

Israel's Hymnal  
 Biblical Research Monthly  
 November, 1945  
 Dr. David L. Cooper

## PSALM FIVE

[Pss 5:1] Give ear to my words, O Jehovah, Consider my meditation.

[Pss 5:2] Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God; For unto thee do I pray.

[Pss 5:3] O Jehovah, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice; In the morning will I order *my prayer* unto thee, and will keep watch.

[Pss 5:4] For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: Evil shall not sojourn with thee.

[Pss 5:5] The arrogant shall not stand in thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

[Pss 5:6] Thou wilt destroy them that speak lies: Jehovah abhorreth the blood-thirsty and deceitful man.

[Pss 5:7] But as for me, in the abundance of thy lovingkindness will I come into thy house: In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

[Pss 5:8] Lead me, O Jehovah, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; Make thy way straight before my face.

[Pss 5:9] For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part is very wickedness; Their throat is an open sepulchre; They flatter with their tongue.

[Pss 5:10] Hold them guilty, O God; Let them fall by their own counsels; Thrust them out in the multitude of their transgressions; For they have rebelled against thee.

[Pss 5:11] But let all those that take refuge in thee rejoice, Let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

[Pss 5:12] For thou wilt bless the righteous; O Jehovah, thou wilt compass him with favor as with a shield.

I. Prayer to the King of kings (vss. 1-4).

II. God's attitude toward sinners (vss. 5,6).

III. Prayer for guidance because of the wicked (vss. 7-9).

IV. Prayer that God will reckon with the wicked (vs. 10).

V. Prayer in behalf of the saints (vss. 11,12).

Men learn by experience. After the rebellion of Absalom had been put down, David had been restored to his throne, and order had been established, he realized the fickleness of humanity and the fact that there were evil men surrounding him who would join another such revolt as the

one which had already past. He therefore prayed for protection from the evil one and for wisdom in order that he might walk in the paths of the Lord. Not only for himself did David pray but for all of those who love God. At the same time, he earnestly entreated the Lord to deal with the wicked who are designated as enemies of God. Let us now look more minutely at this hymn.

### I. Prayer to the king of kings

"Give ear to my words, O Jehovah,  
 Consider my meditation.  
 Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my king, and my God;  
 For unto thee do I pray.  
 O Jehovah, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice;  
 In the morning will I order *my prayer* unto thee, and will keep watch.  
 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness:  
 Evil shall not sojourn with thee" (vss. 1-4).

From verse 1 we can see that the king had been meditating very seriously upon a certain matter, and that, having come to a definite conclusion, he brought the situation before the Lord. In other words, after having analyzed the situation which was confronting him, David expressed in words his petition regarding the same. We should emulate his example in this respect. I fear that too often we rush into prayer and hasten to conclude the same without first having gathered our data, correlated the same, and thought things through to a logical conclusion. Such hasty praying is not scriptural. Our Lord Jesus said, "If two or three of you agree as touching any one thing for which you shall pray, do so and it shall be granted." There is implied in these instructions the thought that people before praying for things should discuss the matter in hand both pro and con and come to a definite agreement. After they have reached unanimity and are certain that that which they contemplate is in accordance with the will of God, they are to pray for the same.

In verse 2 David addresses God as his King. He was David's King, Lord, and God. He is the same to us. We live, move, and have our being in Him. He is our Sovereign, He is our Lord and Master.

David by faith entered into the presence of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He did not need any intermediary, a go-between. The same thing is true with us. The new and living way has been opened up for us and even the humblest and most insignificant child of God can come with boldness to the throne of grace and obtain mercy and grace to help in every time of need. No one need have any hesitation or reluctance in approaching God. He is interested in the most insignificant things that pertain to the life of the least of His children. He delights for everyone to come to Him, casting their cares upon Him and realizing that He cares for them.

David called attention to the fact that he was praying unto God alone. Sometimes appearances seem to indicate that people often in public are not praying to God in reality and sincerity, but are rather praying and are conscious that they are being heard by men. Such praying is not acceptable. One must approach God as a child does his father, speaking personally to Him, who despises sham, cant, and formalism, but who loves sincerity, honesty, and faith.

