



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Holy Book of Psalms

## Psalm 5

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# Introduction

- This Psalm is titled 'To the Chief Musician. With flutes. A Psalm of David'
- The title of the psalm indicates that it was directed toward the Chief Musician, whom some suppose to be the Lord God Himself, and others suppose to be a leader of choirs or musicians in David's time, such as Heman the singer or Asaph
- This psalm was probably intended to be sung with an accompaniment of wind instruments, such as the horn, the trumpet, or flute



# Introduction

- It shows David coming to the Lord in the morning and receiving the strength and joy he needs to make it through the day against many adversaries
- So it is a morning psalm
- The Psalmist as we have seen in the first four psalms, makes a distinction between himself made righteous by God's grace, and the wicked who opposed him
- Some of the church fathers believe that David in this psalm turns his attention to Ahithophal, the wicked advisor to Absalom, who betrayed David just as Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus





# Introduction

- The title according to the Septuagint translation is "For her who receives the inheritance"
- This refers the Church of Christ who receives for her inheritance eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ
- This Psalm is for the whole Church of God



# Introduction

## The Psalm Outline

- Morning Supplication to the Lord 5:1-3
- The Evil Does not Please God 5:4-6
- The Righteous Worship God 5:7-8
- God's Judgement on the Wicked 5:9-10
- God's Blessings for the Righteous 5:11-12

# Morning Supplication to the Lord 5:1-3



- David longed for a dialogue with God
- *Give ear...consider...give heed*, He repeated the same idea three times in the first two verses, “Lord, please listen to me”
- David prayed that God would be attentive to his prayer
- This form of the petition is, that He would attend to his words to what he was about to express
- He desired that God, not only hears his prayers, but also *Consider* the secrets and unexpressed desires of his soul
- Meditation and prayer should go together, Psalm 19:14



# Morning Supplication to the Lord 5:1-3



- There were desires of the soul which no language could convey; they are deep, unspoken “groanings” (Romans 8:26-27)
- As St. Augustine described it, “The Psalmist well shows what this cry is; how from within, from the chamber of the heart, without the body’s utterance, it reaches unto God: for the bodily voice is heard, but the spiritual is understood.”
- His prayer was a *cry*;
- *the voice of his cry*, denotes intensity and passion of affection and such powerful passionate prayers of a righteous man comfort much and do wonders

# Morning Supplication to the Lord 5:1-3



- Though David was himself a king, yet he acknowledged his subjection to God as his supreme Ruler
- And looked up to Him to protect him in his dangers, and to restore him to his rights
- He was, at the same time, his God to whom he felt that he was permitted to come in the hour of trouble
- To Him alone he will direct all his prayers, and therefore from Him alone he expect support and relief
- David made it a point to pray *in the morning*
- The first thing that he does is to pray to God, he neither neglect nor delay that work



# Morning Supplication to the Lord 5:1-3



- Onsemius of Jerusalem states that the psalmist here refers by the word "morning" to the Christian worship
- For the Jews who were under the shadow of the law used to celebrate the Pasch in the evening, now as the Sun of Righteousness shines through the incarnation we worship Him in the morning, illuminated by His divine rays
- We can say that the new Pasch or the Christian Pasch has been realized in the morning by the resurrection of our Savior, who conquers death and destroys the power of the devil

# Morning Supplication to the Lord 5:1-3



- David prayed in the morning because he wanted to honor God at the beginning of his day, and this set the tone for an entire day dedicated unto God
- All our prayers must be directed to God
- David gave us what to do before prayer and after prayer
- Before we pray, we should *direct* our prayer
- After we pray, we *look up* with expectancy to heaven, really believing that God will answer
- Prayers that have a right purpose, will have a prompt answer

# Morning Supplication to the Lord 5:1-3



- 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 is not given, let not the upright heart assume or believe that the prayer is not heard
- It has found its way to the throne and one must wait patiently to God's guidance
- We lose much of the comfort of our prayers because of the desire of seeing their immediate returns



# The Evil Does not Please God

## 5:4-6



- The psalmist here refers to a well-known and well-understood characteristic of God, that He was holy and pure, and that He could not have any pleasure in helping the plans of wicked men, for light has no fellowship with darkness
- Evil men can obtain no support from God, who Is All-Holy
- As David drew closer to God, he became more aware of God's holiness and man's sinfulness
- God will listen to the prayer of a righteous man, since He does not delight in wickedness, but in goodness
- He will not be a friend of unrighteous and they will by no means attempt to ask His help

# The Evil Does not Please God

## 5:4-6



- David was encouraged because he was conscious that his own prayer's purpose was right, and that his heart was just, and that God could not favor the heart of the ungodly
- *The boastful*, Wicked men referring still to his enemies, as having this character
- God should hear him, and deliver him because of their character of wickedness
- They are indeed foolish, unwise, and irrational in that they oppose and fight against Omnipotence, and willingly expose themselves to such dreadful sorrows of the everlasting punishment from God

