, human opinion, or power—rather than in his goodness.

PSALM 114

God's Wonders at the Exodus

- 1 When Israel went out from Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of strange
language,
- 2 Judah became God's^a sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.
- 3 The sea looked and fled;
Jordan turned back.
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like lambs.
- 5 Why is it, O sea, that you flee?
O Jordan, that you turn back?
- 6 O mountains, that you skip like rams?
O hills, like lambs?
- 7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the LORD,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
- 8 who turns the rock into a pool of water,
the flint into a spring of water.

PSALM 115

The Impotence of Idols and the Greatness of God

- 1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name
give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast love and your
faithfulness.
- 2 Why should the nations say,
"Where is their God?"
- 3 Our God is in the heavens;
he does whatever he pleases.
- 4 Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of human hands.
- 5 They have mouths, but do not speak;
eyes, but do not see.
- 6 They have ears, but do not hear;
noses, but do not smell.
- 7 They have hands, but do not feel;
feet, but do not walk;
they make no sound in their throats.
- 8 Those who make them are like them;
so are all who trust in them.
- 9 O Israel, trust in the LORD!
He is their help and their shield.
- 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD!
He is their help and their shield.
- 11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD!
He is their help and their shield.
- 12 The LORD has been mindful of us; he will bless us;

^a Heb *his*

he will bless the house of Israel;
 he will bless the house of Aaron;
 13 he will bless those who fear the
 LORD,
 both small and great.

14 May the LORD give you increase,
 both you and your children.
 15 May you be blessed by the LORD,
 who made heaven and earth.

16 The heavens are the LORD's
 heavens,
 but the earth he has given to
 human beings.
 17 The dead do not praise the LORD,
 nor do any that go down into
 silence.
 18 But we will bless the LORD
 from this time on and forevermore.
 Praise the LORD!

Read Psalms 116, 117

Psalm 116 is a grateful recollection of a situation of mortal danger from which one has been saved by God. Now, in the presence of God's people, it is appropriate to recount this act of salvation and to offer thanks to a merciful God. In Psalm 117, all the nations are invited to join in God's praise.

Reflect: How is it possible to thank God enough for his benefits? At least I can give glory to God when speaking to others and join with others in praising him.

Pray: How can I repay you, Lord, for all that you have done for me? "I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD."

Act: I will participate in the church's public worship, aware that it transforms my prayer into something greater than I could have offered by myself.

PSALM 116

Thanksgiving for Recovery from Illness

1 I love the LORD, because he has heard
 my voice and my supplications.
 2 Because he inclined his ear to me,
 therefore I will call on him as long as I live.
 3 The snares of death encompassed me;
 the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;
 I suffered distress and anguish.
 4 Then I called on the name of the LORD:
 "O LORD, I pray, save my life!"
 5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;
 our God is merciful.
 6 The LORD protects the simple;
 when I was brought low, he saved me.
 7 Return, O my soul, to your rest,
 for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.
 8 For you have delivered my soul from death,
 my eyes from tears,
 my feet from stumbling.
 9 I walk before the LORD
 in the land of the living.
 10 I kept my faith, even when I said,
 "I am greatly afflicted";
 11 I said in my consternation,
 "Everyone is a liar."
 12 What shall I return to the LORD
 for all his bounty to me?
 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation
 and call on the name of the LORD,
 14 I will pay my vows to the LORD
 in the presence of all his people.
 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD
 is the death of his faithful ones.
 16 O LORD, I am your servant;
 I am your servant, the child of your serving
 girl.

You have loosed my bonds.
 17 I will offer to you a thanksgiving
 sacrifice
 and call on the name of the LORD.
 18 I will pay my vows to the LORD
 in the presence of all his people,
 19 in the courts of the house of the
 LORD,
 in your midst, O Jerusalem.
 Praise the LORD!

PSALM 117

Universal Call to Worship

1 Praise the LORD, all you nations!
 Extol him, all you peoples!
 2 For great is his steadfast love
 toward us,
 and the faithfulness of the LORD
 endures forever.
 Praise the LORD!

Read Psalm 118

This psalm—which, like others near it in the Psalter, were prayed during great Jewish feasts such as Passover—sings of a great triumphal procession that begins outside the gates of the temple (cf. v. 19) and continues all the way to the altar (v. 27). The psalm expresses thanksgiving for a great victory granted by God.

Reflect: Does the unbounded and communal expression of joy in God's victory expressed in this psalm find an expression in some way in my own spiritual life?

Pray: Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose love endures forever!

Act: I will reflect on the physical gestures of joy and praise that are found in this psalm, and on the gestures used by the whole community when I am present for the Church's public worship.

PSALM 118

A Song of Victory

1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
 his steadfast love endures forever!
 2 Let Israel say,
 "His steadfast love endures forever."
 3 Let the house of Aaron say,
 "His steadfast love endures forever."
 4 Let those who fear the LORD say,
 "His steadfast love endures forever."
 5 Out of my distress I called on the LORD;
 the LORD answered me and set me in a broad
 place.
 6 With the LORD on my side I do not fear.
 What can mortals do to me?
 7 The LORD is on my side to help me;
 I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.
 8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
 than to put confidence in mortals.
 9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
 than to put confidence in princes.
 10 All nations surrounded me;
 in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
 11 They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;
 in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
 12 They surrounded me like bees;
 they blazed^a like a fire of thorns;
 in the name of the LORD I cut them off!
 13 I was pushed hard,^b so that I was falling,
 but the LORD helped me.
 14 The LORD is my strength and my might;
 he has become my salvation.
 15 There are glad songs of victory in the tents of
 the righteous:
 "The right hand of the LORD does valiantly;
 the right hand of the LORD is exalted;
 the right hand of the LORD does valiantly."

^a Gk: Heb *were extinguished*

^b Gk Syr Jerome: Heb *You pushed me hard*

- 17 I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the LORD.
18 The LORD has punished me severely,
but he did not give me over to
death.
19 Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD.
20 This is the gate of the LORD;
the righteous shall enter through it.
21 I thank you that you have
answered me
and have become my salvation.
22 The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.
23 This is the LORD's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
24 This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.^a

- 25 Save us, we beseech you, O LORD!
O LORD, we beseech you, give us
success!
26 Blessed is the one who comes in the
name of the LORD.^b
We bless you from the house of
the LORD.
27 The LORD is God,
and he has given us light.
Bind the festal procession with
branches,
up to the horns of the altar.^c
28 You are my God, and I will give
thanks to you;
you are my God, I will extol you.
29 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is
good,
for his steadfast love endures
forever.