From the third verse we see that David purposed to bring everything to the Lord in his morning prayer, before he began the day; and then he determined to keep watch over himself in order that he might not do anything displeasing to the Lord. His desire was that he might please the Lord and delight His heart in everything. The king therefore said, "O Jehovah, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice; In the morning will I order *my prayer* unto thee, and will keep watch." We should pray before retiring at night, committing the well being and care of ourselves into His hands. In the morning we should arise and thank God for the care which He has exercised over us during the night. At the same time we should lay our plans, if we have any definite ones, before Him in faith, and ask His guidance over us as we continue through the day to work for Him. It is essential that we thus come to Him and submit all to Him. The reason for this is as follows: The Lord does not coerce the will of any of His servants. He will only take a hand in those things which we commit unto Him for His guidance and blessing. I am speaking this with reference to God's holy, directive will. At the same time I realize that there is the permissive will of God, and that He does allow things to come into our lives even though we may not commit all to Him in faith. But we are not satisfied--or should not be--with simply accepting His permissive will. On the contrary, we should want nothing but His holy, directive will, with reference to everything we do and say. If such be our attitude, we should follow the example of the psalmist and should commit definitely, positively, and in faith, everything to Him when we arise and before we begin the work of the day. At night, as suggested above, we should thank Him for what He has done for us during the day and ask for His protection during the night in order that we might see another day of service for Him.

The psalmist thus prayed each morning concerning his daily routine and pledged that he himself would keep watch. He did this because he realized that "... thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: Evil shall not sojourn with thee." What might be called the dominant characteristic of the Almighty is His holiness. This attribute directs even His love and mercy and truth. God is holy. Evil in no form can dwell with Him. David realized this fact. He therefore prayed that his life might be directed day by day by the Lord. In this may we emulate the psalmist of old.

## II. God's attitude toward sinners

"The arrogant shall not stand in thy sight:  
Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.  
Thou will destroy them that speak lies:

Jehovah abhorreth the blood-thirsty and deceitful man" (vss. 5,6).

In verse 5 we are told that the arrogant shall not stand in God's sight. This means that they can not stand approved in His presence. God hates all the workers of iniquity. Sometimes it is hard for us to understand such a plain statement as this. We are in the habit of saying that God loves the sinner although He hates his wickedness. This interpretation of the divine attitude is, as I see things, incorrect. If God had wished to express that thought, it seems that He would have done so in unequivocal language. But here the psalmist tells us that God hates the workers of iniquity. This same thought is expressed in Psalm 11:5: "Jehovah trieth the righteous; But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth."

In this verse the Lord shows His attitude toward both the righteous and the wicked. In the seventh verse of Psalm 11 we are told that the Lord "loveth righteousness." God tries the righteous. We believe this--just as it is written. Why not believe His statement, "But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth"? Those who are referred to by "the workers of iniquity" in Psalm 5:5, and "him that loveth violence" in Psalm 11:5 are the people who have taken a definite and positive stand against God. They are committed to violence. They have set their wills against God. They place themselves beyond all means of grace. God therefore, in His holiness, must take this scriptural attitude toward them.

Moreover we are told in verse 6 of our psalm that God will destroy those who speak lies and that He abhors those who are bloodthirsty and deceitful. The people comprehended in these categories are in the same class as those of whom I have just spoken. The Lord therefore in His holiness cannot do otherwise than assume this attitude toward them and bring just retribution upon them for their wickedness and their sins.

God is the God of truth. He therefore hates lying. All liars and murderers together with all other wicked men will be cast into the lake of fire eventually (Rev. 21:8). But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death. The Lord also abhors "the bloodthirsty and deceitful man." Man was made in the image of God. No one has a right to take the life of another; that is, no individual has any right to murder another. Capital punishment, however, when executed by duly authorized officials of the government after a just trial has established the guilt of the person, is certainly scriptural (Gen. 9:5,6). The civil authorities are ordained of God to take vengeance upon the evil doers (Romans, chapter 13).

