

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 30.0%

Weekly Readings will cover: Psalms 4 – 9, 11 – 17, 19 - 26

Sunday: Psalm 4, 5 & 6

Monday: Psalm 7, 8, & 9

Tuesday: Psalm 11, 12 & 13 (skip Psalm 10 – we will read this later)

Wednesday: Psalm 14, 15 & 16

Thursday: Psalm 17, 19 & 20 (skip Psalm 18 – we already read this chapter)

Friday: Psalms 21, 22 & 23

Saturday: Psalms 24, 25 & 26

Current # of email addresses in the group: 608

I hope everyone's study went very well. As we try to read through the Bible in Chronological order, we will now pivot and move into a heavy dose of the Psalms. We will not read them in order so please pay close attention to the order listed. We've already read some of them when the context placed them with events we were reading, but we will eventually read them all.

So far through our readings, we've essentially taken a chapter a day most of the time, but it would take us approximately 5 months to just get through the Psalms at that pace. Therefore, I've decided to try to get through 3 psalms per day. Since we've already read some of them and will read a few others later with other books, at this pace we will get through this heavy dose of Psalms in 3 ½ weeks.

Sunday's reading, due to having both an introduction and three Psalms, is quite long, but the rest of the days are more manageable. I hope you enjoy going through the Psalms and I hope you find them to be a blessing to your prayer life!

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 51

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 330 - SUNDAY: December 31st

Psalm 4, 5 & 6

Daily Deep Dive:

Overview of the Book of Psalms: The UCG reading program states: “As we have seen, the early Hebrew arrangement of the Old Testament was in three parts—the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. Mentioning this arrangement, Jesus Christ referred to the last section as the Psalms (Luke 24:44). This was evidently a common designation for the Writings that arose from Psalms being the first book of this section and occupying a rather significant portion of it.

The English titles by which we know this great book of songs, prayers and poetry—Psalms and the Psalter—derive from Greek. *Psalmoi* is the book’s title in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament and the name used in the original Greek of the New Testament (Luke 20:42; Luke 24:44; Acts 1:20). Meaning a song sung to a stringed instrument (such as the harp, lyre and lute), the word was apparently a translation of the Hebrew *mizmor*, a term used in the introductory prescripts or superscriptions of 57 individual psalms. No original title for the book has been preserved in Hebrew. However, in rabbinic literature the accepted name was *Sefer Tehillim* (“Book of Praises”).

The predominant author of the book is Israel’s King David. Of the 150 psalms making up the collection, 73 are designated in the introductory superscriptions as *le-David*, translated “of David.” While the terminology is not clear, as it could mean *by* David, *concerning* David, *for* David or *to* David, it is traditionally understood to mean an attribution of authorship. Psalm 18’s superscription says explicitly that David “spoke to the Lord the words of this song.” This psalm varies only slightly from David’s psalm in 2 Samuel 22. And the end of Psalm 72 refers to preceding psalms in the book as “the prayers of David the son of Jesse.” The Psalms are referred to in one of the ancient Jewish histories as “the writings of David” (2 Maccabees 2:13). The Talmud likewise attributes them in the Midrash on Psalm 1. The New Testament confirms David as the author of at least seven psalms: Psalm 2 (Acts 4:25-26); Psalm 16 (Acts 2:25-28;

Acts 13:35-36); Psalm 32 (Romans 4:6-8); Psalm 69 (Acts 1:16-20; Romans 11:9-10); Psalm 95 (Hebrews 4:7); Psalm 109 (Acts 1:16-20); and Psalm 110 (Matthew 22:41-45; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:34-35).

David was certainly suited to this task. He is described as a “skillful player on the harp” (1 Samuel 16:16-23), an inventor of musical instruments (1 Chronicles 23:5; 2 Chronicles 29:26-30; Nehemiah 12:36; Amos 6:5), a composer of laments or dirges (2 Samuel 1:17; 2 Samuel 3:33), and “the sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1). As king, David took on the task of organizing the singers and musicians for tabernacle and later temple worship (1 Chronicles 6:31-32; 1 Chronicles 16:4-7, 1 Chronicles 16:41-42; 1 Chronicles 25:1, 1 Chronicles 25:6; 2 Chronicles 7:6; 2 Chronicles 8:14; 2 Chronicles 23:18; 2 Chronicles 29:26-27, 30; Nehemiah 12:24).

Yet David is not the only composer of the Psalms. We also find some attributed to men David placed in charge of worship in Jerusalem—Asaph (with 12 psalms) as well as Ethan and Heman (with one psalm each). The name of David’s son Solomon appears twice. Ten psalms are attributed to the Levitical family of Korah (the designation “*sons of Korah*” meaning “*descendants of Korah*”). This is the same Korah who rebelled in the wilderness in Numbers 16, so obviously these descendants did not share his mindset. One composition, Psalm 90, is attributed to Moses—making it the psalm of oldest recorded origin.

Fifty psalms have no attribution, though two of these, Psalms 2 and 95, are referred to in the New Testament as the work of David, as noted above. A number of other anonymous psalms are probably also the work of David. Yet other people must have contributed as well, as Psalm 137 was written following the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem—centuries after the time of David and Solomon. Women, such as Deborah (see Judges 5) and Hannah (see 1 Samuel 2), are

known to have written songs and poetic prayers. The prophet Habakkuk wrote a psalm to be used in temple worship (Habakkuk 3). King Hezekiah curiously declared, “We will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord” (Isaiah 38:20). Perhaps some psalms were composed as late as the time of Ezra, when the final compilation of the book of Psalms took place.

Actually, the book of Psalms is composed of five books, each ending with a doxology (expression of praise) to God:

- Book I (Psalms 1–41): “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen” (41:13).
- Book II (Psalms 42–72): “Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended” (72:18-20).
- Book III (Psalms 73–89): “Blessed be the Lord forevermore! Amen and Amen” (89:52).
- Book IV (Psalms 90–106): “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, ‘Amen!’ Praise the Lord!” (106:48).
- Book V (Psalms 107–150): No similar short closing formula. Rather, the entirety of Psalm 150 apparently serves as the doxology.

The doxologies ending Books I, II and III do not appear to have originally been part of the final psalms to which they are appended. It seems that the three books once formed independent collections—separate hymnals so to speak. The note concluding Book II stating that the prayers of David end with Psalm 72 supports this since there are at least 19 psalms of David in later books. (Thus the prayers were ended as far as that particular collection went.) The repetition of psalms also supports this. Psalm 14 in Book I reappears as Psalm 53 in Book II. Psalm 40:13-17 in Book I reappears as Psalm 70 in Book II. Parts of two

psalms in Book II, Psalm 57:7-11 and Psalm 60:5-12, become Psalm 108 in Book V.

Many believe Book I of Psalms to have been compiled before David's death. Perhaps it was initially put together early in his reign to serve as the hymnal for tabernacle worship. This does not rule out later additions and rearrangement—as Psalm 3 concerns events late in David's life. Some have speculated that Book II was also compiled before David's death—shortly before it, with the total of 72 psalms (3 x 24) intended to be sung in succession by the 24 priestly courses David appointed for temple worship. There is some disagreement about this numbering however, with a few psalms as we currently have them appearing to have originally been one psalm and some questioning whether Psalms 1 and 2 originally served as an introduction to Book I. Another issue concerns the superscription of Psalm 72, the last psalm in Book II. It is labeled as *le-Solomon*. Since the end of this psalm concludes with “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended,” some see it as a psalm of David *concerning* Solomon or intended *for* Solomon to use. But it could well be that Solomon wrote it prior to David's death and that David simply included it in his own collection. It could also be that, following David's death, Solomon appended his own psalm to the end of his father's psalms—either having received the compilation of Book II from David or having authorized the compilation himself.

Book III is often considered to have been compiled during the Babylonian Exile, while the compilation of Books IV and V appears to have come after the return from Babylon (though some place Book IV during the Exile). It should be noted that the break between Books IV and V might have been artificial. The doxology ending Book IV seems to be integral to Psalm 106 and may not originally have applied to the entire collection. There is no “Amen and Amen” to conclude Book IV as in previous divisions. Books IV and V share common distinctions from the other books. For one, many more psalms have no superscriptions

(18 of the 61 as opposed to only six without superscriptions in the preceding 89). For another, Books IV and V have a near absence of musical references and technical terms like *la-menasse'ah* (“To the Chief Musician”) and *selah* (probably indicating a pause or interlude).

Also, *Hallelujah* (“Praise the Lord” in the NKJV) occurs only in Books IV and V. And these latter two books share similar subject matter—psalms of praise and thanksgiving suitable for temple worship services. All of this leads us to suspect that Books IV and V were originally one collection that was later divided into two. This may have been done to fit the pattern of the five books of the Law, as they were apparently read according to a weekly schedule in conjunction with the Law and Prophets in a three-year cycle—a practice that seems to have begun in Ezra’s time. The Talmud in its Midrash on Psalm 1 draws a correspondence between the five books of the Law and the five books of Psalms. There are thematic correspondences here as well, as we will see.

The Psalms give us the heart and feeling of God’s law. God’s law is an expression of His character—revealed in Scripture as love. For us, living this way of love means following His commandments. The first four of the Ten Commandments tell us how to love God, and the last six tell us how to love our fellow man. God’s commandments are further delineated and demonstrated through the first division of the Old Testament, the five books of the Law. The next division, the Prophets, gives an added dimension. The Former Prophets (the books of Joshua through 2 Kings) show us how, historically, blessings came by obedience to God’s law and curses came through disobedience. The Latter Prophets (the books of Isaiah through Malachi) carry the same lessons of blessing and cursing into the future. The next Old Testament division, the Writings, gives further and finer specifications of the application of God’s law.

