

Psalm 5

For the music director, for flutes. A psalm of David.¹

5:1 Hear my words, Yahweh.

Consider my groaning.²

5:2 Attend to the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God,
for to You I am praying.³

5:3 In the morning, Yahweh, You will hear my voice.

In the morning, I will present myself to You, and I will observe.⁴

5:4 For you are not a God who delights in wickedness.

Evil does not dwell with You.⁵

5:5 Those who boast will not stand before Your eyes.

You hate all who do immorality.⁶

5:6 You will destroy those who speak falsehood.

Yahweh abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.⁷

5:7 But as for me, by your abundant loyal love I will enter Your house.

I will worship in Your sacred temple in reverence for You.⁸

5:8 Yahweh, lead me in Your righteousness because of my enemies.

Make Your way smooth before me.⁹

5:9 Because there is nothing established as truth in their mouth.

Their inwardness is destruction.

Their throat is an opened grave.

They engage in flattering deceit with their tongue.¹⁰

5:10 Judge them to be guilty, O God.

May they fall by their own deliberations.

Banish them because of the multitude of their transgressions,
for they are rebellious against You.¹¹

5:11 But let all those who take refuge in You rejoice.

Let them sing for joy into perpetuity.

And place a cover over them.

And may those who love Your name exult in You.¹²

5:12 For You will bless the righteous one, Yahweh.

You surround him with good will like a shield.¹³

¹ – לְמַנְצָתָא אֶל-הַנְּחִילוֹת מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד

² אָמַרְתִּי הַאֲזִינָה | יְהוָה בְּיָנָה הִנְיִי – The hiphil form as here with הַאֲזִינָה is often used, even with the imperative as here. David is simply saying, Hear what I have to say, Yahweh. He wants God to pay close attention to his words. The LXX translates it as Τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐνώτισαι. David’s groaning in this context is coming from the attacks of his enemies (v. 8, etc.).

³ לְקוֹל שׁוֹנֵי מַלְכִי וְאֵלֹהֵי כִּי-אֵלֹהֵי אֲתַפְּלֵל – David is seeking help from God, his God, who is also his King, the one who rules over not only him but also the whole cosmos. He emphasizes that he is praying to God, thus looking to only Him for protection and escape from his enemies.

⁴ יְהוָה בִּקְרַת הַשְּׁמַע קוֹלִי בִּקְרַת אֲעֲרֹךְ-לִי וְאֶצְפָּה – It is the first thing in the morning after David arises from sleep that he addresses God about what is bothering him, his enemies about which he is groaning (vs. 1,5), and he will watch and observe what God does in response to him. Might as well as started early, as soon as he wakes up, to seek God’s help.

The LXX here helps with how to translate the second verb אֲעֲרֹךְ as present myself because of παραστήσομαι.

⁵ כִּי | לֹא אֶל-חַפְּזֵי רָשָׁע | אֲתָה לֹא יִגְדֶךָ רָע – It is as though David reminds himself of good, biblical theology about evil and those who are committed to it, the very people who are most likely his enemies (v. 8). Not only does God not enjoy wickedness and sin, but He will not allow any evil or evil people to live with Him in His presence forever. As Psalm 1:6 says, the way of the evil along with those who are evil themselves will vanish and be destroyed for all eternity. Cf. Psalm 5:6, You will destroy those who speak falsehood.

The LXX helps understand the meaning of רָע as not just evil, but also someone who does evil, because it uses πονηρούμενος, a present participle.

⁶ לֹא-יִתְיַצְּבוּ הַדּוֹלְלִים לְנֶגְדִי שִׁינִיךְ שְׂנֵאֹתָ כָּל-פִּטְעֵלֵי אָנוּ – People who operate on the basis of their pride and choose for themselves what is good and right without referring to God’s definition of morality will not be able to stand before Him and defend themselves. Why? Because God hates and rejects those who do evil. Ultimately, He will destroy them. Again cf. Psalm 1:6 & 5:6.

⁷ הַאֲבָר דְּבָרֵי כֹּזֵב אִישׁ-דְּמִים וּמְרֻמָּה וְיִתְעַב | יְהוָה – Like Psalm 1:6, the psalmist declares an end to evil and those who engage in it in rebellion against God. David is comforting himself with these thoughts about God’s rejection of evil and those who pursue it and therefore about God’s rejection of his enemies.

The LXX helps with translating the imperfect הַאֲבָר as a future tense because of ἀπολείς, which is future. David is most likely referring to the final judgment and God’s destruction of the “vessels of wrath” who have persisted in rebelling against Him during their entire lives.

⁸ וְאֲנִי בְּרַב חַסְדֶּךָ אֲבֹא בֵיתְךָ אֲשַׁמְחֶנָּה אֶל-הַיִּכַּל קְדֹשְׁךָ בֵּיתְךָ אֲתָה – Now David considers his own fate as an authentic believer in God. The “house of God” in David’s time was the portable tabernacle in Jerusalem that the Israelites had constructed and brought with them from the Sinai desert after escaping slavery in Egypt. It is the place of God’s presence among His people Israel, and it is the designated place of worship of God according to the Mosaic Covenant. Unlike his enemies who by definition reject God, David enjoys worshiping God in the tabernacle, offering the required sacrifices as a demonstration of his belief in God. He says that he will do this by means of God’s “abundant loyal love,” His חַסְדֶּךָ. In other words, the only way David can continue worshiping God properly is if God is first loyal to His promises to work within those whom He has chosen and cause them to do so. And David is confident that this is exactly what is going to happen. Again, unlike his enemies who do not revere God, David does, which is the very reason he is appealing to Him alone for help against his enemies (cf. v. 2).

