
By David.

PSALM 25: 1 To you, LORD, do I lift up my soul.

The psalmist, in great distress, calls upon God frequently, Psa 25:1-5; prays for pardon with the strong confidence of being heard, Psa 25:6-11; shows the blessedness of the righteous, Psa 25:12-14; again earnestly implores the Divine mercy; and prays for the restoration of Israel, Psa 25:15-22.

This Psalm seems to refer to the case of the captives in Babylon, who complain of oppression from their enemies, and earnestly beg the help and mercy of God.

It is the first of those called acrostic Psalms, i.e., Psalms each line of which begins with a several letter of the Hebrew alphabet in their common order. Of acrostic Psalms there are seven, viz., 25, 34, 37, Psa 111:1-10, Psa 112:1-10, 119, and 145. It is fashionable to be violent in encomiums on the Jews for the very faithful manner in which they have preserved the Hebrew Scriptures; but these encomiums are, in general, ill placed. Even this Psalm is a proof with what carelessness they have watched over the sacred deposit committed to their trust. The letter I vau is wanting in the fifth verse, and ק koph in the eighteenth; the letter ר resh being twice inserted, once instead of ק koph, and a whole line added at the end, entirely out of the alphabetical series.

Verse 1

Do I lift up my soul - His soul was cast down, and by prayer and faith he endeavours to lift it up to God.

PSALM 25: 2 My God, I have trusted in you. Don't let me be shamed. Don't let my enemies triumph over me.

Verse 2

I trust in thee - I depend upon thy infinite goodness and mercy for my support and salvation.

Let me not be ashamed - Hide my iniquity, and forgive my guilt.

PSALM 25: 3 Yes, no one who waits for you shall be shamed. They shall be shamed who deal treacherously without cause.

Verse 3

Let none that wait on thee be ashamed - Though he had burden enough of his own, he felt for others in similar circumstances, and became an intercessor in their behalf.

Transgress without cause - Perhaps בוגדים bogedim may here mean idolatrous persons. "Let not them that wait upon and worship thee be ashamed: but they shall be ashamed who vainly worship,

or trust in false gods." See Mal 2:11-16. The Chaldeans have evil entreated us, and oppressed us: they trust in their idols, let them see the vanity of their idolatry.

PSALM 25: 4 Show me your ways, LORD. Teach me your paths.

Verse 4

Show me thy ways - The psalmist wishes to know God's way, to be taught his path, and to be led into his truth. He cannot discern this way unless God show it; he cannot learn the path unless God teach it; and he cannot walk in God's truth unless God lead him: and even then, unless God continue to teach, he shall never fully learn the lessons of his salvation; therefore he adds, "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me;" Psa 25:5.

That he may get this showing, teaching, and leading, he comes to God, as the "God of his salvation;" and that he may not lose his labor, he "waits on him all the day." Many lose the benefit of their earnest prayers, because they do not persevere in them. They pray for a time; get remiss or discouraged; restrain prayer; and thus lose all that was already wrought for and in them.

PSALM 25: 5 Guide me in your truth, and teach me, For you are the God of my salvation, I wait for you all day long.

Verse 5

On thee do I wait - This is the line in which I vau, the sixth letter in the order of the alphabet, is lost; for the line begins with א aleph, אֶתְּ אוֹתְּךָ othecha, "on thee." But four of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. have וְאוֹתְּךָ veothecha, "And upon thee." This restores the lost I vau, which signifies "and." The Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Anglo-Saxon, preserve it.

PSALM 25: 6 LORD, remember your tender mercies and your loving kindness, for they are from old times.

Verse 6

Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, and thy loving-kindness - The word רַחֲמִים rachamim, means the commiseration that a man feels in his bowels at the sight of distress. The second word, חַסְדִּים chasadim, signifies those kindnesses which are the offspring of a profusion of benevolence.

They have been ever of old - Thou wert ever wont to display thyself as a ceaseless fountain of good to all thy creatures.

PSALM 25: 7 Don't remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions. Remember me according to your loving kindness, for your goodness' sake, LORD.

Verse 7

Remember not the sins of my youth - Those which I have committed through inconsiderateness, and heat of passion.

According to thy mercy - As it is worthy of thy mercy to act according to the measure, the greatness, and general practice of thy mercy; so give me an abundant pardon, a plentiful salvation.

For thy goodness' sake - Goodness is the nature of God; mercy flows from that goodness.

PSALM 25: 8 Good and upright is the LORD, therefore he will instruct sinners in the way.

Verse 8

Good and upright is the Lord - He is good in his nature, and righteous in his conduct.

Therefore will he teach sinners - Because he is good, he will teach sinners, though they deserve nothing but destruction: and because he is right, he will teach them the true way.

PSALM 25: 9 He will guide the humble in justice. He will teach the humble his way.

