

# MASTERING THE ENGLISH BIBLE

Job & Psalms



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## Contents

Introduction to Mastering the English Bible.....	5
Job .....	12
Introduction .....	12
The Man Job .....	15
Job's Trials .....	16
Job's Spiritual Wisdom .....	18
Job's Prayers .....	20
Job's Friends (Job 4-37) .....	21
God's Speech.....	25
Job's End.....	28
Miscellaneous Other Lessons from Job .....	30
Psalms.....	38
The Splendor of the Psalms .....	38
The Language of the Psalms .....	40
Psalms a Prayer Book.....	43
Psalms a Song Book.....	43
The Authorship of the Psalms .....	45
The Collection of the Psalms.....	47
The Divine Inspiration of the Psalms .....	47
The Inscriptions to the Psalms .....	49
Selah in the Psalms .....	50
Acrostic Psalms.....	50
New Testament Quotations of the Psalms.....	50
Great Questions of the Psalms .....	52
Major Themes of the Psalms .....	53
Interpretation of the Psalms .....	105
The Prophetic Element of the Psalms .....	116
The Psalms as a Biography of David .....	123
Psalms of Degrees (Ps. 120-134).....	123
The Imprecatory Psalms .....	130
The Division of the Psalms .....	132
Favorite Verses in the Psalms .....	136

# Introduction to *Mastering the English Bible*

*Mastering the English Bible* is a comprehensive survey of the Old and New Testaments, covering the Bible's full history and every book of the Bible.

It consists of the following 11 segments:

- Old Testament History Genesis to the Silent Years
- Old Testament Job to Psalms
- Old Testament Proverbs
- Old Testament Prophetic Books
- The Gospels
- Acts
- Romans to Corinthians
- Galatians to Thessalonians
- Pastoral Epistles
- General Epistles
- Revelation

*Mastering the English Bible* is for beginning Bible students as well as for advanced ones. It is for youngsters (teens and above) and oldsters. In fact, the Bible pictures can be used for children. It is for individuals, homes, and churches. It is for preachers, both for those formally educated and informally.

*Mastering the English Bible* is nearly a complete Bible college curriculum in one course. The aim is to educate the student in **Bible history**, **Bible times** (e.g., Egypt, ancient Babylon, the Hittites, Assyria, neo-Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome), **Bible interpretation** (e.g., context, comparing Scripture with Scripture, defining words, paying attention to details, understanding repetition, interpreting metaphoric language), **Bible doctrine**, **theological terms**, **Bible geography**, **Bible typology** (e.g., the Passover, the Tabernacle, the Levitical Priesthood, the Levitical offerings), **Bible culture**, **Bible biography**, **Bible archaeology**, and **Bible prophecy**, and to teach the fundamentals of the law of Moses, the Gospel, Israel, and the Church. The course aims to give the student a broad comprehension of the Bible as a whole and how that each part fits into the whole.

*Mastering the English Bible* is very practical. There are extensive lessons on prayer, Christian growth, spiritual warfare, the husband-wife relationship, child training, evangelism, church planting, pastors, deacons, church discipline, the woman's ministry, youth discipleship, the church as a body, spiritual gifts, congregational singing, and much more.

*Mastering the English Bible* is accompanied by the *Way of Life Pictorial Bible*, which is an extensive series of multimedia PowerPoints packed with 7,500 detailed maps, historical backgrounds, treasures from archaeology, Bible pictures, reconstructive drawings of ancient places, charts, video clips, and other visual aids. Many of these were captured by the author in the best archaeological museums in America and abroad, plus research trips to Israel, Greece, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Europe, and England.

*Mastering the English Bible* is the textbook, and *The Pictorial Bible* is the multi-media supplement. Both are an essential part of the course.

*Mastering the English Bible* is more than a Bible course. It is a philosophy that a true New Testament church is a church in which every member is a serious, lifelong Bible student. If this is not the case, the church cannot possibly be what God wants it to be. It cannot even have the congregational singing that God requires. Consider Colossians 3:16, “**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” This is a description of a true New Testament church. It is a church in which the Word of God is dwelling in the members richly, not slightly, dwelling in all wisdom, meaning that the Word of God is getting down into the daily lives and producing practical wisdom for godly Christian living.

To be a serious, lifelong Bible student is necessary to know God (the greatest benefit), to know God’s will, to be prepared for God’s will (priest, ambassador, teacher, soldier, builder of the church, minister of spiritual gifts, and builder of the home); to make wise decisions; to be victorious in spiritual warfare; and to grow in Christ. Philip Henry, father of the Bible commentator Matthew Henry, observed, “All grace grows as love to the word of God grows.”

