



Royal Psalms

THE ANOINTED KING. THE
RIGHTEOUS SUFFERER
Psalm 2, 16, 20–23, 45, 118.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Mu_CDPsc

“The Lord Is My Shepherd” (hymn no. 108)

1. The Lord is my Shepherd; no want shall I know.
I feed in green pastures; safe-folded I rest.
He leadeth my soul where the still waters flow,
Restores me when wand'ring, redeems when oppressed,
Restores me when wand'ring, redeems when oppressed.

2. Thru the valley and shadow of death though I stray,
Since thou art my Guardian, no evil I fear.
Thy rod shall defend me, thy staff be my stay.
No harm can befall with my Comforter near.
No harm can befall with my Comforter near.

3. In the midst of affliction my table is spread.
With blessings unmeasured my cup runneth o'er.
With perfume and oil thou anointest my head.
Oh, what shall I ask of thy providence more?
Oh, what shall I ask of thy providence more?

What Are the Psalms?



HEBREW POETRY, FEATURES OF THE PSALMS, TYPES OF PSALMS

Overview of Hebrew poetry

- **Much Old Testament scripture is poetic**

- The Book of Psalms, obviously
- Other parts of the *Ketuvim* or “Writings,” such as Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon
- Much of the Latter Prophets
- Even passages in the *Torah* such as Jacob’s Blessing (Genesis 49), Moses Song (Exodus 15), David’s Lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1)

- **What is poetry?**

- **Concentrated language**

- Maximum of thought in a minimum of words

- **Creative and evocative use of language**

- Different diction (word choice), use of words to mean more than usual
- Unusual syntactical structure
- Distinctive in both **form** and **content** (more below)

- **Effects of Poetry**

- Requires the reader to slow down, think about and interpret the material
- Stirs deep feelings, emotional and spiritual

Parallelism

- Correspondence in the ideas expressed in two or more successive lines
- **Synonymous parallelism** (sense of A-line repeated in B-line)
 - *Why do the heathen rage,
and the people imagine a vain thing? (Ps. 2:1)*
- **Antithetical parallelism** (sense of A-line contrasted in B-line)
 - *For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous:
but the way of the ungodly shall perish (Ps. 1:6)*
- **Synthetic or climactic parallelism** (sense of A-line built upon in B-line)
 - *Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty,
give unto the LORD glory and strength. (Ps. 29:1)*
 - *I glory in plainness,
I glory in truth
I glory in my Jesus
for he hath redeemed my soul from hell (2 Nephi 33:6)*
- **Parallelism is important because, unlike rhythm and meter, figures of thought can be translated into another language!**

Musical Features of Hebrew Poetry

(for interest only)

- *No ancient biblical music has survived*
 - David played on the harp as he sang . . .
 - *Selah*—enigmatic Hebrew term that may have been a musical direction
- In the post-biblical period scripture was frequently chanted, and system of marking the biblical text, called *cantillation*, developed to divide it into units, indicate stress or accent, and indicate musical line

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם

wayyō'mer `ēlōhîm yiqqāwû hammayim

“And God said, “Let the waters be collected.” (Gen 1:9) Vowel points in red, cantillations in green; *public domain image courtesy of the ever-popular Wikipedia!*

Psalm 18



א לְמִנְצָחַם, לְעֶבֶד יְהוָה--לְדָוִד:
אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר, לַיהוָה, אֶת-דִּבְרֵי, הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת--
בַּיּוֹם הַצֵּיל-יְהוָה אוֹתוֹ מִכָּף כָּל-אֹיְבָיו, וּמִיַּד
שָׂאוּל.

ב וַיֹּאמֶר-- אֶרְחֶמֶךָ יְהוָה חַזְקִי.

ג יְהוָה, סִלְעִי וּמְצוּדָתִי-- וּמִפְּלִטִי:
אֱלֹהֵי צוּרִי, אֶחָסֶה-בּוֹ; מִגְּנִי וְקִרְוֹ-יִשְׁעִי, מִשָּׁגְבִי.

ד מְהֵלֵל, אֶקְרָא יְהוָה; וּמִן-אֹיְבֵי, אֲנֹשֶׁעַ.

ה אֶפְפוּנֵי חֲבָלֵי-מָוֶת; וּנְחָלֵי בְלִיעַל יִבְעֹתוּנֵי.