# The Evil Does not Please God

## 5:4-6



- *You hate all workers of iniquity*, Not all that have sin in them or do sin, for there are no one without sin; but the those who give themselves up to work of wickedness and are slaves to it
- God hates the sin and not the sinners
- Sin is foolish, and sinners are the greatest of all fools
- Not fools of God's making, for He does not hate that He has made or created, but fools of their own making, and those He hates
- *You shall destroy*, God could not approve their purpose; could not give them prosperity, and that they must be overthrown and punished



# The Evil Does not Please God

## 5:4-6



- Liars and murderers are in a particular manner said to resemble the devil and to be his children, and therefore it may well be expected that God should *abhor* them
- As in the previous verses, so here, David refers to this as a general characteristic of God, but with an intended reference to his enemies
- *those who speak falsehood*, David's enemies were false, traitorous, and unfaithful and this refers to the rebellion of Absalom
- The reference here is to a general characteristic of God, with a special reference to the character of David's enemies

# The Evil Does not Please God

## 5:4-6



- These were the characters of David's enemies; and such as these are still the enemies of Christ and His church
- David was confident that he had no bad intention and was sure that his enemies were engaged in a wicked plan and purpose
- He felt, therefore, that he might go and pray before God and seek His interference, with the assurance that all His attributes, as a righteous and holy God, He will be on his side
- God has no attribute which can take part with a sinner, or on which a sinner can rely
- The righteous can appeal to every attribute in the divine nature with confidence and hope

# The Righteous Worship God

## 5:7-8



- This was David's confidence; it wasn't that he thought that he was righteous, and all others were sinners
- The reason of his confidence was the *mercy* of God
- According to St. John Chrysostom, "Since, the church has been gathered together out of such people – pagans, soothsayers, murderers, sorcerers, liars, cheats – she said, 'You hate and abhor,' indicating that it was not due to her righteousness and good deeds but to God's lovingkindness that she had been rescued from them and let into the precincts, so he added, *But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy.* There are some who do not welcome His mercy as the Jews were."



# The Righteous Worship God

## 5:7-8



- *In fear of You*, Properly considering the infinite holiness of His majesty
- David bows and prostrate himself in the deepest self-denial and humility
- *Lead me, O LORD*, The main object and central thought of the Psalm is the prayer for guidance
- Here we know what he was praying for
- He is asking to direct his heart, his thoughts, and deeds, and all the course and actions of his life especially because of his enemies

# The Righteous Worship God

## 5:7-8



- St. Jerome gives *my enemies* the meaning of 'those lying in ambush'
- God's guidance and protection would enable the good man to avoid their traps, and to walk straight in the way of righteousness
- To walk in God's way is to walk in safety
- *Straight*, Not so much "smooth my way," or "make it leveled" or "easy," as "put it plainly before me" that he may clearly discern it

# God's Judgement on the Wicked

## 5:9-10



- Our righteousness or wickedness will sooner or later show up in our speech
- As Jesus said in Matthew 12:34: *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*
- David felt the wound of wicked words and lies against him
- His enemies speak one thing and mean another, no sincerity and under a false act of kindness seek his destruction
- They are deceitful and unfaithful, and he can, therefore, only appeal to God



# God's Judgement on the Wicked

## 5:9-10



- This refers to the rebellion of Absalom
- Absalom had gone to Hebron on a false claim 2 Samuel 15:7-10, and every act of his in this whole matter had been disloyal and deceitful
- *Their inward part*, Not only their external conduct, but their hearts and their motives
- *Their throat is an open tomb*, The throat of wicked men may be compared for the tomb's hunger, thirst and greed never has enough or is satisfied

# God's Judgement on the Wicked

## 5:9-10



- And this is true of the throat, whether it be considered as an instrument of speech, and throws out damaging words to the characters and reputations of others
- Or as an instrument of swallowing meat and drink, and where the pleasure of appetite is; and so may be expressive of the eager desire of the wicked after sin, who drink up iniquity like water; and of their delight in it, and their fulness of it, and yet still hungry, desirous and not to be satisfied
- Their throat may be compared to an open grave for the bad odor it releases; immorality, and foolish talking, proceeding out of it; curses, insults, and blasphemies, coming out through it

# God's Judgement on the Wicked

## 5:9-10



- The danger is that into it, men may fall unaware; and so the evil communications of wicked men corrupt good manners, and do great harm and misleading to those who fall into company with them
- *They flatter with their tongue*, They pretend friendship that they may more easily deceive and destroy
- So, the *tongue*, instead of confessing truth, it was employed to *flatter* others, with a view to lead them astray
- It fits what Absalom and his followers did
- It is also to a characteristic of the wicked in general