The book of Psalms in particular gives the whole heart, feeling and approach one needs to have toward God's law. God looked on David as a man after His own heart (Acts 13:22), and the outpouring of David's (and others') thoughts and feelings in prayer, or in song, before God is a tremendous example to be carefully studied and personally applied.

Here are five specific applications of the Psalms:

1. *Prayers*: Psalms can provide examples of how to pray. They can be a guide to getting started in prayer, or become your own personal prayers in particular cases.
2. *History*: Many psalms show what went through David's mind in certain situations in his life. The Psalms even contain added details about the history of Israel.
3. *Songs and poetry*: Hymnals used in the Church of God today are a prime example of this, as they often make use of the translated lyrics of the psalms.
4. *Prophecy*: Psalm 22, for example, is a prophecy of the Messiah's sufferings. Others speak of His return and other future events.
5. *Practical*: The Psalms contain direct how-to instruction, though not typically in the same specific way as Proverbs.

The five books of Psalms, like the five books of the Law, cover an interesting progression of historical and prophetic themes. The historical themes of the Psalms by book respectively appear to be: (I) Man and creation; (II) Israel and redemption; (III) Public worship and the temple; (IV) The sojourn of God's people on the earth; (V) Praise and the Word of God. The prophetic themes appear to be: (I) The beginning of salvation; (II) God's relationship with His Church; (III) The time of the Great Tribulation; (IV) God's Kingdom; (V) Mankind's complete salvation. Correspondence has also been shown with the five Megilloth ("Scrolls")—i.e., the festival scrolls read by the Jews during particular festivals. These are as follows:

1. Song of Solomon: Read at Passover.
2. Ruth: Read at Pentecost, the time of the wheat harvest, though there may also be a connection with the closely related Days of Unleavened Bread commencing the earlier barley harvest. Both harvests are mentioned in Ruth.
3. Lamentations: Read on the fast of the 9th of Ab commemorating the temple's destruction, though there could be a thematic connection with the Feast of Trumpets.
4. Ecclesiastes: Read in conjunction with the Feast of Tabernacles, though this sober reflection seems to correspond with the Day of Atonement's focus in the run-up to the Feast.
5. Esther: Read in conjunction with the Jewish feast of Purim commemorating the deliverance of the Jews as told in the book, yet this may prefigure on some level the ultimate deliverance of all mankind foreshadowed in the Eighth Day following the Feast of Tabernacles, often referred to today as the Last Great Day.

Time and space prevents us from exploring all the parallels with the five books of Psalms here, but this makes for a fascinating study.

At the outset, we should take a moment to consider the literary quality of the Psalms. *The Bible Reader's Companion* says in its introduction to the book: "The Psalms are lyric poems, heart songs that touch us deeply. Much of their power derives from a distinctive form of Hebrew poetry, which does not rely on rhyme but on rhythmic patterns of thought. Ideas, emotions, and images are repeated or developed in a variety of ways to create an intuitive response in the reader. While it is not necessary to understand Hebrew poetry to be captivated by the Psalms or to sense their impact, it's important to grasp its principles if we try to interpret them.

"Simply put, the key to Hebrew poetry is parallelism. That is, its tendency to arrange ideas, emotions, and images side by side in a

variety of ways. The three simplest forms of parallelism are synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic. In synonymous parallelism a thought is repeated in different words:

“Our mouths were filled with laughter,

our tongues with songs of joy’ (Psalm 126:2).

“In antithetic parallelism the initial thought, emotion, or image is emphasized by contrasting it with an opposite:

“A kind man benefits himself,

but a cruel man brings himself harm’ (Proverbs 11:17).

“In synthetic parallelism the second line completes the thought of the first:

“I will lie down and sleep in peace,

for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety’ (Psalm 4:8).

“There are more complex types of parallelism found in Psalms. Yet the basic concept is simple. The power of Hebrew poetry flows from the arrangement and repetition of the emotions, ideas, and images presented by the poet” (p. 346).

A note on the superscriptions or prescripts of the Psalms is also in order. In the psalm of Habakkuk 3, the phrase “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth [apparently denoting a poetic style]” appears at the beginning, while appended to the end are the words “To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.” It has been suggested by some that this is the proper formula for psalms in general

and that it should be extended to the book of Psalms. This would mean that the beginning of many a superscription actually belongs to the previous psalm. For instance, Psalm 3 would begin with the superscription "A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son" and end with what Bible translations place at the beginning of Psalm 4: "To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments." Psalm 4 would begin with "A Psalm of David" and end with the beginning of the next superscription, "To the Chief Musician. With flutes." And on it goes.

In his *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, Gleason Archer cites a treatise (J.W. Thirtle, *The Titles of the Psalms, Their Meaning and Nature Explained*, 1905) suggesting "that many of the Psalms had not only a prescript but also a postscript. Some of the ancient Egyptian and Akkadian hymns have been preserved to us with a final notation. This makes it quite possible that in the later compilation of the canonical Psalms the scribes became confused by the presence of postscripts and assumed that they should be taken as part of the prescript for the psalm following" (1982, p. 243). Bear this in mind through the readings, as we will not always touch on this in commenting on individual psalms. [END]

Psalm 4:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 4 is one of David's prayers for deliverance. It "is linked to Psalm 3 in mood and concept. Both speak of the possibility of finding such peace in God's presence that even when torn by physical and emotional pain, a person may still have restful sleep (Psalm 3:5; Psalm 4:8)" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Psalm 4).

In the superscription, where the King James Version leaves a word untranslated, "on Neginoth," the New King James Version properly translates this as "With stringed instruments." (As noted in the introduction to Psalms, this may be the postscript for Psalm 3.)

Getting into the words of Psalm 4 itself, "O God of my righteousness" in verse 1 "can also be translated 'O my righteous God.' The phrase has two meanings: (1) Only God is righteous. (2) All of a person's righteousness is found in him alone" (note on verse 1).

David addresses those who are currently troubling him: "How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame?" (verse 2). "That is, through slander rob David of the public honor he had enjoyed under the Lord's blessing and care (see Psalm 3:3...) and bring him into public disrepute" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 4:2).

David knows that God has set certain godly people "apart for Himself." David was such a person, set apart by God to be king over Israel (1 Samuel 16:12-13). For this reason, he is confident that God hears his prayers and intervenes to help him.

David calls on his enemies to search their hearts, saying, "In your anger [against me] do not sin" (verse 4, NIV). Since anger can lead to sin, his detractors need to quiet down, bring their requests and sacrifices to God and trust Him to resolve their complaints (verse 5). This is remarkable in that the wicked are offered a way to redemption rather than a pronouncement of doom. In the New Testament the apostle Paul quotes verse 4 about being angry and yet not sinning in a different context—to describe the proper exercise of righteous indignation (Ephesians 4:26).

In Psalm 4:6, David recognizes that many have become discouraged, asking, "Who can show us any good?" (NIV). David knows that only God can restore confidence in the nation and end the present crisis. "Lift up the light of your countenance upon us" (verse 6). The related priestly blessing in Numbers 6:26 adds an additional phrase: "The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, *and give you peace.*" With that in mind, it is interesting to note that David concludes with a determined focus on joy

and peace. Again, he is able to sleep peacefully even in the present circumstances because God provides safety.” [END]

Verse 2 – The NKJV says “how long will you love worthlessness” (“vanity” KJV). This is a theme that runs through the bible. This word means “emptiness”. God’s Way offers us something of substance and value, Satan’s way offers a promise of fulfillment and happiness, but is empty and a lie. All of us should constantly be evaluating our lives for where we chase after “worthless/empty” things instead.

Verse 8 – This verse contains another theme that runs throughout the Bible. There is much in this world that can cause us anxiety and worry. God tells us that we have a choice, we can daily seek Him and have confidence that He will look out for us and take care of us, and then reap the result of peace and rest. This is a choice and not automatic. Faith and confidence in God should result in us having peace and rest (compare Matthew 6:33-34).

Psalm 5:

The UCG reading program states: “In Psalm 5, the superscription (the first part of which may refer to Psalm 4, as the Beyond Today Bible Commentary's introductory notes on Psalms explains) apparently describes accompaniment "with flutes," the latter word seeming to translate the Hebrew "Nehiloth" (KJV).

Psalm 5 is a morning prayer (verses 2-3) in which David seeks help for another day. Because the world is corrupt, God makes Himself a refuge and shield for the righteous (verses 11-12). Because the world is confused, He provides clear guidance if we will seek it: "Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness...make Your way straight before my face" (verse 8).

Only the righteous can come into God's presence and enjoy His blessings (verses 5, 11-12). David says in verse 5, "You hate all workers of iniquity." The Hebrew word for hate "is a strong term that speaks primarily of rejection" (*Nelson*, note on Psalm 11:4-6). We should understand this in terms of ultimate judgment, as the next verse continues: "You shall *destroy* those who speak falsehood; the Lord *abhors* the bloodthirsty and deceitful man." What God really hates (what He rejects and wants to destroy) is what the wicked think and do—that is, the things that classify them as wicked. God in fact loves all humanity so much that He has provided an atonement for them through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (see John 3:16)—*if* they will repent and accept it. Yet ultimately, if they still reject God, then all that will constitute them are the things God hates—and He will in perfect justice utterly annihilate them (for their own good and the good of everyone else).