Read a Stanza of Psalm 119

Different sections of this psalm have been prayed by Christians for many centuries at midday. The psalm contains twenty-two stanzas of praises of God's law, with all eight verses of each stanza beginning with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Reflect: In the midst of the day's work, it is good to reflect on God's word, which provides light, direction, solace, correction, and hope as our efforts in God's service continue.

Pray: Your word is a lamp for my feet, O God, and a light for my path!

Act: I will let every action be guided today by the revelation of God's wisdom expressed in his inspired word, and I will pause at various moments in the day to recall his presence.

PSALM 119

The Glories of God's Law

- 1 Happy are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD.
- 2 Happy are those who keep his decrees,
who seek him with their whole heart,
- 3 who also do no wrong,
but walk in his ways.
- 4 You have commanded your precepts
to be kept diligently.
- 5 O that my ways may be steadfast
in keeping your statutes!
- 6 Then I shall not be put to shame,
having my eyes fixed on all your
commandments.
- 7 I will praise you with an upright heart,
when I learn your righteous ordinances.
- 8 I will observe your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me.
- 9 How can young people keep their way pure?
By guarding it according to your word.
- 10 With my whole heart I seek you;
do not let me stray from your commandments.
- 11 I treasure your word in my heart,
so that I may not sin against you.
- 12 Blessed are you, O LORD;
teach me your statutes.

^a Or in him

^b Or Blessed in the name of the LORD is the one who comes

^c Meaning of Heb uncertain

- 13 With my lips I declare
all the ordinances of your mouth.
- 14 I delight in the way of your decrees
as much as in all riches.
- 15 I will meditate on your precepts,
and fix my eyes on your ways.
- 16 I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.
- 17 Deal bountifully with your servant,
so that I may live and observe
your word.
- 18 Open my eyes, so that I may behold
wondrous things out of your law.
- 19 I live as an alien in the land;
do not hide your commandments
from me.
- 20 My soul is consumed with longing
for your ordinances at all times.
- 21 You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones,
who wander from your
commandments;
- 22 take away from me their scorn and
contempt,
for I have kept your decrees.
- 23 Even though princes sit plotting
against me,
your servant will meditate on your
statutes.
- 24 Your decrees are my delight,
they are my counselors.
- 25 My soul clings to the dust;
revive me according to your word.
- 26 When I told of my ways, you
answered me;
teach me your statutes.
- 27 Make me understand the way of
your precepts,
and I will meditate on your
wondrous works.
- 28 My soul melts away for sorrow;
strengthen me according to your
word.
- 29 Put false ways far from me;
and graciously teach me your law.
- 30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
I set your ordinances before me.
- 31 I cling to your decrees, O LORD;
let me not be put to shame.
- 32 I run the way of your commandments,
for you enlarge my understanding.
- 33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of your
statutes,
and I will observe it to the end.
- 34 Give me understanding, that I may
keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.
- 35 Lead me in the path of your
commandments,
for I delight in it.
- 36 Turn my heart to your decrees,
and not to selfish gain.
- 37 Turn my eyes from looking at
vanities;
give me life in your ways.
- 38 Confirm to your servant your promise,
which is for those who fear you.
- 39 Turn away the disgrace that I dread,
for your ordinances are good.
- 40 See, I have longed for your precepts;
in your righteousness give me life.
- 41 Let your steadfast love come to me,
O LORD,
your salvation according to your
promise.
- 42 Then I shall have an answer for
those who taunt me,
for I trust in your word.
- 43 Do not take the word of truth utterly
out of my mouth,
for my hope is in your ordinances.
- 44 I will keep your law continually,
forever and ever.
- 45 I shall walk at liberty,
for I have sought your precepts.
- 46 I will also speak of your decrees
before kings,
and shall not be put to shame;
- 47 I find my delight in your
commandments,
because I love them.
- 48 I revere your commandments, which
I love,
and I will meditate on your statutes.
- 49 Remember your word to your servant,
in which you have made me hope.
- 50 This is my comfort in my distress,
that your promise gives me life.
- 51 The arrogant utterly deride me,
but I do not turn away from your
law.

- 52 When I think of your ordinances
from of old,
I take comfort, O LORD.
- 53 Hot indignation seizes me because
of the wicked,
those who forsake your law.
- 54 Your statutes have been my songs
wherever I make my home.
- 55 I remember your name in the night,
O LORD,
and keep your law.
- 56 This blessing has fallen to me,
for I have kept your precepts.
- 57 The LORD is my portion;
I promise to keep your words.
- 58 I implore your favor with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to
your promise.
- 59 When I think of your ways,
I turn my feet to your decrees;
- 60 I hurry and do not delay
to keep your commandments.
- 61 Though the cords of the wicked
ensnare me,
I do not forget your law.
- 62 At midnight I rise to praise you,
because of your righteous
ordinances.
- 63 I am a companion of all who fear you,
of those who keep your precepts.
- 64 The earth, O LORD, is full of your
steadfast love;
teach me your statutes.
- 65 You have dealt well with your servant,
O LORD, according to your word.
- 66 Teach me good judgment and
knowledge,
for I believe in your
commandments.
- 67 Before I was humbled I went astray,
but now I keep your word.
- 68 You are good and do good;
teach me your statutes.
- 69 The arrogant smear me with lies,
but with my whole heart I keep
your precepts.
- 70 Their hearts are fat and gross,
but I delight in your law.
- 71 It is good for me that I was humbled,
so that I might learn your statutes.
- 72 The law of your mouth is better to me
than thousands of gold and silver
pieces.
- 73 Your hands have made and
fashioned me;
give me understanding that I may
learn your commandments.
- 74 Those who fear you shall see me
and rejoice,
because I have hoped in your word.
- 75 I know, O LORD, that your judgments
are right,
and that in faithfulness you have
humbled me.
- 76 Let your steadfast love become my
comfort
according to your promise to your
servant.
- 77 Let your mercy come to me, that I
may live;
for your law is my delight.
- 78 Let the arrogant be put to shame,
because they have subverted me
with guile;
as for me, I will meditate on your
precepts.
- 79 Let those who fear you turn to me,
so that they may know your
decrees.
- 80 May my heart be blameless in your
statutes,
so that I may not be put to shame.
- 81 My soul languishes for your salvation;
I hope in your word.
- 82 My eyes fail with watching for your
promise;
I ask, "When will you comfort me?"
- 83 For I have become like a wineskin in
the smoke,
yet I have not forgotten your
statutes.
- 84 How long must your servant endure?
When will you judge those who
persecute me?
- 85 The arrogant have dug pitfalls for me;
they flout your law.
- 86 All your commandments are
enduring;
I am persecuted without cause;
help me!