1 For the Leader.

[A Psalm] of David the servant of the LORD,
who spoke unto the LORD the words of this song
in the day that the LORD delivered him
from the hand of all his enemies,
and from the hand of Saul;

2 And he said: I love thee, O LORD, my strength.

3 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;
my God, my rock, in Him I take refuge;
my shield, and my horn of salvation, my high tower

4 Praised, I cry, is the LORD,
and I am saved from mine enemies.

5 The cords of Death compassed me,
and the floods of Belial assailed me.

Introduction to Psalms

- **Title**
 - Hebrew: *Tehillim* or “**songs of praise**”
 - Greek: *Psalmos*
- **“Torah is revelation, prophecy is proclamation, psalms are response [to God]”** (Bandstra, *Introduction to the Old Testament*)
 - The Psalms reflect the feeling and religious experience of ancient Israel
- **Many are pre-exilic, some even original with David**
 - Nevertheless, some are post-exilic and all bear evidence of editing during the collection process
 - Some attributed to David were later compositions that were associated with events of David’s life
- **Structure**
 - 150 psalms divided into 5 “books” on analogy to the Torah
 - Each books ends with **a doxology or statement of praise** (41, 72, 89, 106, 150)
- **Attributions**
 - David (73), Solomon (2), Sons of Korah (12), Asaph (12), Heman (1), Moses (1), Ethan (1)

Psalm Collections (for interest only)

- In addition to the five-fold formal division of the final edition, the Psalter can also be divided into a number of Psalms grouped by types
 - some of them, focusing on the use of *YHWH* or *Elohim* divine names, might suggest that some Psalms came from the south (J) and some from the north (3)
- The Psalter was traditionally divided into five “books” on analogy to the five books of Moses
 - Book 1 (Psalms 1–41)
 - Book 2 (Psalms 41–72)
 - Book 3 (Psalms 73–89)
 - Book 4 (Psalms 90–106)
 - Book 5 (Psalms 107–150)
 - Psalms of Ascent (liturgical psalms for pilgrimage to the temple, Psalms 120–134)
- Each one ends with a *doxology*, or hymn of praise
- Psalm Sub-collections (see Bandstra, 418, table 14.1)
 - Yahwistic Psalms of David (3–41)
 - Psalms of Korah (42–49)
 - Elohist Psalms of David (51–72)
 - Psalms of Asaph (73–83)
 - Psalms on *YHWH*’s kingship (93–99)
 - Hallelujah Thanksgiving Psalms (111–118)
 - **Songs of Ascents** (liturgical psalms for entry to the temple, 120–134)
 - Hallelujah Thanksgiving Psalms (146–150)

Psalm Types

- **Penitential**
 - Prays for forgiveness and help
- **Trust**
- **Thanksgiving**
 - Express gratitude for divine intervention to the singer
- **Hymn**
 - Descriptive language to praise a characteristic of God (irrespective of what he has done for the singer)
- **Royal Psalms**
 - **Praising a king as the representative of YHWH, sung at important events** (coronation/adoption, weddings, victories)
 - **For Christians the king was supposed to be a type of the coming Messiah, hence many serve double-duty as Messianic Psalms**
- **Temple and Liturgy**
 - Describe the joys of the temple, prepare worshipers
- **Wisdom**
 - Cf. Proverbs
- **Torah Psalms**
 - Praise God's revelation in Torah
 - E.g. Psalm 119:1-2
- **Complaint**
 - The largest number of Psalms are actually lamentations, describing the suffering of the singer and containing pleas for deliverance
 - E.g. Psalm 22:2-3
- **Imprecations (cursings!)**
 - Display God's justice, prove God's authority over the wicked, lead wicked to repentance (*HCSB*)
 - "God hears even outrageous cries for justice and attends human suffering" (Bandstra, 410)

The King of Israel

- **YHWH is the ultimate king of Israel**
- **The rightful king was God's *māšîaḥ*, or “anointed one” (Greek, *christos*)**
 - Saul, David, and Solomon all anointed by prophets
 - Originally both kings and priests (e.g., Solomon dedicated the temple)
 - ***Through anointing, the king was “adopted” as the son and representative of YHWH***
 - Royal psalms were sung at coronations, weddings, births, national festivals, and times of military success and failure
- **David was (theoretically) the ideal anointed king**
 - Always faithful to YHWH, though he made many personal errors
 - Successful militarily
- **Most kings failed to live up to the ideal**
- **Hezekiah and Josiah were perhaps the best in view of the biblical authors**
 - **Always consider the first application to an ancient Israelite king and to the original audience**
 - ***Thus David, Hezekiah, and Josiah were types of the New Testament Christ***

Psalm 2

A royal psalm with strong Messianic applications

⁶Yet have I set **my king** upon **my holy hill of Zion**.

⁷I will declare the decree:

the Lord hath said unto me, ***Thou art my Son;***
this day have I begotten thee.

⁸Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,
and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

⁹Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

¹⁰Be wise now therefore, O ye kings:
be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

¹¹Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

¹²Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,
and ye perish from the way,
when his wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Psalm 16

Song of Trust and Confession of Faith

⁷I will bless the LORD,
who hath given me counsel:
my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

⁸I have set the LORD always before me:
because he is at my right hand,
I shall not be moved.

⁹Therefore my heart is glad,
and my glory rejoiceth:
my flesh also shall rest in hope.

¹⁰For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;
neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

¹¹Thou wilt shew me the path of life:
in thy presence is fulness of joy;
at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalm 20

An Intercessory Prayer

⁵We will rejoice in thy salvation,
and in the name of our God we will set up our banners:
the Lord fulfil all thy petitions.

⁶Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed;
he will hear him from his holy heaven
with the saving strength of his right hand.

⁷Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:
but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

⁸They are brought down and fallen:
but we are risen, and stand upright.