David immediately balances his reference to God's just hatred of evil by referring to "the multitude of Your mercy" (verse 7). "Mercy here is *hesed*, a term also translated as 'love,' 'covenant love [or loyalty],' and 'loving-kindness.' *Hesed* reminds us that God is totally committed to humankind. The love we see in Calvary's ultimate sacrifice draws us, as God's mercy drew David, to worship and serve the Lord" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verse 7). Relying on God's mercy, David expresses his intent to worship God and asks for help in following Him—to provide no basis for his enemies' accusations—as he knows he would not succeed in obedience on his own (verses 7-8).

It is interesting that David says he will worship toward God's holy temple (verse 7) when there was as yet no temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps David was speaking of God's temple in heaven (compare Hebrews 9:23-24; Revelation 15:5-16:1). Or perhaps during his preparations for the building of the physical temple late in his life, David wrote this psalm (or modified an earlier one) to be sung when

the temple was standing. Note that the psalm's superscription (or alternatively the postscript at the beginning of Psalm 6) is addressed "To the Chief Musician." For us today, the temple of God, in a spiritual sense, can also refer to the body of believers with God's Holy Spirit—the Church of God (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 3:17).

David asks God to pass sentence on his enemies because they have "no faithfulness in their mouth" (Psalm 5:9). They boast, flatter, lie and curse. "Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with destruction" (same verse, NIV). "Their throat is an open tomb; they flatter [deceivingly] with their tongue." Paul used these words to argue for the depravity of all humanity (Romans 3:13). Jesus stated that a man is defiled by what comes out of his heart: "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man" (Matthew 15:18-29). The sins of the wicked (verses 4-5, 9-10)—which means everyone until they repent—spring from rebellion against God: "Banish them for their many sins, for they have rebelled against you" (verse 10, NIV). As mentioned above, ultimately the wicked will be cast out: "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 7:19).

But God surrounds the righteous—those who repent and seek His will—with protection and favor, making Himself their refuge and shield (Psalm 5:11-12). Of course, this does not mean that God will allow no calamity to overtake His people, as we saw in the book of Job. But everything happens within His oversight, as He directs all things to a positive outcome for those who faithfully serve Him (see Romans 8:28). And in general, He does maintain a protective defense around His people, and He provides them with constant blessings." [END]

Psalm 6:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 6. Where the King James Version gives the superscription (perhaps the postscript of Psalm 5) as "on Neginoth upon Sheminith," the New King James gives the likely translation "On an eight-stringed harp."

In Psalm 6, David is distressed by an illness that he senses God has sent as a punishment for his own sinfulness (verse 1). He suffers intense pain—"my bones are troubled" (verse 2)—with no remission in sight: "My soul is in anguish. How long, O Lord, how long?" (verse 3). He believes the illness to be mortal (verse 5).

We do not know when this situation occurred. David wrote a number of psalms associated with serious illness that may concern the same time. Some have speculated that this came on him after the episode of taking a census of Israel, which focused more on national strength than the need for God's help (see 2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21). God sent a plague on the people, who were likely complicit in self-sufficient thinking. Yet David, who had ordered the census despite Joab's warning, took responsibility. As 2 Samuel 24:17 says: "Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, 'Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house.'" Perhaps his concluding words here came to pass when the plague on the nation was halted, though we cannot know for sure.

Whatever sin it was that apparently brought on his illness, David calls on God's mercy—His unfailing love (Psalm 6:4). As in Psalm 5, the word here again is *hesed*. Says *The Nelson Study Bible*: "Perhaps the most significant single term in the Hebrew text regarding the character of God is the word rendered *mercies* here. The Hebrew word describes what some prefer to call the loyal love of God. The translations vary because the word has much depth. Aside from the personal name of

God (Yahweh), it may be the single most important term describing Him as the object of praise in the Book of Psalms" (note on 6:4).

David warns his enemies in verses 8-10 that he is confident in God's healing and that they will be ashamed, dismayed, and suddenly disgraced for reviling him and, in so doing, dishonoring God, who declared David His servant." [END]

Verse 2 – The NKJV states “have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak”. The word for weak is only found here in the Bible, and Strong’s dictionary says the definition can be “sick or weak”. This may further indicate that David is sick at the time of writing this Psalm.

Day 331 - MONDAY: January 1st

Psalms 7, 8 & 9

Daily Deep Dive:

Psalm 7:

The UCG reading program states: “The superscription of Psalm 7 in the New King James Version calls it a "meditation" of David. The Hebrew for meditation is *higgaion*, as in Psalm 9:16, but the word at the beginning of Psalm 7, as the KJV superscription shows, is actually *shiggaion*, which occurs only here in the Bible. Its plural form, however, is used in the psalm of Habakkuk 3. Repeating from the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on that passage, "The word *shiggayon* comes from *shagah*, 'to wander,' a wandering song" (*Adam Clarke's Commentary*, note on Psalm 7; see note on Habakkuk 3:1). "It may derive from a verbal root meaning 'to reel' or 'to err,' and if so points to some irregular rhythmic mode" (*New Bible Commentary*, note on Habakkuk 3:1).

David names Cush the Benjamite the superscription of Psalm 7. This man, mentioned nowhere else in Scripture, has apparently spoken on behalf of a group of persecutors who accused David of wrongdoing and

were bent on his destruction. Whether they actually believed him guilty of wrong or were just making this up to justify action against him is not clear. Some today speculate that the distinct reference to Cush being a Benjamite may indicate his being a supporter or agent of King Saul. In any case, Cush and his comrades must have been dangerous opponents because David cries out that, if God does not deliver him, his persecutors would "tear me like a lion, and rip me in pieces" (verses 1-2).

In his appeal to God, David takes an oath of innocence in which he invites God to give him into the hands of the enemies who seek to take his life if he is guilty of any of the charges they bring against him (verses 3-5). David is so confident of his innocence that he asks God to judge his righteousness, his integrity (verse 8), his heart and mind (verse 9). "In the Hebrew, *hearts and minds* is literally 'hearts and kidneys'—an ancient way of describing the innermost person" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verses 9-10). We should note that in praying to God the words "Judge me according to my righteousness," David does not mean for God to judge every aspect of his life by this standard. (As with any of us, God would in such an inventory find sins worthy of condemnation. Indeed, other prayers of David show him praying for forgiveness where he has fallen short.) Rather, David in his prayer here is asking for God's judgment in the matter at hand—to judge him according to his deeds and even inward motivations with respect to the accusations that have been made against him. In these, he knows that the righteous and just God will see his complete innocence and fully absolve him.

Against the wicked, however, David describes God as a just Judge and an angry Warrior who will "sharpen His sword," prepare "deadly weapons" and make ready "flaming arrows" to satisfy justice (verses 11-13). Yet David recognizes that the wicked create their own problems for themselves, reaping what they sow (compare Galatians 6:7-8). They *conceive* trouble, which then returns on their own heads (verses

14, 16). "The wicked become 'mothers' to trouble. They will give birth to their own destruction" (note on verses 14-16). They fall into the pits they themselves have dug to trap their prey (verse 15). David therefore knows that those who have plotted his destruction have set up the circumstances for their own demise. Perhaps it was in the midst of his prayer that God inspired David with this reminder—moving him to sing God's praises (see verse 17)." [END]

Verse 8 – Righteousness is not a word we really use outside of a religious context. I often substitute one of the Brown-Driver-Briggs definitions of “what is right”. Here David wanted God to simply judge whether he had done right by people.

Verse 12 – This verse contains a principle found throughout God’s Word. If a sinner will repent and change their behavior (“turn back to God”), God will be merciful, but if someone continues to practice sin and doesn’t change, God will correct them to hopefully bring about change (compare Ezekiel 18:23, Ezekiel 33:19, 2 Peter 3:9).

Verse 15 – This brings to mind the example of Haman in Ester 7:10 (he was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai).

Psalm 8:

The UCG reading program states: “Psalm 8. “At this juncture in the Psalter,” says the *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* in its note on Psalm 8, "this psalm surprises. After five psalms [3-7] (and 64 Hebrew poetic lines—following the introduction to the Psalter...Psalms 1-2) in which the psalmists have called on Yahweh to deal with human perversity, this psalm's praise of Yahweh for his astounding endowment of the human race with royal 'glory and honor' (v. 5) serves as a striking and unexpected counterpoint. Its placement here highlights the glory (God's gift) and disgrace (humanity's own doing) that characterize human beings and the corresponding range of difference in God's dealings with

them. And after five more psalms [9-13] (and 64 poetic lines), this psalm in turn receives a counterpoint...[in Psalm 14]."

Where the NKJV superscription of Psalm 8 has "On the instrument of Gath," the KJV has "upon Gittith" and the NIV has "According to *gittith*." "The Hebrew word perhaps refers to either a winepress ('song of the winepress') or the Philistine city of Gath ('Gittite lyre or music'; see 2 Samuel 15:18)" (note on Psalm 8).

David opens and closes the psalm praising the excellence of God's name (verses 1, 9)—representing God's power, His character and His purpose. The name here is the Hebrew *YHWH*—the Tetragrammaton (i.e., four letters)—often transliterated into English as *Yahweh*, as above. The name means "He Is Who He Is" (the Eternal One). David declares God's name excellent "in all the earth." Wherever one looks on earth—and up from earth to the heavens above—the glory of God is revealed. God introduced Himself to Moses by the first person form of the Tetragrammaton, saying, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). "The One who spoke to Moses declared Himself to be the Eternal One—uncaused and independent. Only the Creator of all things can call Himself the I AM in the absolute sense; all other creatures are in debt to Him for their existence" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Exodus 3:14).