- 87 They have almost made an end of
me on earth;
but I have not forsaken your
precepts.
- 88 In your steadfast love spare my life,
so that I may keep the decrees of
your mouth.
- 89 The LORD exists forever;
your word is firmly fixed in heaven.
- 90 Your faithfulness endures to all
generations;
you have established the earth,
and it stands fast.
- 91 By your appointment they stand
today,
for all things are your servants.
- 92 If your law had not been my delight,
I would have perished in my
misery.
- 93 I will never forget your precepts,
for by them you have given me life.
- 94 I am yours; save me,
for I have sought your precepts.
- 95 The wicked lie in wait to destroy me,
but I consider your decrees.
- 96 I have seen a limit to all perfection,
but your commandment is
exceedingly broad.
- 97 Oh, how I love your law!
It is my meditation all day long.
- 98 Your commandment makes me
wiser than my enemies,
for it is always with me.
- 99 I have more understanding than all
my teachers,
for your decrees are my
meditation.
- 100 I understand more than the aged,
for I keep your precepts.
- 101 I hold back my feet from every evil
way,
in order to keep your word.
- 102 I do not turn away from your ordinances,
for you have taught me.
- 103 How sweet are your words to my
taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
- 104 Through your precepts I get
understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.
- 105 Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.
- 106 I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to observe your righteous
ordinances.
- 107 I am severely afflicted;
give me life, O LORD, according to
your word.
- 108 Accept my offerings of praise,
O LORD,
and teach me your ordinances.
- 109 I hold my life in my hand
continually,
but I do not forget your law.
- 110 The wicked have laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from your
precepts.
- 111 Your decrees are my heritage
forever;
they are the joy of my heart.
- 112 I incline my heart to perform your
statutes
forever, to the end.
- 113 I hate the double-minded,
but I love your law.
- 114 You are my hiding place and my
shield;
I hope in your word.
- 115 Go away from me, you evildoers,
that I may keep the
commandments of my God.
- 116 Uphold me according to your
promise, that I may live,
and let me not be put to shame in
my hope.
- 117 Hold me up, that I may be safe
and have regard for your statutes
continually.
- 118 You spurn all who go astray from
your statutes;
for their cunning is in vain.
- 119 All the wicked of the earth you
count as dross;
therefore I love your decrees.
- 120 My flesh trembles for fear of you,
and I am afraid of your
judgments.
- 121 I have done what is just and right;
do not leave me to my
oppressors.

- 122 Guarantee your servant's well-being;
do not let the godless oppress me.
- 123 My eyes fail from watching for your
salvation,
and for the fulfillment of your
righteous promise.
- 124 Deal with your servant according to
your steadfast love,
and teach me your statutes.
- 125 I am your servant; give me
understanding,
so that I may know your decrees.
- 126 It is time for the LORD to act,
for your law has been broken.
- 127 Truly I love your commandments
more than gold, more than fine gold.
- 128 Truly I direct my steps by all your
precepts;^a
I hate every false way.
- 129 Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore my soul keeps them.
- 130 The unfolding of your words gives
light;
it imparts understanding to the
simple.
- 131 With open mouth I pant,
because I long for your
commandments.
- 132 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as is your custom toward those
who love your name.
- 133 Keep my steps steady according to
your promise,
and never let iniquity have
dominion over me.
- 134 Redeem me from human oppression,
that I may keep your precepts.
- 135 Make your face shine upon your
servant,
and teach me your statutes.
- 136 My eyes shed streams of tears
because your law is not kept.
- 137 You are righteous, O LORD,
and your judgments are right.
- 138 You have appointed your decrees in
righteousness
and in all faithfulness.
- 139 My zeal consumes me
because my foes forget your words.
- 140 Your promise is well tried,
and your servant loves it.
- 141 I am small and despised,
yet I do not forget your precepts.
- 142 Your righteousness is an everlasting
righteousness,
and your law is the truth.
- 143 Trouble and anguish have come
upon me,
but your commandments are my
delight.
- 144 Your decrees are righteous forever;
give me understanding that I may
live.
- 145 With my whole heart I cry; answer
me, O LORD.
I will keep your statutes.
- 146 I cry to you; save me,
that I may observe your decrees.
- 147 I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I put my hope in your words.
- 148 My eyes are awake before each
watch of the night,
that I may meditate on your
promise.
- 149 In your steadfast love hear my voice;
O LORD, in your justice preserve
my life.
- 150 Those who persecute me with evil
purpose draw near;
they are far from your law.
- 151 Yet you are near, O LORD,
and all your commandments are
true.
- 152 Long ago I learned from your decrees
that you have established them
forever.
- 153 Look on my misery and rescue me,
for I do not forget your law.
- 154 Plead my cause and redeem me;
give me life according to your
promise.
- 155 Salvation is far from the wicked,
for they do not seek your statutes.
- 156 Great is your mercy, O LORD;

^a Gk Jerome: Meaning of Heb uncertain

- give me life according to your justice.
- 157 Many are my persecutors and my adversaries,
yet I do not swerve from your decrees.
- 158 I look at the faithless with disgust,
because they do not keep your commands.
- 159 Consider how I love your precepts;
preserve my life according to your steadfast love.
- 160 The sum of your word is truth;
and every one of your righteous ordinances endures forever.
- 161 Princes persecute me without cause,
but my heart stands in awe of your words.
- 162 I rejoice at your word
like one who finds great spoil.
- 163 I hate and abhor falsehood,
but I love your law.
- 164 Seven times a day I praise you
for your righteous ordinances.
- 165 Great peace have those who love
your law;
nothing can make them stumble.
- 166 I hope for your salvation, O LORD,
and I fulfill your commandments.
- 167 My soul keeps your decrees;
I love them exceedingly.
- 168 I keep your precepts and decrees,
for all my ways are before you.
- 169 Let my cry come before you, O LORD;
give me understanding according
to your word.
- 170 Let my supplication come before you;
deliver me according to your promise.
- 171 My lips will pour forth praise,
because you teach me your statutes.
- 172 My tongue will sing of your promise,
for all your commandments are
right.
- 173 Let your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen your precepts.
- 174 I long for your salvation, O LORD,
and your law is my delight.
- 175 Let me live that I may praise you,
and let your ordinances help me.
- 176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep;
seek out your servant,
for I do not forget your
commandments.

Read Psalms 120, 121

These two psalms speak of the Lord's protection, both from enemies and from other dangers that are unnamed, but metaphorically described as unsure footing, the burning of the sun, and the terrors encountered at night. Particularly comforting is the assurance that even while we grow tired and lose strength, our watchful God never tires or sleeps.

Reflect: Am I aware that God is constantly watching to protect me from harm? If I experience difficulty, I can be sure that it has not escaped his attention and that he will not allow me to be destroyed by it.

Pray: Our help is from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Act: I will face whatever it is that I fear and always do what is right, especially when I have no doubt about the right thing to do.