### III. Prayer for guidance because of the wicked

"But as for me, in the abundance of thy lovingkindness  
will I come into thy house:  
In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.  
Lead me, O Jehovah, in thy righteousness because of my enemies;  
make thy way straight before my face.  
For there is no faithfulness in their mouth:  
Their inward part is very wickedness;  
Their throat is an open sepulcher;  
They flatter with their tongue (vss. 7-9).

In contrast with the arrogant, the workers of iniquity, the speakers of lies, and the bloodthirsty and deceitful man, the psalmist declared that he would go to the house of God in the abundance of the Lord's loving-kindness. Then in the fear of the Lord he would worship toward His holy Temple. David realized that it was by God's grace that his life had been spared, and that he had been restored to his kingdom. The situation therefore was all due to the overflowing abundance of God's grace and loving-kindness. He therefore purposed to go to the house of God and to worship toward the Temple. What David meant by his entering into the house of God was his entering into the Temple enclosure. Having thus entered it, he would worship with his face toward the sacred shrine which consisted of the holy place and the most holy. Only the priest could enter into the holy place with the blood of the sacrifices that had been made. But the high priest alone on the Day of Atonement was permitted to go into the most holy place with blood of the sacrifice for that occasion. David and any other Israelites at any time could go to the sacred enclosure and could worship toward the holy shrine. To the writer of Psalm 84 the tabernacles of the Most High were a most amiable place.

As stated above, by sheer experience David had learned the fickleness of man and the corruption of the human heart. He therefore pleaded with the Lord to lead him by divine righteousness because of his enemies and to make straight his path. The king realized that it is easy for mortals to make mistakes and to miss the path God has for His children. He therefore prayed for divine insight and discernment in order that he might not make a mistake and depart from the path of duty. He was so very eager to be found in the center of God's holy, directive will that he prayed for the Lord to make the path straight before his face in order that he might walk therein. Do you, my dear brother or sister, have such a passionate desire to be in the center of God's directive will that you ask the Lord to prevent your straying aside and to make the path which He wishes you to take so very plain that you cannot be mistaken? Happy and blest are we if that is the sentiment of our hearts and petitions to the Lord daily.

David prayed thus because he wanted to please God. But he also wanted to avoid being ensnared by the wicked. In verse 9 he gave us, figuratively speaking, an X-ray of the human heart in its unregenerated condition:

"For there is no faithfulness in their mouth;  
 Their inward part is very wickedness;  
 Their throat is an open sepulcher;  
 They flatter with their tongue."

#### IV. Prayer that God will reckon with the wicked

"Hold them guilty, O God;  
 Let them fall by their own counsels;  
 Thrust them out in multitude of their transgressions;  
 For they have rebelled against thee" (vs. 10).

To those who do not understand the scriptural teaching concerning God's holiness, the petition just quoted seems to be vindictive and out of harmony with the Christian spirit. The reader should note that these are not ordinary sinners. They are steeped in "the multitude of their transgressions; For they have rebelled against thee (God)." These men are God-haters. They are rebels against both God and man. The psalmist realized that fact. He therefore prayed that God would deal with them upon the basis of merit. God is compelled to deal with men, who refuse to accept His grace, upon the basis of their lives. There is nothing left for Him to do other than this. All the imprecatory psalms must be understood in the light of this general truth.

#### V. Prayer in behalf of the saints

"But let all those that take refuge in thee rejoice,  
 Let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them:  
 Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.  
 For thou wilt bless the righteous;  
 O Jehovah, thou wilt compass him with favor as with a shield" (vss 11,12).

The statements just made concerning the imprecatory element of different prayers are confirmed by verse 11 above. The psalmist does not want God to deal with those who take refuge in Him upon the basis of their lives. On the contrary, they are, having escaped the wrath to come, to rejoice in God and in His salvation. They are to shout for joy because God defends them. They are therefore to rejoice in the salvation which He provides and in anticipation of the eternal joy which will be theirs in the world to come, that is, in the Millennial Age and in the ages of the ages which follow that great Kingdom Era. This fact is asserted in verse 12: "For thou wilt bless the

righteous ... Thou wilt compass him with favor as a shield." God thus protects and delivers His people here and will preserve them unto eternal life.