David observes that "from the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies" (verse 2, NIV). While the word for "praise" could also be rendered "strength," as in the KJV and NKJV, "praise" seems the better translation since Jesus quoted the verse this way when the common people (figuratively children) praised Him while the "mature" religious leaders who opposed Him wanted to squelch them but could not (Matthew 21:16). Perhaps David simply meant that despite the scorn of the wicked, there were always new generations of children to gaze in wonder at God's creation and express

awe. Yet God who inspired the psalm also had the more specific prophetic fulfillment in mind.

David's reflections on the grandeur of the heavens (verse 3) gives rise to the question, "What is man?" (verse 4). "The Heb[rew] word here [for man] is *'enos*, which emphasizes man's mortality and weakness. David is stunned that the all-powerful Creator should exalt in such puny beings by caring for us and by giving us dominion over His earth" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on Psalm 8). Who are we in comparison to the Creator? Why would He even think of us? Why would He care for us or have anything to do with us? (verse 4). The word for "visit" here in the NKJV has the sense of "see to" or "deal with," which can have either a positive or negative sense. Here the meaning is positive.

In verses 5-8, David muses further about man's place in the scheme of things—that he is the pinnacle of God's earthly creation.

In verse 5, the word translated "angels" is *elohim*, the word used throughout the Old Testament for God. The Moffatt Translation says, "Thou hast made him little less than divine." Yet it does not seem reasonable to say that man is only a little lower than God. After all, David himself was thinking about how man was basically nothing next to God's majesty as revealed in the sky above. And God Himself tells human beings, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). Perhaps it was because of this that the Targums (ancient Jewish paraphrases of Scripture) and the Septuagint (the Jewish rendering of the Old Testament in Greek) translated the word *elohim* here as meaning "angels." Yet human beings seem rather far below the amazing power and abilities of angels too.

It should be noted that the words "little less" or "little lower" could also be rendered "for a little *while* lower." The literal meaning would then

be that man has been created for a little while lower than God, implying that man after that little while will ultimately share God's plane of existence. This is in fact man's destiny—to be part of *Elohim*, the family of God (see also Psalm 82:6 and our free booklet, [Who Is God?](#)). Yet such a rendering would no doubt have made early Jewish translators even more uncomfortable. So we can see why they would prefer the word "angels" over "God" in Psalm 8:5 in any case. Of course, it is certainly true that for the time being man has been made lower than the angels as well as God, so the writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews (probably the apostle Paul) had no problem using the translation the Jews were familiar with, giving the Greek word for angels rather than God (see Hebrews 2:7).

Psalm 8:6 speaks of God giving man dominion over His creation. This is quoted in Hebrews 2:8. Yet where David goes on in Psalm 8:7-8 to focus on man's dominion over the animals of the earth, recalling Genesis 1-2, the book of Hebrews ends its quotation with Psalm 8:6, emphasizing the "all things" committed to man's rule in this verse—meaning, in its fullest sense, the entire universe and spirit realm. Man, Hebrews 2 explains, has not yet received this ultimate dominion with God—except for Christ, who is our forerunner." [END]

Psalm 9:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 9 and Psalm 10 may have initially been composed as one single psalm. "A number of indicators point in that direction. Psalm 10 is the only psalm from Psalm 3 to 32 that has no superscription, and the Hebrew text of the two psalms together appears to reflect an incomplete (or broken) acrostic structure" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 9). "Acrostic refers to the poetic practice of opening each line, verse, or stanza with a different letter of the alphabet. The acrostics are sometimes complete (Psalms 25; 34; 37; 111; 119; 145). Psalms 9 and 10 form an incomplete acrostic" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, introduction to

Psalms). The Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible treats them as a single psalm.

"Psalm 9 is predominantly praise (by the king) for God's deliverance from hostile nations.... It concludes with a short prayer from God's continuing righteous judgments (see v. 4) on the haughty nations. Psalm 10 is predominantly prayer against the rapacity of unscrupulous people within the realm—as arrogant and wicked in their dealings with the 'weak' (v. 2) as the nations were in their attacks on Israel (vv. 2-11 can serve equally as a description of both). The conjunction of these two within a single psalm is not unthinkable since the attacks of 'the wicked' (9:5; 10:4), whether from within or from without, on the godly community are equally threatening to true Israel.... Probably Ps 9-10 came to be separated for the purpose of separate liturgical [i.e., religious worship service] use" (*Zondervan*, note on Psalm 9).

"To {the tune of} [a now unknown song] 'Death of the Son'" could be the meaning of the Hebrew phrase *almuth labben* in the superscription of Psalm 9, as in the NKJV and NIV. However there are other possibilities.

David says that those who seek God are those who know His name and put their trust in Him (verse 10). Those who reject God come to experience Him in a different way: "The Lord is known by the judgment He executes" (verse 16). David includes words relating to *judgment* six times in the psalm. God judges individuals (verse 3), nations (verses 5, 19) and the entire world (verse 8). God judges so that individuals and nations may learn that they are *but men* (verse 20) who live under the authority of the Creator. God has the power to destroy *wicked men* (verses 5-6) and to advance the cause of *righteous men* (verses 8-10, 12, 19). God's righteous judgment is a major factor in leading the humble to seek Him.

David, we should further note, also points out that the wicked bring about their own destruction (verses 15-16), just as was pointed out in Psalm 7:15-16. After making this point, the end of Psalm 9:16 notes: "Meditation. Selah." While the word translated "meditation" may be a musical notation, it could well be meant literally. Perhaps in conjunction with the musical term *selah*, which seems to indicate a pause or interlude, the idea here is to stop and think about what has just been sung. For all who would pursue a life of sin, it should be remembered that your sins will catch up with you. As Numbers 32:23 tells us, "Take note...be sure your sin will find you out."

Psalm 9:17 in the NKJV says that the wicked are headed for "hell." The Hebrew word here is *sheol*, which the NIV correctly translates as "the grave." (See our free booklet [Heaven & Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?](#)) The righteous, on the other hand, are brought "up from the gates of death" (verse 13) to praise God "in the gates of the daughter of Zion" (verse 14). Besides speaking of present deliverance, this seems to anticipate the future actual resurrection of the saints and their dwelling with Christ in Jerusalem.

Verses 19-20 call on God to act in accordance with His righteous judgment in the sight of all nations, foreshadowing the end of the age when God will do just that." [END]

Day 332 - TUESDAY: January 2nd

Psalms 11, 12 & 13 (skip Psalm 10)

Daily Deep Dive:

Psalm 11

The UCG reading program states: "David composed Psalm 11 when others around him (the "you" in verse 1 is plural) were counseling him to flee from encroaching enemies. The NKJV closes the quote of the counselors at the end of verse 1, but it makes more sense to close the quote at the end of verse 3, as the NIV does. It is not clear whether the

threat of enemies secretly shooting with arrows in verse 2 is literal or figurative (see Psalm 64:3-4), though the advice of flight would seem to imply mortal danger.

The advisers see no alternative to a hiding out in the hills because they believe "the foundations are destroyed" (verse 3). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* says: "The word 'foundations' (*shathoth*) occurs only here with this meaning.... The 'foundations' appear to be a metaphor for the order of society (Psalm 75:3 {NIV, 'pillars'}; Psalm 82:5; Ezekiel 30:4): the 'established institutions, the social and civil order of the community'.... This order has been established by the Lord at creation and is being maintained.... [Yet to the advisers it now appears that] God's justice and law are being replaced by human autonomy and its resultant anarchy" (note on Psalm 11:1-3).

David counters that the foundations are not destroyed because the Lord Himself is the true foundation. God may be testing the righteous at this time (verse 5), but He is in charge and sees what is going on (verse 4). David knows that "God is alive and at work in His holy temple [not the one in Jerusalem that was yet to be built but the one in heaven, as made clear by verse 4]; that He is hearing prayer, forgiving sins, welcoming home sinners, waiting for people to flee or to take refuge in Him, and not away in the mountains; that God is ruling His world from on high, noticing and testing every little detail of human life" (George Knight, *Psalms*, OT Daily Bible Study Series, 1982, comments on Psalm 11:1-7).

God hating the wicked and lovers of violence in verse 5 refers to His ultimate rejection of them (see the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Psalm 5:5). The phrase "the portion of their cup" (Psalm 11:6) refers to "their lot" (NIV; see Psalm 16:5). The cup for the wicked is one of punishment (see Psalm 75:8; compare Jeremiah 25:15-29). It is shown in Psalm 11:6 to contain fire, brimstone (sulfur) and burning wind—

images we later see in John the Baptist's warning of God's "winnowing fan" and "unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12) as well as the book of Revelation's prophecy of the future "lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Psalm 21:8). The unrepentant will be completely burned up in this fire, not tormented forever (see our free booklet [Heaven & Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?](#)).

Yet God faithfully loves the righteous and will in His righteous justice ultimately preserve them. The concluding phrase "His countenance beholds the upright" (Psalm 11:7) could also be rendered in reverse, "Upright men will see his face" (NIV), implying free access to God's throne." [END]

Psalm 12:

The UCG reading program states: "In the superscription of Psalm 12, the word *sheminith*, as in Psalm 6, is likely properly translated in the NKJV as "eight-stringed harp." As to substance, David in Psalm 12 laments the perversion of language he witnesses everywhere, with people using words to hurt each other. Conversation is filled with lies, flattery, deception, boasting, idle words (verses 2-4). "Everyone lies to his neighbor" (verse 2, NIV). The wicked say whatever promotes their own interests (verse 4). "We'll talk our way to the top, we'll outtalk the simple; no one can stop us" (Knight, *Psalms*, comments on Psalm 12:1-8). Christ warned his followers to be careful about what they say: "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37).