PSALM 120

Prayer for Deliverance from Slanderers

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 In my distress I cry to the LORD,
that he may answer me:
- 2 "Deliver me, O LORD,
from lying lips,
from a deceitful tongue."
- 3 What shall be given to you?
And what more shall be done to you,
you deceitful tongue?
- 4 A warrior's sharp arrows,
with glowing coals of the broom tree!
- 5 Woe is me, that I am an alien in Meshech,
that I must live among the tents of Kedar.
- 6 Too long have I had my dwelling
among those who hate peace.
- 7 I am for peace;
but when I speak,
they are for war.

PSALM 121**Assurance of God's Protection***A Song of Ascents.*

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
- 2 My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
- 4 He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

- 5 The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade at your
right hand.
- 6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- 7 The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
- 8 The LORD will keep
your going out and your
coming in
from this time on and
forevermore.

Read Psalms 122, 123

In both of these psalms the psalmist looks to God, first in the city of Jerusalem containing God's temple, and then in the transcendence of the heavenly throne where God dwells. In each place, there is the peace that union with God brings: peace among people in God's city, peace within the soul that looks to him with trust.

Reflect: If I live in union with God, I may still know suffering, but I will not lack peace. Peace is the sure sign of God's presence.

Pray: Lord, give us your peace always.

Act: In planning the day I will ask God first what he wants me to do. I will keep my eyes on him until he lets me know what he wants.

PSALM 122**Song of Praise and Prayer for Jerusalem***A Song of Ascents. Of David.*

- 1 I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD!”
- 2 Our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
- 3 Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together.
- 4 To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
- 5 For there the thrones for judgment were set up,
the thrones of the house of David.
- 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.
- 7 Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.”
- 8 For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, “Peace be within you.”
- 9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your good.

PSALM 123**Supplication for Mercy***A Song of Ascents.*

- 1 To you I lift up my eyes,
O you who are enthroned in the heavens!
- 2 As the eyes of servants
look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a maid
to the hand of her mistress,

Read Psalms 124, 125

These psalms express praise for the Lord's protection. The imagery is sometimes vivid: the threats that have been encountered are compared to the rapidly rising waters of a flash flood, the fangs of a wild animal, and the trap set by a hunter for a helpless bird. God's protection is signified by the breaking of the trap, and the safety of his people by the unshakeable mountains surrounding Jerusalem.

Reflect: Life today seems full of anxieties, for which the ideas expressed in these psalms provide a needed antidote.

Pray: Free us, Lord, from all evils, and graciously give us peace in our day.

Act: I will contemplate the images in these psalms and savor a sense of security under God's protection.

so our eyes look to the LORD our God,
until he has mercy upon us.

- 3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us,
for we have had more than enough of contempt.
- 4 Our soul has had more than its fill
of the scorn of those who are at ease,
of the contempt of the proud.

PSALM 124

Thanksgiving for Israel's Deliverance

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

- 1 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side
—let Israel now say—
- 2 if it had not been the LORD who was on our side,
when our enemies attacked us,
- 3 then they would have swallowed us up alive,
when their anger was kindled against us;
- 4 then the flood would have swept us away,
the torrent would have gone over us;
- 5 then over us would have gone
the raging waters.
- 6 Blessed be the LORD,
who has not given us
as prey to their teeth.
- 7 We have escaped like a bird
from the snare of the fowlers;
the snare is broken,
and we have escaped.
- 8 Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

PSALM 125

The Security of God's People

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.
- 2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the LORD surrounds his people,
from this time on and forevermore.
- 3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest
on the land allotted to the righteous,
so that the righteous might not stretch out
their hands to do wrong.
- 4 Do good, O LORD, to those who are good,
and to those who are upright in their hearts.
- 5 But those who turn aside to their own crooked ways
the LORD will lead away with evildoers.
Peace be upon Israel!

Read Psalm 126

The return of God's people from exile is described here in jubilant terms, as the fulfillment of a prayer almost too good to be true. Rather than resenting their past affliction, the people see all that they have endured as the painful toil of planting, which results finally in a bountiful yield.

Reflect: What prayer of mine has been answered beyond my expectations? For what do I hope against hope even now?

Pray: Lord, you have done great things for me, and I praise you.

Act: I will consider what conversion needs to take place in my life: a turn away from unhelpful attachments, or a return to the fervor that I once had.

Read Psalms 127, 128

Using terms that describe the stability of a house ordered according to God's will, these psalms depict the tranquility that comes as a blessing from God: peace, prosperity, love, children, and a table full of good food.

Reflect: Do my human relationships reflect the tranquility that is a sure sign of God's presence?

Pray: Lord, bless my family and friends with peace.

Act: I will be for my family and friends a reflection of God's love, a channel of the peace that the following of his will can bring into our lives.

PSALM 126**A Harvest of Joy**

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,^a
we were like those who dream.
- 2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
- 3 The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.
- 4 Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
- 5 May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.
- 6 Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.

PSALM 127**God's Blessings in the Home**

A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.

- 1 Unless the LORD builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the LORD guards the city,
the guard keeps watch in vain.
- 2 It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives sleep to his beloved.^b
- 3 Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD,
the fruit of the womb a reward.
- 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the sons of one's youth.
- 5 Happy is the man who has
his quiver full of them.
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

PSALM 128**The Happy Home of the Faithful**

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 Happy is everyone who fears the LORD,
who walks in his ways.
- 2 You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;

^a Or brought back those who returned to Zion

^b Or for he provides for his beloved during sleep

Read Psalm 129

This psalm seems to be the prayer of an individual looking back at a period of suffering inflicted by others, but the words are placed in the mouth of the whole nation of Israel, a people who remember their foreign captivity and their liberation by God. They pray that justice will be meted out to their enemies.

Reflect: What resentments do I bear? Am I willing to turn them over to the Lord?

Pray: Thank you, Lord, for setting me free. It is you in whom I trust for my vindication.

Act: I will not bear resentments in my heart, but I will place them before God and count on the justice that he will bring about.

Read Psalm 130

This “Penitential Psalm,” known traditionally as the *De profundis* because of the first two words of its Latin version, expresses an awareness of sin that is quickly eclipsed by the knowledge that the Lord’s mercy is far greater than any human fault, and even more certain than the rising of the sun.

Reflect: For what do I need God’s mercy? Do I trust in his mercy with the same certain anticipation described here as the sentinels’ looking forward to the dawn?

Pray: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! Hear my voice!

Act: Memorize all or part of this beautiful psalm to recite as the occasion arises.

you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.

- 3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.
- 4 Thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.
- 5 The LORD bless you from Zion. May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.
- 6 May you see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel!

