
For the Chief Musician, with the flutes. A Psalm by David.

PSALM 5: 1 Give ear to my words, LORD. Consider my meditation.

David continues instant in prayers Psa 5:1, Psa 5:2; makes early application to God, Psa 5:3; and shows the hatred which God bears to the workers of iniquity, Psa 5:4-6. His determination to worship God, and to implore direction and support, Psa 5:7, Psa 5:8. He points out the wickedness of his enemies, Psa 5:9, and the destruction they may expect, Psa 5:10; and then shows the happiness of those who trust in the Lord, Psa 5:11, Psa 5:12.

This Psalm is inscribed to the chief Musician upon Nehiloth, A Psalm of David. As neginoth may signify all kinds of instruments struck with a plectrum, stringed instruments, those like the drum, cymbals, etc.; so nechiloth, from חל chal, to be hollow, to bore through, may signify any kind of wind instruments, such as the horn, trumpet, flute, etc. See on Psa 4:1-8 (note). The Septuagint have, Εἰς το τέλος, ὑπερ της κληρονομουσης, "In favor of her who obtains the inheritance." The Vulgate and Arabic have a similar reading. The word נחילות nechiloth they have derived from נחל nachal, to inherit. This may either refer to the Israelites who obtained the inheritance of the promised land, or to the Church of Christ which obtains through him, by faith and prayer, the inheritance among the saints in light. This Psalm is, especially, for the whole Church of God.

Verse 1

Give ear to my words - This is properly a morning hymn, as the preceding was an evening hymn. We have seen from the conclusion of the last Psalm that David was very happy, and lay down and slept in the peace and love of his God. When he opens his eyes on the following morning, he not only remembers but feels the happiness of which he spoke; and with his first recollections he meditates on the goodness and mercy of God, and the glorious state of salvation into which he had been brought. He calls on God to give ear to his words; probably words of God's promises which he had been pleading.

PSALM 5: 2 Listen to the voice of my cry, my King and my God; for to you do I pray.

Verse 2

Hearken unto the voice of my cry - We may easily find the process through which David's mind was now passing:

1. We have seen from the preceding Psalm that he lay down in a very happy frame of mind, and that he had enjoyed profound repose.
2. As soon as he awakes in the morning, his heart, having a right direction, resumes its work.
3. He meditates on God's goodness; and on his own happy state, though pursued by enemies, and only safe as long as God preserved him by an almighty hand and especial providence.

4. This shows him the need he has of the continual protection of the Most High; and therefore he begins to form his meditation and the desires of his heart into words, to which he entreats the Lord to give ear.

5. As he was accustomed to have answers to his prayers, he feels the necessity of being importunate! and therefore lifts up his voice.

6. Seeing the workers of iniquity, liars, and blood-thirsty men strong to accomplish their own purposes in the destruction of the godly, he becomes greatly in earnest, and cries unto the Lord: "Hearken unto the voice of my cry."

7. He knows that, in order to have a right answer, he must have a proper disposition of mind. He feels his subjection to the supreme authority of the Most High, and is ready to do his will and obey his laws; therefore he prays to God as his King: "Hearken, my King and my God." I have not only taken thee for my God, to save, defend, and make me happy; but I have taken thee for my King, to govern, direct, and rule over me.

8. Knowing the necessity and success of prayer, he purposes to continue in the spirit and practice of it: "Unto thee will I pray." R. S. Jarchi gives this a pretty and pious turn: "When I have power to pray, and to ask for the things I need, then, O Lord, give ear to my words; but when I have no power to plead with thee, and fear seizes on my heart, then, O Lord, consider my meditation!"

PSALM 5: 3 LORD, in the morning you shall hear my voice. In the morning I will lay my requests before you, and will watch expectantly.

Verse 3

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning - We find from this that he had not prayed in vain. He had received a blessed answer; God had lifted upon him the light of his countenance, and he therefore determines to be an early applicant at the throne of grace: "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning." He finds it good to begin the day with God; to let Divine things occupy the first place in his waking thoughts; as that which first occupies the mind on awaking is most likely to keep possession of the heart all the day through.

In the morning will I direct my prayer - Here seems to be a metaphor taken from an archer. He sees his mark; puts his arrow in his bow; directs his shaft to the mark, i.e., takes his aim; lets fly, and then looks up, to see if he have hit his mark. Prayers that have a right aim, will have a prompt answer; and he who sends up his petitions to God through Christ, from a warm, affectionate heart, may confidently look up for an answer, for it will come. If an immediate answer be not given, let not the upright heart suppose that the prayer is not heard. It has found its way to the throne; and there it is registered.

PSALM 5: 4 For you are not a God who has pleasure in wickedness. Evil can't live with you.

Verse 4

Neither shall evil dwell with thee - As thou art holy, so thou hast pleasure only in holiness; and as to evil men, they shall never enter into thy glory; לא יגרך רע lo yegurecha ra, "the evil man shall not even sojourn with thee."