God doesn't speak meaningless, idle words. He backs up what He says. Therefore, when God states that He will rise up on behalf of the oppressed and provide a safe refuge (Psalm 12:5), the oppressed can confidently count on His help. "In contrast to the idle words of the

wicked (vv. 1-4), the words of God are altogether trustworthy. The eternal and steadfast nature of the Lord Himself stands behind His words" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verses 5-7). The words of God here can denote the whole of Scripture. The comparison of refining silver demonstrates how carefully chosen His words are. That they are purified seven times demonstrates how complete and perfect they are. It may also hint at numerous patterns of seven, signifying completeness and perfection, within the Bible.

The psalm ends in verse 8 with the sobering reminder that though God will be faithful to His promises in taking care of His people, we still in the meantime must be on guard against the reality of living in an evil world." [END]

Psalm 13:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 13. In the throes of anxiety over a situation that could spell death for David, he asks God four times how long He will refrain from intervening to help (verses 1-2). The question "How long shall I take counsel in my soul...?" (verse 2) could also be phrased as "How long must I wrestle with my thoughts...?" (NIV).

David appeals to God's honor, for his death would mean to his enemies either that David was not a legitimate servant of God contrary to God's own testimony or that God was unable to save Him. "The enemies' rejoicing [over David's fall] would be intolerable because it would be aimed in part against God in whom the psalmist has trusted (Psalm 35:19)" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Psalm 13:4).

In verse 5 we come to a turning point. It appears that God has now granted David a proper perspective. He thus ends the psalm confidently by focusing on God's mercy (*hesed*)—His covenant faithfulness, His

unfailing love—remembering God's goodness to Him in the past (verse 6).” [END]

Verse 1 – I love how David composed the Psalms (of course under God’s inspiration). Here, similar to Psalm 22, David starts with how he is feeling and not stating what is in fact true. David “feels” like God has forgotten him and is hiding from him, but that isn’t true. David doesn’t leave us in the Psalm believing this is the truth but brings the Psalm to a conclusion by focusing on what is true. God will save him (verse 5. God will deal bountifully with him (verse 6). This pattern is similar in Psalm 22, a very famous, but often misunderstood and misquoted Psalm.

Verse 3 – The NKJV states “enlighten my eyes”. The Hebrew for “enlighten” means “to be light” or “to be luminous”. The NLT translates it as: “Restore the sparkle to my eyes”.

Verse 4 – The NKJV states “Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.” The Hebrew for “moved” means “To totter, shake, slip” (BDB).

Day 333 - WEDNESDAY: January 3rd

Psalms 14, 15 & 16

Daily Deep Dive:

Psalm 14:

The UCG reading program states: “Psalm 14, of which Psalm 53 is a somewhat revised duplicate, is a lament about the foolishness of "practical atheism." The fool (*nabal*, wicked, impious person) convinces himself, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1)—or at least no God who would deign to impact his life. Determining the concept of God to be essentially irrelevant, the fool "intentionally flouts his independence from God and his commandments" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verse 1).

The Zondervan NIV Study Bible comments on Psalm 14: "This psalm brings to closure the collection of prayers that began with Psalm 3.... Five psalms (and 64 Hebrew poetic lines) after Psalm 8's surprising evocation of humanity's 'glory and honor' (Psalm 8:5), this psalm highlights their disgrace.... In this it serves as a counterpoint to that earlier recollection of humanity's high dignity and thereby exposes more sharply the depth of their disgrace—from which the petitioners in this and the preceding psalms have suffered."

While fools go about denying God's existence, He looks down on humanity, assessing its wickedness (Psalm 14:2). David says that God has found everyone corrupt (verses 1-3). The apostle Paul will quote this verdict in Romans 3:10-12. It is not clear if David intends to include in this indictment those he refers to as "the generation of the righteous" (verse 5). No doubt he realizes that they were not righteous to begin with but had needed to come to God in repentance. Paul's use of this passage is to show that all are guilty of sin and in need of God's grace. Yet those who respond in faith become the godly in contrast to the godless hosts of mankind.

Eventually the wicked of every age who refuse to repent will face the consequences of their foolishness. "There," at a specific time of judgment, they will greatly fear (verse 5). And at that time, God's people, those who repent of their wayward human nature, will be saved (verses 6-7)." [END]

Psalm 15:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 15, begins a new group of psalms (15-24). As the *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* notes, "Psalm 15 and its distinctive counterpart, Psalm 24, frame a cluster of psalms that have been arranged in a concentric pattern with Psalm 19 serving as the hinge.... [There are] thematic links between Psalm 16 and 23, between Psalm 17 and 22, and between Psalm 18 and 20-21.... The

framing psalms (15; 24) are thematically linked by their evocation of the high majesty of God and their insistence on moral purity 'without {which} no one will see the Lord' (Hebrews 12:14). At the center, Psalm 19 uniquely combines a celebration of the divine majesty as displayed in the creation and an exposition of how moral purity is attained through God's law, forgiveness and shepherding care. Together, these three psalms (15; 19; 24) provide instructive words concerning the petitioners heard in the enclosed psalms, offer a counterpoint to Psalm 14, and reinforce the instruction of Psalm 1."

Psalm 15 identifies some of the important requirements for someone coming into God's presence. The psalm brings to mind pilgrims making their way to Jerusalem for the annual worship festivals. "As the pilgrims approached Jerusalem—the city of God, where His 'sanctuary' was located on the 'holy hill'—they had to examine themselves before entering the courts of God's sanctuary" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verse 1).

In a larger sense, the psalm presents a number of points of examination for anyone who wants to be in God's presence. Such an individual 1) follows what is right as a general way of life, 2) obeys God's commandments, 3) speaks truthfully, 4) doesn't make spiteful remarks about others, 5) doesn't intentionally hurt others, 6) doesn't spread false accusations against others; 7) shuns the wicked and their ways, 8) honors godly people, 9) keeps promises even when it hurts, 10) doesn't take advantage of those in need, 11) doesn't act against innocent people for gain.

God's sanctuary today, His spiritual temple or house, is the Church. Yet the figure surely extends to the future temple of God in His Kingdom. Of course, just trying to follow these points will not gain us access to God through entrance into His Church and Kingdom—because no one is innocent and no one can succeed in this effort on his own. God imputes

true righteousness to those "who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4: 24-25). For those who are so justified, the points of Psalm 15 constitute one of many "lists" of right things to practice as part of building on a strong foundation (Matthew 7:24-25)—so that they "will never be shaken" (Psalm 15:5, NIV)." [END]

I'm going to include this whole chapter here from the New Living Translation as I believe it captures these verses well.

NLT "Who may worship in Your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter Your presence on Your holy hill?

Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts.

Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends.

Those who despise flagrant sinners, and honor the faithful followers of the LORD, and keep their promises even when it hurts.

Those who lend money without charging interest, and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent. Such people will stand firm forever." [END]

I would encourage you to take 15 to 30 seconds on each of these lines and think deeply about them.

Psalm 16:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 16 is referred to in its superscription as a *mikhtam*. "The term remains unexplained, though it always stands in the superscription of Davidic prayers occasioned by great danger (see Psalm 56-60)" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 16). The Septuagint renders the word as the Greek *stelographa*, meaning "an inscription on a slab." *Mikhtam* is

possibly related to the similar-sounding word *mikhtav*, meaning "writing" in Isaiah 38:9. Perhaps these particular psalms were originally written not as songs but as poems.

David begins Psalm 16 with a petition for protection and deliverance to God in whom he has placed his trust (verse 1). David then reflects in verses 2-3 on the basis on which God hears him: 1) he has confessed God as the Lord of his life; 2) he recognizes that whatever good he has comes only from God and not from himself; and 3) he honors and takes joy in the "saints" or "holy ones"—the other followers of the true God.

David thinks next about the sorrows men bring on themselves when they chase after false gods (verse 4). Indeed, the religions of the cultures surrounding Israel in his day included some obvious examples of this. "If he had chosen the god Moloch of the Canaanites, for example, he would have had to sacrifice one of his babies to that god (Lev. 20:2). If he had gone to live in Carthage, and had adopted its religion, he would have had to participate in human sacrifice. Obviously he shrank in horror from the very idea of both practices" (Knight, *Psalms*, comments on Psalm 16:1-11). Of course, David likely meant much more than this. False religion has spawned *many* wrong concepts and practices that lead mankind away from true happiness.

David then addresses God again, saying, "*You* are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot" (verse 5). "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places" (verse 6). Several words here recall the apportioning of the Promised Land to Israel: "chosen portion," "inheritance," "lot," "boundary lines." *The Nelson Study Bible* comments that "David had an ancestral inheritance in the land. As king, he also had extensive royal holdings. But he realized that no inheritance was greater than his relationship with Almighty God" (note on verses 5-8).

In verse 10, where the NKJV has "You will not leave my soul in Sheol," the NIV has "You will not abandon me to the grave." This could be understood as meaning either that God will not allow David to go to the grave in his present circumstances or that, even if David dies, God will resurrect him from the grave. The latter seems to be intended by what follows: "Nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption" or, as the NIV translates it, "decay." Yet this reference to *the* Holy One was in fact a prophecy of the Messiah. "If this could be said of David—and of all those godly Israelites who made David's prayer their own—how much more of David's promised Son! So Peter quotes vv. 8-11 and declares that with these words David prophesied of Christ and his resurrection (Acts 2:25-28...)" (*Zondervan*, note on Psalm 16:9-11). Indeed, Jesus is more exactly meant by these verses because, unlike David, He was resurrected before His body started to decay. As the apostle Paul explained in Acts 13:35-36: "Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption."