# God's Judgement on the Wicked

## 5:9-10



- *Pronounce them guilty, O God*, David desired, since they were undoubtedly guilty, that God would regard and treat them as such
- It is not that he wished that God would make them guilty
- But it is that, as they were guilty, and as they were pursuing a course which tended to overthrow the rule of the land, and as they were at war with God and with the best interests of the people, God would interrupt and stop their progress
- He would show Himself to be a righteous and just God
- There is no evidence of any revenge

# God's Judgement on the Wicked

## 5:9-10



- It is a prayer which corresponds with all the efforts, and consequently with all the wishes of every good person, that the violators of law may be stopped and punished
- As St. Augustine said, "It is a prophecy, not a curse. For he does not wish that it should come to pass; but he perceives what will come to pass. For this happens to them, not because he appears to have wished for it, but because they are such as to deserve that it should happen."
- *Let them fall by their own counsels*, David assumes that God will make his enemies fall

# God's Judgement on the Wicked

## 5:9-10



- He prays that they may fall from the effect of their own counsels
- St. Augustine believe that the meaning here is that it was a wish for their good so they may no more think evil
- The psalmist did not wish to be made the means in their destruction; but he desired that God would himself interrupt so that their own plans might be made the means of defeating the rebellion
- If men are so wicked that they must perish it is desirable that it should be “seen” that they perish by their own guilt and imprudence



# God's Judgement on the Wicked

## 5:9-10



- The fate of Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23) perhaps fulfilled this imprecation
- *Cast them out*, Let them not be successful in taking possession of the throne, and in overturning the regime
- This he wishes to happen as a consequence of the number and the aggravation of their offences
- The psalmist wanted to focus the attention on the “great number” of their sins as a reason why they should not be successful
- Such a prayer is not wrong, for it would not be right to pray that sinners in the abundance of their sins, or in consequence of the multitude of their sins, should be successful and prosperous

# God's Judgement on the Wicked

## 5:9-10



- Then he stated the reason of why they should be casted out, *For they have rebelled against You*
- It was not that they did David wrong; it was because they had rebelled against God; and it was right, therefore, to hope and to pray that He would interfere
- There is no spirit of revenge manifested here, and nothing said that would encourage such a spirit
- David prayed that the wicked would come to their deserved end
- As rebels against God, they deserved the guilty sentence

# God's Blessings for the Righteous 5:11-12



- David likes contrasts
- As the preceding verse foretold the punishment of the ungodly, this describes the happiness of the saints
- Who would not rely upon God's word and promise when all human hopes and refuges fail? Which was often the case of David and his followers
- The wicked have everything to dread, for they must be cut off; but the righteous have every reason to be happy, for they shall be blessed and protected by God
- The righteous are not made righteous by their words



# God's Blessings for the Righteous 5:11-12



- The righteous are those who *trust* the Lord and *love His name*
- But their righteousness is *evident* in their words
- They *rejoice*, they *shout for joy*, and they are *joyful in* the Lord
- Joy is one of the characteristics of the truly godly that they do find their happiness in God
- The apostles rejoiced when tortured
- St. Paul rejoiced when exposed to distress, he was on the point of death and spoke of sharers in his enjoyment, “*Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me*” Philippians 2:17-18

# God's Blessings for the Righteous 5:11-12



- He also said, *“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing.”*  
1 Thessalonians 5”16-17
- Jesus indicated this in His words, revealing the lasting and continuing of the enjoyment, *“I will see again, and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.”* John 16:22
- *Be joyful in You*, in Your existence, Your perfections, Your authority and Your law
- In all that You have revealed of Yourself, and in all that You do
- They rejoice that there is a God and that He is just
- They delight in communion with Him and in doing His will

# God's Blessings for the Righteous 5:11-12



- This is the greatest blessing of all – the *favor* of God
- Knowing that God looks on us with favor and pleasure is the greatest knowledge in the world
- All the joy of the righteous comes from the fact that God's blessing is upon them
- *You will surround him as with a shield*, A shield, in war, guards only one side, but the *favor* of God is to the saints a defense on every side
- The believer is promised total defense which he needs in this land of battles, in the fullest measure



# God's Blessings for the Righteous 5:11-12



- So while the believers keep themselves under the divine protection, they are entirely safe and ought to be entirely satisfied
- In another translation as we pray in the Book of Hours, Agpeya, the verse read, *as a shield of favor You have crowned us*
- God is the godly man's shield and his crown
- St. Jerome says, "In the world, a shield is one thing and a crown is another, but with God, He Himself is our shield, He Himself is our crown."
- He continues, "For our victory is won and the crown of our victory is gained by His protection and through His shield ... he shall receive the crown who in this world has proved the conqueror."



# Discussion

- What is contrasted in Psalm 5?
- How can we say that God hates the wicked?
- What does this psalm teach us?
- How do we apply this Psalm?
- How does this Psalm teach us to worship God?