

STUDIES IN PSALMS

The refrains to these psalms are specially noticeable. The psalms themselves are private and individual; but the refrains reach out to public events in which all Israel are interested. Thus viewed, the two psalms become intensely dramatic; and lend themselves to thrilling events in Israel's ancient history. Cp. Thirtle, O.T.P., 107-8.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The words of W. G. Scroggie help our understanding as to what is meant by "an alphabetical psalm"—: "Certain of the Psalms are in acrostic form, that is there is traceable in them an alphabetical succession in the initial letters of verses. As these Psalms have come down to us this arrangement is not always complete, but may have been so originally. The acrostic Psalms are 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145."
2. What is meant by the word "ashamed" in verses 2 and 3? Does this refer to embarrassment? Discuss.
3. How did David or Hezekiah or whoever wrote this psalm imagine the requests to be taught and led would be answered?
4. What are the sins of youth as compared with the sins of old age?
5. The positive advantages in following and loving God are often here emphasised.—how we need this emphasis! Obedience of God's law is the doorway into freedom of heart. How shall we convince men that this is true?
6. Follow through this psalm with a list of man's responsibilities resulting in a list of God's blessings—Discuss.

PSALM 26

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

An Ideal Levite's Prayer for Vindication by the
Prolongation of his Life.

ANALYSIS

An introductory Petition, ver. 1a, is sustained by six stanzas of protestations and prayers. Stanza I, vers. 1b, c, 2, A protest of blamelessness

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and trust, is sustained by Prayer for further Testing. Stanza II., vers. 3, 4, Protest continued, of right feeling, right conduct and avoidance of evil company. Stanza III., vers. 5, 6, Protest prolonged, and pointed towards worship! Stanza IV., vers. 7, 8, To proclaim Jehovah's wonders, his House is loved. Stanza V., vers. 9, 10, Plea for life, in contrast with evil doers. Stanza VI., vers. 11, 12, Blamelessness moves to prayer for redemption, and gives assurance of public praise.

(Lm.)—By David.

- 1 Vindicate me¹ O Jehovah!²
For I in my blamelessness have walked,
and in Jehovah have I trusted without wavering:³
- 2 Try me Jehovah and prove me,
test thou my motives and my mind.⁴
- 3 For thy kindness hath been before mine eyes,
and I have walked to and fro in thy truth;⁵
- 4 I have not sat with worthless men,⁶
and with dissemblers would I not enter.
- 5 I have hated an assembly of evil-doers,
and with lawless men⁷ would I not sit.⁸
- 6 I can bathe in pureness my palms,⁹
and would fain march around thine altar O Jehovah.
- 7 To proclaim aloud¹⁰ a thanksgiving,
and to tell of all thy wondrous works
- 8 Jehovah! I have loved the dwelling of thy house,
even the place of the habitation of thy glory.¹¹
- 9 Do not take away with sinners my soul,
nor with men of bloodshed my life:
- 10 In whose hands is an evil device,
and their right-hand is filled with a bribe.

1. Cp. 7:8, 43:1.

b. Cp. short line for emphasis 1:1, 3, 8:1, 9.

3. Cp. 2 K. 18:5.

4. U.: "my reins and my heart." Cp. Intro., Chap. III., "heart," "reins."

5. Cp. Isa. 38:3.

6. "Insincere persons"; (or *frivolous persons*: lit. *men of unreality*)"

—Dr.

7. "Implies disloyal association with the heathen, the impious outsiders"

—Thirtle, O.T.P., 106.

8. Cp. 1:1.

9. 73:13.

10. Ml. "with voice."

11. Note the continued presence of the shekinah.

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- 11 Since I in my blamelessness do walk¹
ransom me and be gracious unto me Jehovah.
12 My foot hath taken its stand in a level place,
in assemblies do I bless Jehovah.²

(Nm.)

PARAPHRASE

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Dismiss all the charges against me, Lord, for I have tried to keep Your laws and have trusted You without wavering.

2 Cross-examine me, O Lord, and see that this is so; test my motives and affections too.

3 For I have taken Your lovingkindness and Your truth as my ideals.

4 I do not have fellowship with tricky, two-faced men; they are false and hypocritical.

5 I hate the sinners' hangouts and refuse to enter them.

6 I wash my hands to prove my innocence and come before Your altar

7 Singing a song of thanksgiving and telling about Your miracles.

8 Lord, I love Your home, this shrine where the brilliant, dazzling splendor of Your presence lives.

9, 10 Don't treat me as a common sinner or murderer who plots against the innocent and demands bribes.

11 No, I am not like that, O Lord; I try to walk a straight and narrow path of doing what is right; therefore in mercy save me.

12 I publicly praise the Lord for keeping me from slipping and falling.

EXPOSITION

This is a bright and beautiful psalm, with a ring of sincerity in it, and lighted up with a glowing hope of public blessing. The experiences of both David and Hezekiah lie behind it. Thirtle well says of it:—"Words in every sense suited to the

1. Cp. ver. 3 and Isa. 38:3.

2. Cp. Isa. 38:20. "In the choirs of the congregation do I praise Jahve"—Del. "In full assemblies will I bless Jehovah"—Dr.

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times of either king. Ver. 8 recalls Hezekiah's love for the Temple, and ver. 9 expresses his revulsion at the thought of dying the death of a sinner, which was his interpretation of the mortal sickness with which God had smitten him" (Thirtle, O.T.P., 315-6.) The references appended to the text will transport the reader into a realm of reality, and the Analysis prefixed to it will probably make detailed exposition appear unnecessary.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Integrity is a grand virtue—how can we plead it before an absolute holy God? Is this the circumstance of verses 1 through 7? Discuss.
2. Can we really love God without truly hating sin?
3. Before whom or to whom, is the psalmist trying to demonstrate his integrity? Is this normal? Discuss.
4. "The company we choose is always an index of our character"—Discuss.
5. When cut loose from social or civilized restraints—to where do we gravitate? This is a revelation of our real selves—is this true? Discuss.

PSALM 27

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Trust and Prayer in the Hour of Danger.

ANALYSIS

Part I., Two pentameter hexastichs: Stanza I., vers. 1-3, That which Jehovah Is Now he Has Been in the Past, and Will Be in the Future; Stanza II., vers. 4-6, The One Thing sought in spite of Intermediate Danger, is Anticipated with Confidence. Part II., Four irregular tetrastichs, betraying Adaptation: Stanza I., vers. 7, 8, Prayer in Seeking Jehovah's Face. Stanza II., ver. 9, The Hiding of Jehovah's Face Deprecated. An addition, ver. 10: Jehovah will Not Fail, though Father and Mother may. Stanza III., vers. 11, 12, Prayer for Guidance in Presence of Enemies. Stanza IV., ver. 13, The Prospect of Prosperity Awaited with Confidence.