David concludes this psalm by expressing confidence that God will show him the way to eternal life, the "path of life" in God's presence (verse 11), which he describes as full of joy and pleasure forever." [END]

Day 334 - THURSDAY: January 4th

Psalms 17, 19 & 20 (skip Psalm 18)

Daily Deep Dive:

Psalm 17:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 17. David calls for God's attention and vindication. His is a "just cause," and he knows that God is aware of his innocence (verses 1-3). Yet we should recognize that David is not at all prideful over his obedience to God, as he realizes the need for God's help to continue in His ways (verse 5). David bases his

request for vindication on God's "lovingkindness" (*hesed*)—His covenant loyalty, whereby He is faithful to save those who trust in Him (verse 7).

David's request that God keep him as the "apple of Your eye" (verse 8) makes use of an expression also found in Deuteronomy 32:10, Proverbs 7:2 and Zechariah 2:8. This phrase poetically depicts the sensitivity of the pupil (apple) of one's eye and portrays God as focused on and very attentive to His people. Interestingly, "in Old English the pupil of the eye was called a 'mannikin,' meaning 'little man,' because the pupil gave back the reflection of a grown man as a little man. So too with the Hebrew, for it too means 'little man,' or even 'dear little man'" (Knight, *Psalms*, comments on Psalm 17:1-15).

David's desire that God hide him "under the shadow of Your wings" (verse 8) pictures the protection a mother hen provides her chicks. It also portrays an intimate relationship with God (see the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Ruth 3). David pictures his enemies, on the other hand, as young lions, "lurking in secret places," eager to strike (verses 11-12). Their having "fat hearts" in verse 10 speaks of "their greedy, self-loving, and insensitive nature" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verses 10-12)—their "callous hearts" (NIV).

Commentators are not clear on the correct translation of the second half of verse 14. Where the first half is clearly talking about the worldly people who receive their portion in this life, it is not clear whether the second half is still speaking of these (as in the NKJV) or if the reference changes to the godly (as in the NIV). Related to this is the question over whether the phrase translated "hidden treasure" in the NKJV denotes something positive or negative. If negative, the righteous could not be meant. If positive, either the righteous or the wicked could be meant. The evidence seems to favor the understanding that the meaning is positive and that worldly people are meant. These are content to amass

possessions and leave them to their children. Their sights are set on nothing higher than what falls to them in this life.

David in contrast looks to the far future for his ultimate reward. His reflection here on the resurrection, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" (verse 15) reminds us of the apostle John's wonderful prophetic declaration concerning our awesome destiny, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2)." [END]

Psalm 19:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 19 is a wisdom psalm in which David praises God's creation and instruction. David calls attention to the heavens because the sun, the moon, and the stars declare the Creator's glorious activity. The radiance of the sun and the orderly appearance of the moon and stars bear witness to the existence of a Master Designer (see also Romans 1:20).

Verse 4 of Psalm 19 reads variously, "their *line* has gone out" (perhaps meaning *orbit*) and "their *voice* goes out" (NRSV). Even in English, the word "line" can denote a geometric line, a line of text or the text an actor is given to speak aloud. David mentions that the *voice* of the celestial bodies can be heard everywhere (verse 3). "The poem talks of *hearing* the glory of God. It declares that behind the whole majesty of nature there is *sound*, the sound of the Word of God. The whole creation, even without the use of *words*, sounds forth the divine Word; when put into Greek, this is the word Logos that we meet in John 1:1" (George Knight, *Psalms*, The Daily Study Bible Series, comments on Psalm 19:1-6).

Some see in these verses the idea that, prior to His written revelation in Scripture, God formed the constellations to communicate the story of His plan for humanity—imagery that was corrupted in pagan mythology (see, for instance, E.W. Bullinger's book *The Witness of the Stars* and E.

Raymond Capt's book *The Glory of the Stars*). Yet even apart from that, the heavens certainly have a powerful message to communicate. As verse 1 shows, they demonstrate the sublime majesty, creativity, genius and power of God.

David compares the sun to a bridegroom, cheerfully leaving his chamber, and to the strength of a champion prepared for his race. "Nothing," he adds, "is hidden from the sun's radiance and strength," just as nothing is hidden from the glory of God. It is interesting to consider that in the New Testament, Jesus Christ, God the Word made flesh, is referred to as both the "bridegroom" (Matthew 25:1-10) and the "light of the world" (John 8:12)—His followers also have this latter distinction through reflecting the "light" of His character (Matthew 5:14).

Just as God (both Father and Son) is brilliant in glory and illuminating, so also is God's law. Indeed, the psalm now moves from the heavenly revelation to the written revelation of God. The word "law" is translated from the Hebrew *torah* and means instruction (verses 7-10). "This portion of the psalm "presents six words for the law of God—law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, and judgments; six evaluations of the law—perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true; and six results—converting the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes, enduring forever, and righteous altogether" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on vv. 7-10). Curiously, the terms here are thoroughly elaborated on exactly 100 psalms later—in Psalm 119.

Consideration of God's majesty as revealed in the heavens and the stark perfection of His law, David is reminded of his own inadequacies. He asks a searching question, "Who can understand his [own] errors?" (verse 12). God says that a man's heart is desperately wicked and that only He really understands it (Jeremiah 17:9). Since a man can't get to

the bottom of his nature and rid himself of his faults, God must intervene to forgive him of his shortcomings and help him to obey (Psalm 19:12). God's power can enable us to stay away from deliberate sins and reveal the secret faults over the course of our years of seeking to follow His way of life (verse 13; 139:23-24).

David prays that his words and thoughts will be pleasing in God's sight, similar to the request he makes in Psalm 141:3: "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips." Such a "guard" is the Holy Spirit reminding us of right and wrong, which we learn from our study of God's Word. The Spirit helps us to do what we should. But the choice to do the right and the effort to control the lips remains up to us." [END]

Verse 12 through 14 – Oh that each of us would pray these words each day to God. What beautiful words David was inspired and led to record for us here.

Psalm 20:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 20 appears to be a prayer for God to bless an upcoming military battle, yet "day of trouble" can have a wide application throughout the lives of God's people, as we engage in spiritual battles.

David states that those who "trust in chariots, and some in horses," have fallen on the battlefield, but his forces will triumph in the name of the Lord (verses 7-8). David cites the custom of soldiers presenting offerings and sacrifices before going into battle. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* note on verse 3 states, "The Israelite practice of presenting sacrifices and offerings before a military campaign was an act of devotion and submission to the Lord (1 Samuel 7:9-10; 1 Samuel 13:9-12)."

The word "salvation" (verse 5) is also translated "deliverance." On this occasion the psalmist speaks of being delivered from a physical enemy. He is not referring to ultimate spiritual salvation. The New International Version translates this verse, "We will shout for joy when you are victorious." For us today, this can mean God giving us daily victories over sin and difficult circumstances.

The phrase "lift up our banners" (same verse, NIV) conveys a sense of confidence that those who trust in God will experience His blessings. The word *banner* comes from the root word "to flaunt," "to be conspicuous." David's armies will fly their victory flags so all will know that "the Lord saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand" (verse 6). David himself was God's anointed. Jesus Christ is of course the ultimate anointed—and all believers are part of His spiritual army. Yet all of God's spiritual children are also His anointed individually—anointed with the Holy Spirit.

David concludes with, "May the King answer us when we call." *The Nelson Study Bible* notes on verses 7-9 that "above King David was God the Great King; moreover, one day King Jesus would rule from sea to sea." [END]

Day 335 - FRIDAY: January 5th

Psalms 21, 22 & 23

Daily Deep Dive:

Psalm 21:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 21, as *The Nelson Study Bible* notes, "is another of the royal psalms of David. Psalm 20 is a prayer of the king for God's blessing on his army. Psalm 21 is an assurance of God's blessing on the king [himself]. Both psalms, as is the case with all the royal psalms, speak ultimately of the great King to

come, the Lord Jesus." Some see this psalm as one of thanksgiving after the victory in the battle referred to in the previous psalm.

David praises God for the blessings given to him as king. The king depended on God's strength: "How great is his joy in the victories You give!" (verse 1b, NIV). Here the NKJV has, "And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" "One meaning of the Hebrew word *salvation* is 'room to breathe.' God had given King David a release from the pressures and constraints that bound him" (note on verse 1). Besides the joy of temporary deliverance from physical conditions, the verse also looks forward to ultimate spiritual salvation.

David enumerates the good acts of God on his behalf: kingship (a crown of pure gold), victory, desire of his heart, long life (forever and ever through salvation), deliverance, honor and majesty, blessings, God's presence and unfailing love (verses 2-7).

David asserts that his enemies are also God's enemies because "they intended evil against You," (verse 11) and they "hate You" (verse 8). David trusts God to deal with them (verse 9) "in the time of Your anger." Looking beyond David's own lifetime, God's anger will be evidenced to all during the Day of the Lord, a time of punishment prophesied throughout the Scriptures." [END]

Psalm 22:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 22, David laments his life-threatening circumstances—danger from enemies (see verses 20-21), perhaps in the midst of severe illness (see verse 17) wherein his enemies are jostling around him in anticipation of his death, possibly to be equated with other psalms where David languishes in bodily affliction. Yet here he uses words that directly foreshadow the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. "The language David uses to describe his own predicament is prompted by the Holy Spirit. Thus it could span a

thousand years to describe precisely the experiences of the Savior Jesus—both His excruciating death and victorious resurrection" (*Nelson Study Bible*, introductory note on Psalm 22).

During His crucifixion ordeal, Jesus cried out with the words that begin this psalm, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" (verse 1; Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34)—as at this point, Jesus bore the sins of all humanity and God sternly rejects sin. It does not seem that Jesus just said these words only to fulfill prophecy. No doubt He really felt them for the moment. And remarkably, He and the Father foresaw a thousand years beforehand that He would feel this way—and inspired David to record these words and thoughts accordingly.