PSALM 129

Prayer for the Downfall of Israel’s Enemies

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 “Often have they attacked me from my youth”
—let Israel now say—
- 2 “often have they attacked me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me.
- 3 The plowers plowed on my back;
they made their furrows long.”
- 4 The LORD is righteous;
he has cut the cords of the wicked.
- 5 May all who hate Zion
be put to shame and turned backward.
- 6 Let them be like the grass on the housetops
that withers before it grows up,
7 with which reapers do not fill their hands
or binders of sheaves their arms,
8 while those who pass by do not say,
“The blessing of the LORD be upon you!
We bless you in the name of the LORD!”

PSALM 130

Waiting for Divine Redemption

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.
- 2 Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!
- 3 If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
- 4 But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered.

Read Psalms 131, 132

The first of these psalms speaks of trust in God in the imagery of a tiny child at rest on its mother's lap. The second speaks of trust in God in the form of David's tireless service of the Lord who has promised him an eternal dynasty. Ultimately, it is not David's work that accomplishes so much, but God's. It is the Lord who will "prepare a lamp" for his anointed one.

Reflect: What can I do for God that adds anything to his greatness? My greatest accomplishment will lie in my openness to what the Lord wants to do with and for me.

Pray: I will hope in the Lord, now and forever.

Act: I will do my best for God by my openness to what he wants to do with me. I will praise him best by silently listening to his word.

- 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
- 6 my soul waits for the LORD
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.
- 7 O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.
- 8 It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

PSALM 131**Song of Quiet Trust**

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

- 1 O LORD, my heart is not lifted up,
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.
- 2 But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like the weaned child that is
with me.^a
- 3 O Israel, hope in the LORD
from this time on and forevermore.

PSALM 132**The Eternal Dwelling of God in Zion**

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 O LORD, remember in David's favor
all the hardships he endured;
- 2 how he swore to the LORD
and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob,
- 3 "I will not enter my house
or get into my bed;
- 4 I will not give sleep to my eyes
or slumber to my eyelids,
- 5 until I find a place for the LORD,
a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."
- 6 We heard of it in Ephrathah;
we found it in the fields of Jaar.
- 7 "Let us go to his dwelling place;
let us worship at his footstool."
- 8 Rise up, O LORD, and go to your resting place,
you and the ark of your might.
- 9 Let your priests be clothed with righteousness,
and let your faithful shout for joy.

^a Or my soul within me is like a weaned child

Read Psalms 133, 134

Both of these psalms seem to have been prayed when the people gathered in Jerusalem to participate in the public worship of their God. The emphasis in these psalms is on the blessings that flow to the people from their presence before the God of Zion: fraternal unity, peace and strength flowing from the one who made heaven and earth.

Reflect: Do I recognize the necessity for God's involvement in the healing of the world's social ills, and in the establishment of true peace?

Pray: May the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth, bless us from Zion.

Act: I will read today's newspaper not just to gain information, but to pray for harmony among God's people where it is found to be lacking.

- 10 For your servant David's sake
do not turn away the face of your anointed one.
- 11 The LORD swore to David a sure oath
from which he will not turn back:
"One of the sons of your body
I will set on your throne.
- 12 If your sons keep my covenant
and my decrees that I shall teach them,
their sons also, forevermore,
shall sit on your throne."
- 13 For the LORD has chosen Zion;
he has desired it for his habitation:
- 14 "This is my resting place forever;
here I will reside, for I have desired it.
- 15 I will abundantly bless its provisions;
I will satisfy its poor with bread.
- 16 Its priests I will clothe with salvation,
and its faithful will shout for joy.
- 17 There I will cause a horn to sprout up for David;
I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one.
- 18 His enemies I will clothe with disgrace,
but on him, his crown will gleam."

PSALM 133

The Blessedness of Unity

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!
- 2 It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down over the collar of his robes.
- 3 It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion.
For there the LORD ordained his blessing,
life forevermore.

PSALM 134

Praise in the Night

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the
LORD,
who stand by night in the house of the LORD!
- 2 Lift up your hands to the holy place,
and bless the LORD.
- 3 May the LORD, maker of heaven and earth,
bless you from Zion.

Read Psalm 135

The people who stand in the courts of the temple survey prayerfully their history with the God who presides over nature, who brought them out of Egypt, and who gave them the land of Canaan. The living God is contrasted with those idols that are so unwisely worshiped by the surrounding nations.

Reflect: What does “living God” really mean? Do I experience God’s reality and relate to him as one who is alive?

Pray: Lord, I believe that you are alive. Help my unbelief.

Act: Though perhaps quietly and in private, possibly using the words of this psalm, I will pray to God out loud, speaking to him as one living person speaks to another.

PSALM 135**Praise for God’s Goodness and Might**

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Praise the name of the LORD;
give praise, O servants of the LORD,
2 you that stand in the house of the LORD,
in the courts of the house of our God.
- 3 Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good;
sing to his name, for he is gracious.
- 4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself,
Israel as his own possession.
- 5 For I know that the LORD is great;
our Lord is above all gods.
- 6 Whatever the LORD pleases he does,
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all deeps.
- 7 He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of
the earth;
he makes lightnings for the rain
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.
- 8 He it was who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,
both human beings and animals;
- 9 he sent signs and wonders
into your midst, O Egypt,
against Pharaoh and all his servants.
- 10 He struck down many nations
and killed mighty kings—
- 11 Sihon, king of the Amorites,
and Og, king of Bashan,
and all the kingdoms of Canaan—
- 12 and gave their land as a heritage,
a heritage to his people Israel.
- 13 Your name, O LORD, endures forever,
your renown, O LORD, throughout all ages.
- 14 For the LORD will vindicate his people,
and have compassion on his servants.
- 15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
the work of human hands.
- 16 They have mouths, but they do not speak;
they have eyes, but they do not see;
- 17 they have ears, but they do not hear,
and there is no breath in their mouths.
- 18 Those who make them
and all who trust them
shall become like them.
- 19 O house of Israel, bless the LORD!
O house of Aaron, bless the LORD!

Read Psalm 136

In this litany psalm, the mention of God's deeds in creation, the exodus, the conquest of the land, and the liberation of his people are interspersed with the refrain: "his steadfast love endures forever." Each one of the divine deeds mentioned is not only a manifestation of power but, first and foremost, a proof of his merciful love.

Reflect: How has God manifested his love to me personally?

Pray: Lord, your mercy endures without end. May you be praised forever.

Act: I will reflect on the Lord's past deeds as a reason for my continued trust in him.

- 20 O house of Levi, bless the LORD!
You that fear the LORD, bless the LORD!
21 Blessed be the LORD from Zion,
he who resides in Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD!