PSALM 5: 5 The arrogant shall not stand in your sight. You hate all workers of iniquity.

Verse 5

The foolish shall not stand - He is a fool and a madman who is running himself out of breath for no prize, who is fighting against the Almighty; this every wicked man does; therefore is every wicked man a fool and a madman.

Thou hatest all workers of iniquity - Some sin now and then, others generally; some constantly, and some labor in it with all their might. These are the Workers of iniquity. Such even the God of infinite love and mercy hates. Alas! what a portion have the workers of iniquity! the hatred of God Almighty!

PSALM 5: 6 You will destroy those who speak lies. The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

Verse 6

That speak leasing - Falsity, from the Anglo-Saxon leasunge, a lie, falsity, deceit; from leas, lie, which is from the verb leasian to lie. See on Psa 4:2 (note).

The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man - איש דמים ish damim, the man of bloods; for he who has the spirit of a murderer, will rarely end with one bloodshedding. So the Jews, who clamored for the blood of our Lord, added to that, as far and as long as they could, the blood of his disciples.

PSALM 5: 7 But as for me, in the abundance of your loving kindness I will come into your house. I will bow toward your holy temple in reverence of you.

Verse 7

In the multitude of thy mercy - David considered it an inexpressible privilege to be permitted to attend public worship; and he knew that it was only through the multitude of God's mercy that he, or any man else, could enjoy such a privilege. He knew farther that, from the multitude of this mercy, he might receive innumerable blessings in his house. In this spirit, and with this dependence, he went to the house of the Lord. He who takes David's views of this subject will never, willingly, be absent from the means of grace.

In thy fear - Duly considering the infinite holiness of thy majesty, will I worship, אשתחווה eshtachaveh, will I bow and prostrate myself in the deepest self-abasement and humility.

Toward thy holy temple - If David was the author of this Psalm, as is generally agreed, the temple was not built at this time: only the tabernacle then existed; and in the preceding clause he speaks of coming into the house, by which he must mean the tabernacle. But temple here may signify the holy of holies, before which David might prostrate himself while in the house, i.e., the court of the tabernacle. Even in the house of God, there is the temple of God; the place where the Divine Shechinah dwells. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. In all ages and dispensations, Jesus was ever the temple where the Supreme Deity was met with and worshipped. The human nature of Jesus was the real temple of the Deity. Nowhere else can God be found.

PSALM 5: 8 Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies. Make your way straight before my face.

Verse 8

Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness - When entered into the house, and prostrated before the temple, he knew that, unless God continued to lead and direct, he was not likely to profit even by such great advantages. We need God not only to bring us to his house, but to keep our feet while we are there.

Because of mine enemies - His conduct was marked; his enemies looked upon and watched him with an evil eye. They would have been glad of his halting, that they might have brought a reproach on the good cause which he had espoused. O how cautiously should those walk who make a profession of living to God, of knowing themselves to be in his favor, and of being delivered from all sin in this life!

Make thy way straight - Show me that I must go right on; and let thy light always shine on my path, that I may see how to proceed.

PSALM 5: 9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth. Their heart is destruction. Their throat is an open tomb. They flatter with their tongue.

Verse 9

No faithfulness in their mouth - They make professions of friendship; but all is hollow and deceitful: "They flatter with their tongue."

Very wickedness - Their heart is full of all kinds of depravity.

Their throat is an open sepulcher - It is continually gaping for the dead; and sends forth effluvia destructive to the living. I fear that this is too true a picture of the whole human race, totally corrupt within, and abominable without. The heart is the center and spring of this corruption; and the words and actions of men, which proceed from this source, will send out incessant streams of various impurity; and thus they continue till the grace of God changes and purifies the heart.

PSALM 5: 10 Hold them guilty, God. Let them fall by their own counsels; Thrust them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against you.

Verse 10

Destroy thou them, O God - All these apparently imprecatory declarations should be translated in the future tense, to which they belong; and which shows them to be prophetic. Thou Wilt destroy them; thou Wilt cast them out, etc.

PSALM 5: 11 But let all those who take refuge in you rejoice, Let them always shout for joy, because you defend them. Let them also who love your name be joyful in you.

Verse 11

Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice - Such expressions as these should be translated in the same way, declaratively and prophetically: "All those who put their trust in thee Shall rejoice, - Shall ever shout for joy."

PSALM 5: 12 For you will bless the righteous. LORD, you will surround him with favour as with a shield.

Verse 12

For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous - A righteous soul is a peculiar object of God's affectionate regards; and therefore will be a subject of continual blessing.

With favor - Literally, Like a shield, thy favor will crown him. God loves such; and this love is their defense. In all places, times and circumstances, it will preserve them. "Keep yourselves," says the apostle, "in the love of God." He who abides in this love need not fear the face of any adversary. Thus ended the morning's devotion of this excellent man: a model by which every Christian may frame his own.