David suffers intensely through his dire circumstances, but he still trusts in God to deliver him (verses 3-5). At present, he is humiliated: "I am a worm, and no man" (verse 6). The phrase "they shoot out the lip" (verse 7) is also translated "they hurl insults" (NIV) and "they make mouths at me" (NRSV). Christ's tormentors mocked and taunted just as David's words portend, even in the specific manner of verse 8 (Matthew 27:27-31, Matthew 27:39-44).

David describes his encroaching enemies as "strong bulls of Bashan" (Psalm 22:12)—Bashan being the northeastern region of Israel "noted for its fine breed of cattle" (Deuteronomy 32:14; Ezekiel 39:18)" (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, "Ba'shan"). Yet they are not only strong and powerful, but are fierce and raging like lions (Psalm 22:13). Jesus faced the hatred of the Jewish religious leadership and the brutality of the Romans.

Where David says, "My tongue clings to My jaws" (verse 15), we should recall Jesus' anguished words on the cross, "I thirst" (John 19:28).

In a surprising statement in the next verse, "They pierced My hands and My feet," David "explicitly predicts the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The words are merely a figure of speech for the terrifying experiences of David; but as a prophet (Acts 2:30), David spoke accurately of the sufferings of Jesus" (*Nelson Study Bible* note on verse 16). It should be noted, however, that instead of "They pierced," the Masoretic vowel pointing gives this as "Like a lion," which is the preferred Jewish translation. Yet this rendering leaves out a verb. The Jewish Publication Society Tanakh fills in with the word *maul*: "like lions {they maul} my hands and feet." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* says: "*ka'ari* (...lit[erally], 'like the lion') has occasioned much discussion. The [Greek Septuagint translation] reads a verb—'they pierced,' as does the NIV, from *karah*...or from... *k-w-r*'pierce'.... Some suggest a homonym of the root *k-r-h* ('bind') and read 'they have bound my hands and my feet'.... The text remains an exegetical problem" (footnote on verse 16).

Yet even apart from knowingly or unknowingly prophesying Christ's form of execution, it should not be hard to imagine David thinking of his own body being figuratively nailed up in a shaming display. For penal suspension was known to that era. As an example, the Philistines literally fastened the dead bodies of Saul and his sons to the wall of Beth Shan as a public disgrace (1 Samuel 31:8-10).

"I can count all my bones" in verse 17 would seem to refer to David being able to see his bones through his skin, being gaunt from lack of nourishment because of illness or being on the run. Yet in Jesus' case it may refer to the actual exposure of His bones from the severe, flaying scourging He endures.

David's statement at the end of verse 17, "They look and stare at Me," finds its New Testament counterpart in Luke 23:35, "And the people stood looking on." Indeed, this follows right after the end of Luke 23:34,

"And they divided His garments and cast lots." This was specifically prophesied in the next verse of Psalm 22, verse 18. Matthew 27:35 actually quotes from this verse and notes its fulfillment.

Of course, we should recognize that all of Christ's followers become partakers of His sufferings (Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 1:5; 2 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 1:29; Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:3). Therefore, just as David prayed this prayer for himself, so can all of us pray in the words of this prayer when we are faced with severe circumstances.

We should note that the psalm does not end with a focus on suffering. Rather, verses 19-21 call on God to intervene and the end of verse 21 assures us that He has (for David and for Christ), just as He will for us. The verses to follow speak of the ultimate deliverance and triumph that is found in God.

In response to his deliverance, David speaks of declaring the name of God in the congregation of the faithful—publicly to his "brethren...in the midst of the assembly" (verse 22), "in the great assembly" at the temple (verse 25). The book of Hebrews notes this as the confession of Christ, who is not ashamed to call us His followers His "brethren" (Hebrews 2:12). The assembly of brethren represents the called-out assembly of God today—His Church. And the great assembly would seem to denote what we find in Hebrews 12:22: "Mount Zion...the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...an innumerable company of angels...the general assembly and church of the firstborn."

Verses 27-28 of Psalm 22 picture the worship of God in the Kingdom. "All the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the Kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations." Then, everyone will declare the wonderful works of God and teach the good news from one generation to the next. As *Expositor's* notes on verses 30-31, "The

praise of God will extend from generation to generation. The story of redemption will not only include the nations but also generations yet unborn...each generation will join in with the telling of the story of redemption and of His kingship (cf. vv.3-5) and will, in the process of transmitting it, add what God has done for them." [END]

Verse 1 – As I mentioned when we read Psalm 13, notice the way David conveys his feelings initially in the Psalm. They are David's true feelings, yet, he knows that feelings are not always accurate. Just as in Psalm 13, here too David will align his feelings with the truth when he states in verse 24 "For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard." The truth is that God never leaves or forsakes us (Hebrews 13:5).

As part of the Jewish educational system, boys and girls memorized scripture. Likely any Jewish listener hearing Christ's words when he quoted this first verse would have quickly recalled the words and themes contained within Psalm 22. As they recalled the words of this Psalm and stared up at Jesus to whom all these events/words had just taken place in His life, I imagine it would have had a great impact on them.

Verse 2 – Again, David pours out his feelings, but certainly this is not the truth as God hears David's, Christ's, and our prayers.

Verse 6 – The NKJV states "I am a worm and no man". The Hebrew for "worm" is from the "crimson/scarlet worm". It is most often not translated as "worm" in the Bible but instead as a color "crimson/scarlet" (approx. 81% of the time). An alternative translation would be "I am crimson and no man". Jesus Christ would have been covered in blood, making this seem like an accurate translation.

Verse 8 – Compare the words of Luke 23:35.

Verse 11 – Notice while David felt forsaken (verse 1), he continued to pray to God because God had not truly forsaken him and was there with him hearing his prayer.

Verse 24 – What a verse! God was with David in his terrible moment of difficulty!

Verses 27 – 31 – The greatest fulfillment of this is yet to come when the whole world will come to understand what Jesus Christ did for each of them as their personal Savior and they will come to worship Him and know absolutely that “He has done this”!

Psalm 23:

The UCG reading program states: “Psalm 23 is the "Shepherd Psalm"—the most famous, beloved, quoted and memorized psalm of all. It is short and simple but packed with great meaning. "One of the most common descriptions of kingship in the ancient world was that of shepherd" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Psalm 23)—wherein the king metaphorically serves as the shepherd of his "flock," that is, of his people. Consider, for example, the crook or shepherd staff as one of the symbols of the Egyptian pharaoh. The rod was another important symbol of ancient kingship. Yet unlike the other national rulers of his day, David came to the job of king from the background of first actually having served as a literal shepherd of sheep. (It is interesting to recall that Moses too, though having previously been trained in the pharaonic court, tended flocks for 40 years before God used him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and through the wilderness.)

Besides political leaders, the "shepherd" metaphor in the Bible is also used for religious leaders, with some ministers in the New Testament being referred to as shepherds. (The word "pastor" means shepherd.)

Yet we should recognize that *all* of God's people are called to be humble, dedicated servants—leading by example today and preparing to rule with Christ in His Kingdom tomorrow.

The ultimate Leader, King and therefore Shepherd is, of course, God (see also Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 40:11; Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 34:11-31; Micah 5:4). God in the person of Jesus Christ is later referred to as the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-30). In Psalm 23, David considers God in His role of Shepherd from the perspective of one who had taken care of his own literal flock. Yet the perspective within the psalm is not of a human shepherd but of a sheep within the flock of God, at least in the first four verses. From his own shepherding work, David well understood the needs, wants and concerns of sheep and drew parallels with his personal needs, wants and concerns. Likewise, a leader should always be trying to understand everything from the point of view of those being led, and try to do what is best for them, not what is beneficial for himself.

With God as his shepherd, David said his life would never be characterized by lack (verse 1). He trusted that all his needs would be met. He would not be left alone to struggle for the necessities of physical and spiritual life because God would provide them—He knows what and where is best for us (verse 2). God would always refresh and revive him, leading Him down *the right paths* (verse 3)—the literal concept here meaning the right paths for sheep to travel (e.g., so that they don't fall off cliff edges and kill themselves or wander into other danger) but, metaphorically, denoting the proper paths of life (that is, people walking in God's moral laws of *righteousness*).

Under the care of a competent shepherd, sheep proceed to good pastures without fear. "The valley of the shadow of death" in verse 4 is literally "the valley of death-darkness." It gets very dark in the Judean ravines in late afternoon when the sun sinks below the hilltops. For us,

the presence of the Shepherd's rod and staff through any dark valley in life, when it is hard to see where we are going and can be rather frightening, is a reminder that "God's comfort and strength are 'with' us in all kinds of darkness, in times of depression, serious illness, rejection by one's friends, horror at discovering the disloyalty of one's own heart, and so on, as well as the experience of death itself" (Knight, *Psalms*, comments on Psalm 23:1-6).

Why would the shepherd's rod and staff provide comfort? A rod or club was used to defend against wild predators—just as God defends His people against natural or spiritual forces that seek their harm. It was also used as a disciplinary tool, perhaps even thrown at or near sheep to startle them away from danger (which was ultimately for its welfare and, thus, long-term comfort). A shepherd's staff was used to guide the sheep and to rescue them, lifting them up out of dangerous situations when necessary. Even so does God lead and deliver His people.