PSALM 136

God's Work in Creation and in History

- 1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
2 O give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
4 who alone does great wonders,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
5 who by understanding made the heavens,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
6 who spread out the earth on the waters,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
7 who made the great lights,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
8 the sun to rule over the day,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
9 the moon and stars to rule over the night,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
10 who struck Egypt through their firstborn,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
11 and brought Israel out from among them,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
12 with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
13 who divided the Red Sea^a in two,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
14 and made Israel pass through the midst of it,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
15 but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the
Red Sea,^a
for his steadfast love endures forever;
16 who led his people through the wilderness,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
17 who struck down great kings,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
18 and killed famous kings,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
19 Sihon, king of the Amorites,
for his steadfast love endures forever;
20 and Og, king of Bashan,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

^a Or Sea of Reeds

21 and gave their land as a heritage,
for his steadfast love endures
forever;

22 a heritage to his servant Israel,
for his steadfast love endures
forever.

23 It is he who remembered us in our
low estate,
for his steadfast love endures
forever;

24 and rescued us from our foes,
for his steadfast love endures
forever;

25 who gives food to all flesh,
for his steadfast love endures
forever.

26 O give thanks to the God of
heaven,
for his steadfast love endures
forever.

Read Psalm 137

The words of this psalm reflect the Babylonian exile of God's people as either a present fact or a recent and bitter memory. Exile at a distance from Jerusalem has increased the people's love for the holy city, which they promise never to forget while cursing those who have deprived them of the sight of her.

Reflect: Why does God sometimes seem to be absent? When this happens, does it cause me to love him less, or more?

Pray: When I cannot sense your presence, Lord, teach me to look for you rather than doubting.

Act: I acknowledge that I am not yet living in my spiritual homeland, but that I am continuing a journey toward it that will last as long as this present life.

PSALM 137

Lament over the Destruction of Jerusalem

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon—
there we sat down and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.
- 2 On the willows^a there
we hung up our harps.
- 3 For there our captors
asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
- 4 How could we sing the LORD's song
in a foreign land?
- 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!
- 6 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy.
- 7 Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites
the day of Jerusalem's fall,
how they said, “Tear it down! Tear it down!
Down to its foundations!”
- 8 O daughter Babylon, you devastator!^b
Happy shall they be who pay you back
what you have done to us!
- 9 Happy shall they be who take your little ones
and dash them against the rock!

PSALM 138

Thanksgiving and Praise

Of David.

- 1 I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
- 2 I bow down toward your holy temple

^a Or poplars

^b Or you who are devastated

Read Psalm 138

This is the prayer of one who realizes many things that too often go unnoticed: that God has been faithful to his promises, that he has answered prayer and given strength, and that—despite his seeming absence from earthly affairs—he is attentive and involved in the lives of his creatures.

Reflect: From afar, the Lord defends the lowly and judges the proud. How does he see me?

Pray: Lord, you see me as I am. Make me as you wish me to be.

Act: I will pause to reflect on the fact that God is watching over me with care.

Read Psalm 139

The psalmist wanders mentally through every conceivable location, expressing amazement that God's watchful eye follows him at every turn, that even as an embryo in the womb his every future action is already known and accounted for by God. In contrast with the foolishness of one who wishes to escape from the eyes of God, the psalmist rejoices and willingly takes refuge in God's sight.

Reflect: Do I think there is any action of mine that is beyond God's sight? Do I wish that this were so?

Pray: Lord, I see that your knowledge and your love are inseparable. I cannot hide from you, but I don't want to hide from you either.

Act: I will become aware of the mask that I wear when I try to create impressions for other people, and of the fact that the Lord sees behind it.

and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.^a

- 3 On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.^b
- 4 All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth.
- 5 They shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD.
- 6 For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly; but the haughty he perceives from far away.
- 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.
- 8 The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

PSALM 139**The Inescapable God**

To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.

- 1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
- 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.
- 3 You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.
- 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.
- 7 Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
- 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
- 9 If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
- 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.
- 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,"
- 12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

^a Cn: Heb you have exalted your word above all your name

^b Syr Compare Gk Tg: Heb you made me arrogant in my soul with strength

- 13 For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
- 15 My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
- 16 Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
- 17 How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
- 18 I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
- I come to the end^a—I am still with you.
- 19 O that you would kill the wicked,
O God,
and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me—
- 20 those who speak of you maliciously,
and lift themselves up against you for evil!^b
- 21 Do I not hate those who hate you,
O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?
- 22 I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.
- 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
- 24 See if there is any wicked^c way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.^d

PSALM 140

Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies

To the leader. A Psalm of David.

- 1 Deliver me, O LORD, from evildoers;
protect me from those who are violent,
- 2 who plan evil things in their minds
and stir up wars continually.
- 3 They make their tongue sharp as a snake's,
and under their lips is the venom of vipers. *Selah*
- 4 Guard me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked;
protect me from the violent
who have planned my downfall.
- 5 The arrogant have hidden a trap for me,
and with cords they have spread a net,^e
along the road they have set snares
for me. *Selah*
- 6 I say to the LORD, "You are my God;
give ear, O LORD, to the voice of my
supplications."
- 7 O LORD, my Lord, my strong deliverer,
you have covered my head in the day of battle.
- 8 Do not grant, O LORD, the desires of the wicked;
do not further their evil plot.^f *Selah*

^a Or I awake

^b Cn: Meaning of Heb uncertain

^c Heb *hurtful*

^d Or *the ancient way*. Compare Jer 6.16

^e Or *they have spread cords as a net*

^f Heb adds *they are exalted*

Read Psalms 140, 141

These psalms appeal to God for help against dangers that are not merely hypothetical, including a present threat of violence from arrogant and ruthless enemies in the first case, and threats from one's own interior weaknesses in the second. As often seems to be the case, Psalm 140 ends with an expression of confidence that the prayer will be answered.

Reflect: Who or what constitutes the greatest threat to me now? Do I trust in God's protection against this threat? Am I willing to accept helpful criticism?

Pray: Lord, may I never forget that a life in your service is a battle, and that there will be persons or forces that militate against it. May I never lose my confidence in you.

Act: When I pray for something that I certainly need, I will thank God for having heard me even before I see his answer.

- 9 Those who surround me lift up their heads;^a
let the mischief of their lips overwhelm them!
- 10 Let burning coals fall on them!
Let them be flung into pits, no more to rise!
- 11 Do not let the slanderer be established in the land;
let evil speedily hunt down the violent!
- 12 I know that the LORD maintains the cause of the
needy,
and executes justice for the poor.
- 13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your
name;
the upright shall live in your presence.

PSALM 141

Prayer for Preservation from Evil

A Psalm of David.