The goal is that this course will be the foundation for a whole life of Bible study. The student must learn how to carve out time from his schedule so that he makes daily Bible study a habit; he must learn how to *read* the Bible and how to *study* the Bible; he must learn how to apply rules of interpretation and how to use Bible study tools and how to pursue Bible study projects. These things are taught in the Way of Life course *The Effectual Bible Student*.

[https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/effectual\\_bible\\_student.php](https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/effectual_bible_student.php). This is a basic course. The advanced course is *Understanding the Bible for Yourself*, also available from Way of Life Literature.

*Mastering the English Bible* is a product of 49 years of serious Bible study and teaching. The author has a passion to help God’s people become effectual Bible students, beginning at the youngest age possible. The church and the home are to work in harmony toward this objective.

*Mastering the English Bible* also features a syllabus, review questions, tests, test scores, and other teaching tools. These are available to those who purchase the textbooks and register online.

The course syllabus is very important. It explains the course objectives, the requirements, and the student projects, and it gives a weekly timeline of what the student should accomplish and when to take the tests. It is a class schedule that can be used by teachers or by private students. For the larger courses, there are two ‘paces,’ one shorter and one longer.

### **No shortcut to learning the Bible**

- It requires commitment, sacrifice, labor, persistence, and holiness.
- Proverbs 2 likens the pursuit of spiritual wisdom to searching for silver. “Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Pr. 2:3-6).
- The effectual student has to carve out time from his daily schedule, learn how to study the Bible, obtain the necessary tools, and work at it day by day for his entire life.

# Job

## Outline

The Historicity of Job  
The Date and Authorship of Job  
The Theme of Job  
The Man Job  
Job's Trials  
Job's Response to the Trials  
Job's Spiritual Wisdom  
Job's Prayers  
Job's Friends (Job 4-37)  
God's Speech (Job 38-41)  
Job's End (Job 42)  
Miscellaneous Other Lessons

The student must first read the book of Job before beginning this study.

## Introduction

### The Historicity of Job

Though many liberal commentators have doubted the historicity of Job, a Bible believer will not fall into this trap. Job is mentioned two other times in Scripture, and both times he is treated as an historical figure who went through the very trials that are described in this book. He is mentioned in Ezekiel 14:14-20 in association with Noah and Daniel. Thus, if these men are historical figures, then Job is as well. Job is also mentioned in James 5:11. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." This verse encapsulates the entire book of Job and testifies authoritatively to its historicity.

For an extended reply to the naysayers who have doubted Job's historicity, see Barnes Commentary.

### The Date and Authorship of Job

1. Job is probably the oldest book in the Bible.

It was written after the flood (Job 22:15-16).

It was written after the establishment of kings and kingdoms (Job 34:18). This was after Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, for the first mention of a kingdom is in the context of Nimrod (Ge. 10:10). Job lived during the era when city states spread across Mesopotamia and beyond.

It was written before the Mosaic law and thus before the writing of the Pentateuch. In Job 1:5, we find that Job offered private burnt offerings for his children. He would not have done this had the law of Moses been in effect, because then the sacrifices had to be made at the door of the tabernacle (Le. 17:1-5). "The religion of Job is of the same kind which we find prevailing in the

time of Abraham, and before the institution of the Jewish system. It is a religion of sacrifices, but without any officiating priest. Job himself presents the offering, as the head of the family, in behalf of his children and his friends; Job 1:5; 42:8. There is no priest appointed for this office; no temple, tabernacle, or sacred place of any kind; no consecrated altar. Now this is just the kind of religion which we find prevailing among the patriarchs, until the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; and hence, it is natural to infer that Job lived anterior to that event. Thus, we find Noah building an altar to the Lord, and offering sacrifices, Ge. 8:20; Abraham offering a sacrifice himself in the same manner, Ge. 15:9-11... Sacrifices were offered to God, and the father of a family was the officiating priest" (Barnes).

2. As for the author of Job, we are not told. It was probably written by Job himself after the experience. James 5:10-11 indicates that Job was a prophet. The Jews have attributed the book to Moses, but we have no evidence of this anywhere in the Bible itself. The thing that we know for sure, and the only thing that really matters, is that it is written under divine inspiration, and it is entirely accurate and authoritative. In 1 Corinthians 3:19, the apostle Paul quotes from Job 5:13 and cites it as authoritative and thus as Scripture. The apostles teach us that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Ti. 3:16) and that the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pe. 1:21).

### The Theme of Job

Job has six great themes

- **First, the book of Job deals with the sovereignty of God and the necessity of submitting to God without question.** God is God. "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever" (Ro. 11:36). When God appears in Job 38 and speaks to Job and his friends, He says nothing about Job's suffering. He does not answer any of Job's questions in regard to his experiences. He simply presents Himself as the Almighty Creator who can do as He pleases. This is the first great theme of Job. "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. ... Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct *him*? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. ... Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous" (Job 38:1-4; 40:1-2, 6-8).