Verse 9

The meek will he guide - עֲנָוִים anavim, the poor, the distressed; he will lead in judgment - he will direct them in their cause, and bring it to a happy issue, for he will show them the way in which they should go.

PSALM 25: 10 All the paths of the LORD are loving kindness and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Verse 10

All the paths of the Lord - אֲרָחוֹת orchoth signifies the tracks or ruts made by the wheels of wagons by often passing over the same ground. Mercy and truth are the paths in which God constantly walks in reference to the children of men; and so frequently does he show them mercy, and so frequently does he fulfill his truth that his paths are earnestly discerned. How frequent, how deeply indented, and how multiplied are those tracks to every family and individual! Wherever we go, we see that God's mercy and truth have been there by the deep tracks they have left behind them. But he is more abundantly merciful to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies; i.e. those who are conformed, not only to the letter, but to the spirit of his pure religion.

PSALM 25: 11 For your name's sake, LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

Verse 11

For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon - I have sinned; I need mercy; there is no reason why thou shouldst show it, but what thou drawest from the goodness of thy own nature.

PSALM 25: 12 What man is he who fears the LORD? He shall instruct him in the way that he shall choose.

Verse 12

That feareth the Lord - Who has a proper apprehension of his holiness, justice, and truth; and who, at the same time, sees himself a fallen spirit, and a transgressor of God's holy law, and consequently under the curse. That is the person that truly and reverently fears God.

Him shall he teach - Such a person has a teachable spirit.

The way that he shall choose - The way that in the course of Providence he has chosen, as the way in which he is to gain things honest in the sight of all men; God will bless him in it, and give him as much earthly prosperity as may be useful to his soul in his secular vocation.

PSALM 25: 13 His soul shall dwell at ease. His seed shall inherit the land.

Verse 13

His soul shall dwell at ease - בטוב תלין betob talin, "shall lodge in goodness;" this is the marginal reading in our version; and is preferable to that in the text.

His seed shall inherit - His posterity shall be blessed. For them many prayers have been sent up to God by their pious fathers; and God has registered these prayers in their behalf.

PSALM 25: 14 The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him. He will show them his covenant.

Verse 14

The secret of the Lord is with them - סוד sod, the secret assembly of the Lord is with them that fear him; many of them have a Church in their own house.

He will show them his covenant - He will let them see how great blessings he has provided for them that love him. Some refer this to the covenant of redemption by Christ Jesus.

PSALM 25: 15 My eyes are ever on the LORD, for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

Verse 15

Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord - All my expectation is from him alone. If I get at any time entangled, he will pluck my feet out of the net.

PSALM 25: 16 Turn to me, and have mercy on me, for I am desolate and afflicted.

Verse 16

Turn thee unto me - Probably the prayer of the poor captives in Bablyon, which is continued through this and the remaining verses.

PSALM 25: 17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged. Oh bring me out of my distresses.

Verse 17

The troubles of my heart are enlarged - The evils of our captive state, instead of lessening, seem to multiply, and each to be extended.

PSALM 25: 18 Consider my affliction and my travail. Forgive all my sins.

Verse 18

Look upon mine affliction - See my distressed condition, and thy eye will affect thy heart.

Forgive all my sins - My sins are the cause of all my sufferings; forgive these.

This is the verse which should begin with the letter ק koph; but, instead of it, we have ר resh both here, where it should not be, and in the next verse where it should be. Dr. Kennicott reads קומה kumah, "arise," and Houbigant, קצר ketsar, "cut short." The word which began with ק koph has been long lost out of the verse, as every version seems to have read that which now stands in the Hebrew text.

PSALM 25: 19 Consider my enemies, for they are many. They hate me with cruel hatred.

Verse 19

Consider mine enemies - Look upon them, and thou wilt see how impossible it is that I should be able to resist and overcome them. They are many, they hate me, and their hatred drives them to acts of cruelty against me.

PSALM 25: 20 Oh keep my soul, and deliver me. Let me not be disappointed, for I take refuge in you.

Verse 20

O keep my soul - Save me from sin, and keep me alive.

Let me not be ashamed - He ends as he began; see Psa 25:2 : "Let me not be confounded, for I put my trust in thee."

PSALM 25: 21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

Verse 21

Let integrity and uprightness - I wish to have a perfect heart, and an upright life. This seems to be the meaning of these two words.

PSALM 25: 22 Redeem Israel, God, out all of his troubles.

Verse 22

Redeems Israel, O God - The people are prayed for in the preceding verses as if one person; now he includes the whole, lest his own personal necessities should narrow his heart. and cause him to forget his fellow sufferers.

This verse stands out of the order of the Psalm; and does not appear to have formed a part of the alphabetical arrangement. It is a general prayer for the redemption of Israel from captivity; and may well be applied to those of the true Israel who are seeking for complete redemption from the power, the guilt, and the pollution of sin; and from all the troubles that spring from it. And let it be ever known, that God alone can redeem Israel.