- 1 I call upon you, O LORD; come quickly to me;
give ear to my voice when I call to you.
- 2 Let my prayer be counted as incense before you,
and the lifting up of my hands as an evening
sacrifice.
- 3 Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD;
keep watch over the door of my lips.
- 4 Do not turn my heart to any evil,
to busy myself with wicked deeds
in company with those who work iniquity;
do not let me eat of their delicacies.
- 5 Let the righteous strike me;
let the faithful correct me.
Never let the oil of the wicked anoint my head,^b
for my prayer is continually^c against their
wicked deeds.
- 6 When they are given over to those who shall
condemn them,
then they shall learn that my words were
pleasant.
- 7 Like a rock that one breaks apart and shatters
on the land,
so shall their bones be strewn at the mouth of
Sheol.^d
- 8 But my eyes are turned toward you, O GOD, my
Lord;
in you I seek refuge; do not leave me
defenseless.
- 9 Keep me from the trap that they have laid for me,
and from the snares of evildoers.
- 10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
while I alone escape.

^a Cn Compare Gk: Heb *those who surround me are uplifted in head*; Heb divides verses 8 and 9 differently

^b Gk: Meaning of Heb uncertain

^c Cn: Heb *for continually and my prayer*

^d Meaning of Heb of verses 5-7 is uncertain

Read Psalms 142, 143

The appeal to God from a dire situation is mitigated in Psalm 142 only by the hope that such pleading will give way to thanksgiving. In Psalm 143, the one who prays is aware that the distress may be caused by his own faults, but is confident in God's mercy and asks to be led both to act justly and to obtain justice from others.

Reflect: Do I pray for God's protection as one who is innocent, or as one who is guilty? In the end, does it matter?

Pray: You are the one who judges me, Lord. Save me both from the injustice of others, and also from my own.

Act: I will confess my sins to God, including also those sins of mine that I may not recognize. Even as a sinner, however, I will continue to trust in his power and his protection.

PSALM 142**Prayer for Deliverance from Persecutors**

A Maskil of David. When he was in the cave. A Prayer.

- 1 With my voice I cry to the LORD;
with my voice I make supplication to the LORD.
- 2 I pour out my complaint before him;
I tell my trouble before him.
- 3 When my spirit is faint,
you know my way.

In the path where I walk
they have hidden a trap for me.

- 4 Look on my right hand and see—
there is no one who takes notice of me;
no refuge remains to me;
no one cares for me.
- 5 I cry to you, O LORD;
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."
- 6 Give heed to my cry,
for I am brought very low.

Save me from my persecutors,
for they are too strong for me.

- 7 Bring me out of prison,
so that I may give thanks to your name.
The righteous will surround me,
for you will deal bountifully with me.

PSALM 143**Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies**

A Psalm of David.

- 1 Hear my prayer, O LORD;
give ear to my supplications in your
faithfulness;
answer me in your righteousness.
- 2 Do not enter into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.
- 3 For the enemy has pursued me,
crushing my life to the ground,
making me sit in darkness like those long dead.
- 4 Therefore my spirit faints within me;
my heart within me is appalled.
- 5 I remember the days of old,
I think about all your deeds,
I meditate on the works of your hands.
- 6 I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. *Selah*

- 7 Answer me quickly, O LORD;
my spirit fails.
Do not hide your face from me,
or I shall be like those who go
down to the Pit.
- 8 Let me hear of your steadfast love in
the morning,
for in you I put my trust.
Teach me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.
- 9 Save me, O LORD, from my enemies;
I have fled to you for refuge.^a
- 10 Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.
Let your good spirit lead me
on a level path.
- 11 For your name's sake, O LORD,
preserve my life.
In your righteousness bring me
out of trouble.
- 12 In your steadfast love cut off my
enemies,
and destroy all my adversaries,
for I am your servant.

Read Psalm 144

In this psalm, the king prays for victory, humbly acknowledging that it is God who trains his hands for battle, and that his own humanity is frail and mortal, in need of divine help. The help of God is then sought not only for victory in battle but also for prosperity in peace.

Reflect: Do I live with the illusion that either true peace or true prosperity can be firmly established by human effort alone?

Pray: Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.

Act: In the pursuit of prosperity and peace, my first and most powerful activity will be prayer.

PSALM 144

Prayer for National Deliverance and Security

Of David.

- 1 Blessed be the LORD, my rock,
who trains my hands for war, and my fingers
for battle;
- 2 my rock^b and my fortress,
my stronghold and my deliverer,
my shield, in whom I take refuge,
who subdues the peoples^c under me.
- 3 O LORD, what are human beings that you regard
them,
or mortals that you think of them?
- 4 They are like a breath;
their days are like a passing shadow.
- 5 Bow your heavens, O LORD, and come down;
touch the mountains so that they smoke.
- 6 Make the lightning flash and scatter them;
send out your arrows and rout them.
- 7 Stretch out your hand from on high;
set me free and rescue me from the mighty
waters,
from the hand of aliens,
8 whose mouths speak lies,
and whose right hands are false.
- 9 I will sing a new song to you, O God;
upon a ten-stringed harp I will play to you,
- 10 the one who gives victory to kings,
who rescues his servant David.
- 11 Rescue me from the cruel sword,
and deliver me from the hand of aliens,
whose mouths speak lies,
and whose right hands are false.
- 12 May our sons in their youth

^a One Heb Ms Ck: MT *to you I have hidden*

^b With 18.2 and 2 Sam 22.2: Heb *my steadfast love*

^c Heb Mss Syr Aquila Jerome: MT *my people*

- be like plants full grown,
 our daughters like corner pillars,
 cut for the building of a palace.
- 13 May our barns be filled,
 with produce of every kind;
 may our sheep increase by thousands,
 by tens of thousands in our fields,
- 14 and may our cattle be heavy with
 young.

May there be no breach in the
 walls,^a no exile,
 and no cry of distress in our
 streets.

- 15 Happy are the people to whom such
 blessings fall;
 happy are the people whose God
 is the LORD.

Read Psalms 145, 146

The Lord's universal kingship is praised here, but unlike any other king, even one whose kingdom extends worldwide, the Lord is able to enter into a compassionate relationship with every creature and has a particular concern for those who are weak or bowed down by difficulty. He is powerful enough to satisfy the deepest desires of all.

Reflect: What is the relevance of this imagery of kingship to my own time and situation? How is the Lord different from earthly rulers?

Pray: I will extol you, my God and my king, and bless your name forever.

Act: I will let my gestures in prayer express my acknowledgment of God's kingship.

PSALM 145

The Greatness and the Goodness of God

Praise. Of David.