⁹ יְהוָה | גִּלְגִּי בְּצַדִּיקְךָ לְמַעַן שׁוֹרְרֵי הוֹשֶׁר [חֹשֶׁר] לְפָנַי דְּרַבְּךָ – Like Psalm 23, David wants God to cause him to pursue morality. The LXX translates הוֹשֶׁר with κατεύθυνον, the latter meaning direct, keep straight, guide, prosper, so that it makes sense to translate the Hebrew word with even make smooth with the idea that God will make it easy for David to do what is right, probably because he understands just how difficult it is for him as a sinner to do what is good even though he is a changed of heart sinner. While his enemies go in the opposite direction morally speaking, David wants God to take him in the direction of biblical goodness and obedience to God. He does not want to be like his enemies and is using them as an additional reason to pursue morality according to God’s working within him.

¹⁰ כִּי אֵין בְּפִיהֶו נְכוּזָה קְרַבָּם הַנּוֹת קְבֻרָתוֹת גְּרוּבָם לְשׁוֹנֵם יִתְלִיקוּן – David is calling his enemies liars who are committed to an incorrect view of reality. The LXX helps here by translating נְכוּזָה with ἀλήθεια.

While David’s inwardness, which has been changed by God, will result in eternal life, his enemies have an inwardness which will bring them death and destruction at the hands of God’s justice. The LXX helps here by using the words ἡ καρδία αὐτῶν to refer to where inside them David is pointing.

The LXX uses ἀνεωγμένως, which is a perfect passive participle, meaning that the grave has been opened after it was closed, now exposing the decomposing body to the air. Thus, David’s enemies’ breath so to speak stinks like a grave which has been opened, thus allowing the smell of the decomposing body to escape from it. By this David is saying

that death comes from within them, from their moral depravity and commitment to evil and rebellion against God. And part of this death is revealed in the way they talk to people, not with any real sincerity, but hoping to get people's approval and win them over to their way of thinking and acting.

¹¹ הַאֲשִׁימֶם | אֱלֹהִים יִפְלוּ מִמְעַצְוֵיהֶם בְּרַב פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם הַדִּיחֵמוּ כִּי־מָרוּ בָךְ – It is interesting that David does not pray for God's mercy on his enemies the way we are directed to in the New Testament (cf. Matthew 5:43-48). Instead, he wants God to execute His justice on them and destroy them, which is definitely what they deserve, but not what we are supposed to hope for according to the Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore, it must be that David is speaking as God's Anointed One, His king of Israel who is allowed to act as His representative on earth in all ways, including His way of justice. Thus, David is standing in for God on earth and speaking like God who has the right to extend mercy or to extend justice towards morally depraved human beings.

Whatever David's enemies are counseling together, perhaps his demise, he would have God put an end to them because their discussions involve such evil as to eliminate God's Anointed One. This is the same as wanting to eliminate God. To banish them for their transgressions is the same as to make them vanish because of their evil paths in Psalm 1:6.

They will be banished from God's presence, meaning that they will be destroyed.

And David is convinced that his enemies are simply rebelling ultimately against God. They have no intention of obeying God and His commandments.

¹² וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ כָּל־הַוְּסִי בָךְ לְעוֹלָם יִרְנְנוּ וְתִסְדֵּךְ עָלֵינוּ וַיִּעֲלֶצוּ בָךְ אֲהַבֵּי שְׂמֵךְ – If someone has enemies and he seeks protection from God, particularly protection of his authentic belief so that it does not get crushed by the suffering caused by his enemies, then David would have them rejoice in God's assistance and protection of their faith. The LXX calls this וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ "hoping," i.e., οἱ ἐλπίζοντες. Also, David would have them perform music and songs in the midst of their joy on into this present age for however long it lasts.

David wants God to put a cover over these same believers, which will protect them from their enemies and having their faith crushed.

And just as they sing with joy, they exult in God because they love His "name," who He is and what He is all about as the transcendent Creator of reality who is telling His story of redemption, mercy, and justice on into eternity. For the LXX, to exult (וַיִּעֲלֶצוּ) is to boast or brag (καυχῆσονται).

¹³ כִּי־אַתָּה תִּבְרָךְ זָרֵיק יְהוָה כַּצַּנָּה רָצוֹן תַּעֲטֶרְנִי – David ends by stating categorically that God will give to the righteous person who inwardly is committed to Him the blessing of eternal life. The LXX translates רָצוֹן with εὐδοκίας, meaning good will, i.e., God's good will towards the righteous person which results in his being blessed by God with eternal life and salvation. God protects with His good will the righteous man from his faith being crushed by the suffering which his enemies might cause him, and God's protection is like a shield around him.