⁹Save, LORD:
let the king hear us when we call.

Psalm 21

A Royal Psalm

¹The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD;
and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!

²Thou hast given him his heart's desire,
and hast not withholden the request of his lips.

³For thou [doth meet] him with the blessings of goodness:
thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head

⁴He asked life of thee,
and thou gavest it him,
even length of days for ever and ever.

⁵His glory is great in thy salvation:
honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

⁶For thou hast made him most blessed for ever:
thou hast made him exceeding glad
with thy countenance.

⁷For the king trusteth in the LORD,
and through the mercy of the most High
he shall not be moved.

¹³Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength:
so will we sing and praise thy power.

Psalm 22

A Suffering Servant

¹My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
why art thou so far from helping me,
and from the words of my roaring?

⁷All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
⁸He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him:
let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

¹⁴I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint:
my heart is like wax;
it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

¹⁵My strength is dried up like a potsherd;
and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

¹⁶For dogs have compassed me:
the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me:
they pierced my hands and my feet.

¹⁷I may tell all my bones:
they look and stare upon me.

¹⁸They part my garments among them,
and cast lots upon my vesture.

²²I will declare thy name unto my brethren:
in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

²³Ye that fear the Lord, praise him;
all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him;
and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

²⁴For he hath not despised nor abhorred
the affliction of the afflicted;
neither hath he hid his face from him;
but when he cried unto him, he heard.

Psalm 23

Hymn of trust, used in personal and clan worship, but with clear royal applications as well

¹The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil:
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
for ever.

Psalm 45

Royal wedding psalm; remember the later Christian allegory of the bridegroom (Christ) and bride (Church)

In praise of the bridegroom (vv. 2–8)

²Thou art fairer than the children of men:
grace is poured into thy lips:
therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

⁴And in thy majesty ride prosperously
because of truth and meekness and righteousness;
and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

⁶Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:
the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

⁷Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness:
therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

In praise of the bride (vv. 9–16)

¹⁰Hearken, O daughter, and consider,
and incline thine ear;
forget also thine own people,
and thy father's house;
¹¹So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty:
for he is thy Lord;
and worship thou him.

¹³The king's daughter is all glorious within:
her clothing is of wrought gold.

¹⁴She shall be brought unto the king
in raiment of needlework:
the virgins her companions that follow her
shall be brought unto thee.

¹⁵With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought:
they shall enter into the king's palace.

Psalm 118

Last of the Hallel, or “*halelûyāh*,” Psalms (Pss. 111–118); hymn of thanksgiving

¹O give thanks unto the LORD;
for he is good:
because his mercy endureth for ever.

²Let Israel now say,
that his mercy endureth for ever.

⁶The LORD is on my side; I will not fear:
what can man do unto me?

¹⁴The LORD is my strength and song,
and is become my salvation.

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness:
I will go into them,
and I will praise the LORD :

²¹I will praise thee:
for thou hast heard me,
and art become my salvation.

²²The stone which the builders refused
is become the head stone of the corner.

²⁴This is the day which the LORD hath made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

²⁵Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD :
O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

²⁶***Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD:***
we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

²⁷God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light:
bind the sacrifice with cords,
even unto the horns of the altar.

²⁸Thou art my God, and I will praise thee:
thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

²⁹O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good:
for his mercy endureth for ever.

Another Type of Psalm of Interest (For interest only)

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*Temple and Liturgical Psalms
sung in pilgrimages to the Temple or praise within it*

Music and Praise within the ancient Temple

“The inherent meaning of the psalms and the power of their poetry were augmented by their musical performance. Anciently the psalms were sung and were often accompanied by instruments. That musical accompaniment was particularly important in the temple, where following David’s pattern of performing the psalms was an important part of the worship . . .

“This pattern suggests that ancient temple worship was a dynamic, awe-inspiring experience, involving all the senses—the sight of sacrifices and ritual gestures, the smell of burnt offerings and incense, and the sound of prayers and music sung by groups of singers and multiple instrument players. Nevertheless, in a very broad sense, ancient religious music parallels our own practice, with prelude and postlude music framing our sacrament meetings, hymns preceding our prayers, and the sacrament hymn preparing us for the administration of the sacrament itself. Perhaps we could very loosely compare the Levitical temple choir and players to our Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square, each adding to our worship and deepening it with their music”. (Huntsman, *Worship*, 116–17)

Psalm 23:5-6; 27: 4

⁵Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

⁴One thing have I desired of the Lord,
that will I seek after;
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple.

Psalm 24

¹The earth is the Lord's,
and the fulness thereof;
the world,
and they that dwell therein.

²For he hath founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the floods.

³Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
or who shall stand in his holy place?

⁴He that hath clean hands,
and a pure heart;
who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
nor sworn deceitfully.

⁵ He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
and righteousness from the God of his salvation

⁶This is the generation of them that seek him,
that seek thy face, O Jacob. *Selah.*

⁷Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.

⁸Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
the Lord mighty in battle.

⁹Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.

¹⁰Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory. *Selah.*