With the rod and staff imagery, the metaphor appears to shift in focus from that of a shepherd of sheep to that of a Middle Eastern king or sheik—as ancient rulers of that region used both emblems. The next verse speaks of preparing a table in the presence of enemies (verse 5), as in the tent of a great patriarch or sheik in the midst of roving bands of pursuers. Sheep being protected from animal predators has become people being protected from human aggressors. And this security is found through the hospitality of a gracious host—accompanied by a banquet meal, perfumed oil and an overflowing cup of drink or blessings (same verse). Hospitality was and remains a major focus for such patriarchs and sheiks—as it is even more so for God.

It should be noted, however, that some view the imagery of verse 5 as still consistent with caring for sheep. The "table" is viewed as the highland plateaus, where pasturage is good in the summer. And

anointment with oil is seen as a remedy against flies, insects and parasitic infection.

David describes his manifold blessings as goodness and mercy (*hesed*, "unfailing love") following him—or, as he seems to mean, *pursuing* him (verse 6). That is, in God's tent or God's green pastures he is safe from enemies and totally secure in every way. The only thing pursuing him is goodness and mercy all the days of his life. The fact that blessings follow obedient people rather than precede them is significant. We must step out on faith and obey God even when we don't see any rewards for a long time. They will come eventually. "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you," we are told (James 4:8). Once God calls us, He wants to see us take initiative.

David anticipates eternal life as he speaks of "dwelling in the house of the Lord forever" (verse 6). *The Nelson's Study Bible* comments on verse 6, "God's promise for the Israelites was not just for the enjoyment of life in the land of promise...it was also for the full enjoyment of the life to come in His blessed presence (Psalm 16:9-11; Psalm 17:15; Psalm 49:15)."What an awesome privilege it is to be a sheep in God's fold—to have the lavish invitation to dwell forever in the house of the omnipotent Shepherd-King.

To learn more about being a "good shepherd", read John 10:1-30.

A classic work on Psalm 23 well worth reading is *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23* by Phillip Keller, who examines the psalm from the perspective of one who has actually raised and tended sheep." [END]

Verse 2 – The word used for "green" does not mean a color. This word is specific to "new grass, tender shoots, a sprout". Each night the warm moisture blows in from the Mediterranean Sea and on the cool nights collects on the rocks on the ground and rolls off onto the fertile soil.

Tender new shoots of grass spring up on the hillsides. A shepherd had the responsibility of knowing the terrain and leading the sheep from a bite of food to a bite of food. The needs and the sheep were met moment by moment due to the competent shepherd.

Additionally, a sheep will not lie down unless several conditions are met. For anyone desiring a deeper dive into this topic, I gave a sermon diving into the depth of these verses that can be viewed here:

<https://www.ucg.org/sermons/following-god-in-green-pastures>

Day 336 - SATURDAY: January 6th

Psalms 24, 25 & 26

Daily Deep Dive:

Psalm 24:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 24 is considered a royal psalm. It speaks of God as the Creator and returning King. The psalmist draws on the Genesis account of creation when he states that God "founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters" (verses 1-2)

David asks who is worthy to worship such a great Creator God (verse 3). Who could ascend to the tabernacle—or later temple—in Jerusalem? This recalls the theme of Psalm 15. "Together with Ps 15 it frames the intervening collection of psalms and with that psalm sharply delineates those who may approach God in prayer and 'dwell in the house of the Lord' (23:6...)" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 24).

"It may be that the instructions on moral purity were originally part of a ceremony before completing the last leg of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem [for the annual festivals].... However....the hymn instructs God's people *wherever* they may be to live in the presence of the Creator King in order to receive His blessing" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verse 3).

Some commentators believe this psalm was composed by David to be sung by a procession of Israelites when the Ark of the Covenant was at last brought to Jerusalem (see 2 Samuel 6). The mercy seat atop the ark was a physical representation of the throne of God on earth—so that the King of glory in verses 7-10 was represented by the ark. The King of glory here, the one the Israelites knew as God in the Old Testament who descended to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, was the preincarnate Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 10:4 and our booklet [*Who Is God?*](#)).

This would mean that the first part of the psalm concerns the preparation of those permitted to accompany the King of glory up His holy hill.

Continuing with a processional interpretation, many propose two choirs singing verses 7-10 as the ark reaches the gates of Jerusalem or the tabernacle. The first choir accompanying the ark says, "Lift up your heads, O you gates!" (verse 7). This addresses either the gates themselves in a personified sense or the gatekeepers—commanding the gates to be roused and at attention, to rejoice (being no more downcast apart from God's presence), or to be lifted out of their locked position and opened. In any case, the gates opening up to receive the King of glory is implicit.

The second choir, stationed at the gates, intones, "Who is this King of Glory?" (verse 8)—to which choir one responds, "The Lord strong and...mighty in battle" (same verse). The sequence is then repeated (verses 9-10). Yet regarding the closing words of Psalm 24:10, George Knight in his *Psalms* commentary suggests: "Probably the whole concourse of priests and people now joyously shout these last two lines in one voice. 'The Lord of hosts' (meaning the armies both of Israel and of the heavenly beings) '*that* God is the King of glory!'"

This song has long been used in Christendom as celebratory "of Christ's ascension into the heavenly Jerusalem—and into the sanctuary on high" (*Zondervan*, note on Psalm 24). Yet the image of His returning from battle to enter His sanctuary probably better fits, in an ultimate sense, the time of the end—when Jesus Christ will enter the millennial Jerusalem temple following His triumph over His enemies in the Day of the Lord." [END]

Psalm 25:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 25 begins "a group of nine psalms [ending with Psalm 33] containing an unusual (even for the Psalter) concentration of pleas for 'mercy' (Psalm 25:16; Psalm 26:11; Psalm 27:7; Psalm 28:2; Psalm 30:8-10; Psalm 31:9) accompanied by professions of 'trust' (Psalm 25:2; Psalm 26:1; Psalm 27:3; Psalm 28:7; Psalm 31:6, Psalm 31:14; Psalm 32:10; Psalm 33:21) and appeals to or celebrations of Yahweh's '(unfailing) love' (Psalm 25:6-7, Psalm 25:10; Psalm 26:3; Psalm 31:7, Psalm 31:16, Psalm 31:21; Psalm 32:10; Psalm 33:5, Psalm 33:18, Psalm 33:22). The series begins with an alphabetic acrostic prayer for God's saving help (Ps 25) and culminates in a 22-verse (the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet) hymn of praise for Yahweh's sovereign rule and saving help (Ps 33)" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalms 25-33).

Structurally, Psalm 25 itself "is an alphabetic acrostic (somewhat irregular, with an additional, concluding verse that extends the lines beyond the alphabet). It is composed of four unequal stanzas (of three, four, eight and six verses). The first and fourth stanzas are thematically related, as are the second and third (an *a-b/b-a* pattern)" (note on Psalm 25).

"David prays for God's covenant mercies when suffering affliction for sins [verses 11, 18] and when enemies seize the occasion to attack [verses 2, 19], perhaps by trying to discredit the king through false

accusations" (same note). This is a theme we have seen before. The prospect of experiencing shame from an enemy triumph concerns David greatly—he mentions "shame" four times in the psalm. Shame should not befall those who hope and trust in God but should fall instead on people who decide to "deal treacherously without a cause" (verse 3). "Shame is the intended end of the enemies of God (Psalm 35:26)...not of the faithful" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verses 1-2).

David declares that because God is good and upright, He teaches sinners in His way (verse 8). But this is not so they can continue to live in sinful defiance of Him. Rather, He works with those who are humble and obedient (verses 9, 12). He will teach them a way of life characterized by justice, mercy, truth and prosperity (verses 8-10, 13). As Ezra 8:22 tells us, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him."

In summarizing his afflictions and troubles, David reminds God that his foes are cruel and he needs deliverance (verses 17-20). He concludes the psalm with a respectful declaration of hope, the same hope with which he began: "I wait for you" (verse 21; compare verse 3).

Even in this prayer for mercy and help for himself personally, David is not forgetful of others. In verse 22, which is outside the acrostic pattern of the psalm, he concludes with an intercessory prayer for his people. "David petitions the Lord to be compassionate with the nation Israel just as he has been with David. The Lord was not only the personal Savior of David, but also the Savior of all the Israelites" (*Nelson*, note on verse 22). Here, as in other references to Israel in the Psalms, we may look beyond the physical nation to the chosen people of God—ultimately all those who constitute spiritual Israel even if physically from other nations (see Romans 9:6; Galatians 6:16)." [END]

Psalm 26:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 26 is a protest of innocence (verses 1, 6, 11) in which David asks God to thoroughly investigate him: "Examine my heart and my mind" (verse 2, NIV). It could be that he was facing some false accusations from others at this point as in the next psalm, though it is possible that he simply saw his life in jeopardy due to illness or enemies and was pleading with God to not allow him to be destroyed with the punishment due the wicked. He explains the pattern of his life—not sinless, but consistent: "I walk continually in your truth" (verse 3) and "I lead a blameless life" (verse 11). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* notes that David "is not thinking about [only] two aspects of his life: spiritual and intellectual or emotional and rational. Rather, he offers himself *completely* for a total examination."

David aligns his life with two purposes: to worship God—"so I will go about your altar, O Lord," (verse 6)—and to tell about God's wonderful works (verse 7). David speaks of his integrity in the sense of pursuing the expectations God has for him. He strives to do things that please God and avoid the things God hates (verses 3-8). The apostle Peter states that God has similar expectations for Christians today. Just as David proclaimed God's wondrous works with thanksgiving, we are to show forth God's praises now (1 Peter 2:9-10; compare Psalm 26:7).

Because David walks with integrity and trusts God, he stands on level ground (verse 12). David's appreciation of an even place calls to mind Christ's teaching on the importance of laying a foundation on good, solid ground (Matthew 7:24-25)." [END]