- 1 I will extol you, my God and King,
 and bless your name forever and ever.
- 2 Every day I will bless you,
 and praise your name forever and ever.
- 3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
 his greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 One generation shall laud your works to another,
 and shall declare your mighty acts.
- 5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
 and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
- 6 The might of your awesome deeds shall be
 proclaimed,
 and I will declare your greatness.
- 7 They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant
 goodness,
 and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
- 8 The LORD is gracious and merciful,
 slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- 9 The LORD is good to all,
 and his compassion is over all that he has
 made.
- 10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,
 and all your faithful shall bless you.
- 11 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,
 and tell of your power,
 12 to make known to all people your^b mighty
 deeds,
 and the glorious splendor of your^c kingdom.
- 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
 and your dominion endures throughout all
 generations.

The LORD is faithful in all his words,
 and gracious in all his deeds.^d

^a Heb lacks *in the walls*

^b Gk Jerome Syr: Heb *his*

^c Heb *his*

^d These two lines supplied by Q Ms Gk Syr

- 14 The LORD upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed
down.
- 15 The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in
due season.
- 16 You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every
living thing.
- 17 The LORD is just in all his ways,
and kind in all his doings.
- 18 The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
- 19 He fulfills the desire of all who fear him;
he also hears their cry, and saves
them.
- 20 The LORD watches over all who love
him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.
- 21 My mouth will speak the praise of
the LORD,
and all flesh will bless his holy
name forever and ever.

PSALM 146

Praise for God's Help

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!
- 2 I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all
my life long.

- 3 Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no
help.
- 4 When their breath departs, they
return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.
- 5 Happy are those whose help is the
God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their
God,
6 who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
7 who executes justice for the
oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
- The LORD sets the prisoners free;
8 the LORD opens the eyes of the
blind.
- The LORD lifts up those who are
bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.
- 9 The LORD watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the
widow,
but the way of the wicked he
brings to ruin.
- 10 The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all
generations.
Praise the LORD!

PSALM 147

Praise for God's Care for Jerusalem

- 1 Praise the LORD!
How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is
fitting.
- 2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.
- 3 He heals the brokenhearted,
and binds up their wounds.
- 4 He determines the number of the stars;
he gives to all of them their names.
- 5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
his understanding is beyond measure.
- 6 The LORD lifts up the downtrodden;
he casts the wicked to the ground.

Read Psalm 147

God is praised here as the “builder” of the whole of creation but, in a particular way, of Jerusalem, which he rebuilds after the destruction of the exile. He dispenses both the food needed by animals and human beings and the elements that mark the seasons of earthly time. Most remarkable for the people of Israel is the fact that creation’s Lord has taken a particular interest in them.

Reflect: Do I have trouble accepting the fact that the God of the universe cares about the details of my own life?

Pray: Lord, thank you for choosing me as your servant. Teach me to listen to your voice and to await your faithful care.

Act: I will stop looking in myself for any reason that will compel God to love me, because his love, instead, is the reason for the good that I find in myself.

- 7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
make melody to our God on the lyre.
- 8 He covers the heavens with clouds,
prepares rain for the earth,
makes grass grow on the hills.
- 9 He gives to the animals their food,
and to the young ravens when they cry.
- 10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse,
nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner;^a
- 11 but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in his steadfast love.
- 12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!
- 13 For he strengthens the bars of your gates;
he blesses your children within you.
- 14 He grants peace^b within your borders;
he fills you with the finest of wheat.
- 15 He sends out his command to the earth;
his word runs swiftly.
- 16 He gives snow like wool;
he scatters frost like ashes.
- 17 He hurls down hail like crumbs—
who can stand before his cold?
- 18 He sends out his word, and melts them;
he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.
- 19 He declares his word to Jacob,
his statutes and ordinances to Israel.
- 20 He has not dealt thus with any other nation;
they do not know his ordinances.
Praise the LORD!

PSALM 148**Praise for God’s Universal Glory**

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
- 2 Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!
- 3 Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
- 4 Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!
- 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for he commanded and they were created.
- 6 He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.^c
- 7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,

^a Heb *legs of a person*

^b Or *prosperity*

^c Or *he set a law that cannot pass away*

Read Psalm 148

For the praise of God, this psalm calls not only on all human beings from the least to the greatest but also on the angels, the heavenly bodies, even the animals, the sea monsters, and the forces of nature. All things are found to praise God's goodness even silently, by virtue of his goodness reflected in them.

Reflect: No one who is truly praising God is content to be alone in praising him. Inviting others to join in the praise is an essential element of praise itself.

Pray: Let all things praise the Lord's name.

Act: Take a walk and imitate this psalm in finding the praise of God in all the things that you see.

Read Psalm 149

In this psalm, traditionally prayed in the morning on Sundays and the more solemn festive days, God's "faithful" (Hebrew *hasidim*) celebrate the newness of the salvation that he has brought about. Though they may be poor and oppressed (*anawim*) for their faithfulness, God gives them joy in a victory that makes them more powerful than kings and princes, able to celebrate without worry.

Reflect: A holy celebration should banish all anxieties. God is king, and the victory is already ours.

Pray: Sing a new song to the Lord!

Act: As I fulfill what God asks of me, I will not fear anyone, and I will not worry about things that might tempt me to act otherwise.

- 8 fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!
- 9 Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
- 10 Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!
- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
- 12 Young men and women alike,
old and young together!
- 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
- 14 He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the LORD!

PSALM 149

Praise for God's Goodness to Israel

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise in the assembly of the faithful.
- 2 Let Israel be glad in its Maker;
let the children of Zion rejoice in their
King.
- 3 Let them praise his name with dancing,
making melody to him with tambourine and
lyre.
- 4 For the LORD takes pleasure in his people;
he adorns the humble with victory.
- 5 Let the faithful exult in glory;
let them sing for joy on their couches.
- 6 Let the high praises of God be in their throats
and two-edged swords in their hands,
7 to execute vengeance on the nations
and punishment on the peoples,
8 to bind their kings with fetters
and their nobles with chains of iron,
9 to execute on them the judgment decreed.
This is glory for all his faithful ones.
Praise the LORD!

PSALM 150

Praise for God's Surpassing Greatness

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!^a

^a Or *dome*

Read Psalm 150

In this final psalm, the exhortation to “praise the Lord” occurs eleven times, specifying different places, motives, and means for such praise. The imperative verb “Praise!” is in the plural, addressed to an indeterminate multitude that finally comes to include all living things. By the psalmist’s intention, the Lord’s praise has merged with the very limits of the created world: a fitting conclusion for this inspired book of prayers.

Reflect: Praise of the Lord will be as constant as breathing as long as my life is lived joyfully according to his will.

Pray: Lord, may I make use of everything you have given me as I praise you in every moment and for every good thing you have done in my life.

Act: Here is a new way to examine my conscience: By what actions of mine do I forget or fail to offer praise to the Lord?

- 2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing
greatness!
- 3 Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
- 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
- 5 Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
- 6 Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!