- **Second, the book of Job deals with the age-old battle between God and Satan.** This is obvious from the very outset. God challenges Satan to a duel, so to speak, with the unwitting Job at the center of the battle. We are shown that though the battle is fierce from an earthly perspective, Satan is but an instrument in the hand of God and the outcome of the struggle is certain. We see that God is always right and that His plans and purposes are always ultimately fulfilled and cannot be thwarted by any power in heaven or earth. Compare Da. 4:34-35.

- **Third, the book of Job deals with the question of why the godly suffer and why God seems to hide His face in times of trouble.** This is summed up in Job 13:24: "Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?" It is the question asked by David in Psalm 10:1 -- "Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" What saint has not asked this question, and what saint has not been encouraged by Job's example? We would be much poorer spiritually if Job were not in our Bibles.

- **Fourth, the book of Job deals with the necessity of faith.** That is the point that James makes in the New Testament: “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (Jas. 5:11). James emphasizes that Job patiently endured the trial, and he did that by faith in the revelation that he had from God. Though Job was deeply confused by the trial and he had temporary doubts, he never cursed God and he essentially maintained his faith throughout. What an amazing example of patient faith in suffering!

At the beginning of the trial, Job glorified God even when his wealth and children were taken away, bowing himself to the ground and making that amazing statement, “Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21).

When his health was taken away and his wife urged him to curse God, he refused and rebuked her, saying, “What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” (Job 2:10).

Even at the height of his temptation, when he was being persecuted by his friends, he exclaimed, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15), and, “... when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

It is important to note that Job did not know the reason for his affliction and it was essential that he not know. “The fact is, Job was not meant to know the explanation of his trial; and on this simple fact everything hangs. If Job had known, there would have been no place for faith; and the man could never have come forth as gold purified in the fire. We are meant to understand that there are some things which God cannot reveal to us at present, inasmuch as the very revealing of them would thwart His purposes for our good” (J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*). Alfred Edersheim rightly observed: “We cannot understand the meaning of many trials; God does not explain them. To explain a trial would be to destroy its object, which is that of calling forth simple faith and implicit obedience. If we knew why the Lord sent us this or that trial, it would thereby cease to be a trial either of faith or of patience.”

- **Fifth, the book of Job shows God's watchcare over His redeemed people.** Job is a powerful illustration of the great New Testament promise of Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

- **Sixth, the book of Job deals with the question of how sinful man can be justified with God.** This question is asked in two passages: “What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?” (Job 15:14-16). “How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?” (Job 25:4-6). The answer to this question is given by Job: “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25). “My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity” (Job 14:17).

## The outline of Job

### I. The introduction (Job 1-2)

Here, the stage is set for the dialogue that forms the major portion of the book. God challenges Satan about Job's righteousness, and Satan claims that if God would lift the divine hedge and allow him to take away Job's possessions and health, that Job would curse God. God allows this,



but he orders Satan not to take Job's life. Job responds to this terrible trial by blessing the Lord. See Job 1:21; 2:9-10.

## II. The dialogue (Job 3-37)

This section forms the bulk of the book. It describes the attempt of three old men and one younger one to come to grips with what has happened to Job apart from the benefit of divine revelation. They all fail.

## III. The appearance of God (Job 38-41)

God appears and challenges Job and demonstrates His sovereignty as the Almighty Creator and teaches Job that His will is not to be questioned.

## IV. The conclusion (Job 42)

Job repents before God. God orders Job's friends to make a burnt sacrifice and instructs Job to pray for them. God removes the trial and restores to Job twice as much as he had before.

## The Man Job

### 1. He lived in the land of Uz (Job 1:1).

- Uz was somewhere in the region of Edom ("Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz," La. 4:21). It appears that it was a larger territory than Edom. Edom was located south and east of the Dead Sea. The western border ran from the bottom of the Dead Sea to the top of the eastern arm of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba).

- Uz had multiple kings (Jer. 25:20). Uz is described as a territory like that of the Philistines that had chief cities.

### 2. Job was the most righteous man on the earth (Job 1:1, 8).

- He was perfect and upright (Job 1:1). This does not mean that he was sinlessly perfect. He readily acknowledged that he was a sinner (Job 7:20; 9:20; 10:15; 13:23). The term "perfect" in Scripture often means something other than sinless perfection. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, we find that the Scripture is able to make the man of God "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The word "perfect" is plainly defined in this context. It means "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" or complete in all of the will of God. We see the same thing in Colossians 4:12, "... that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." To stand perfect is to stand complete in all the will of God. Job was perfect in the sense that he lived up to the light that he had and sought to obey God in all things and confessed his sins and failures and offered sacrifice to cover them.

- His righteousness was based on his fear of God (Job 1:1). This is the fountainhead of godliness. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Pr. 9:10). The fear of God is to know that God is a holy God and to live my life accordingly. It is to know that God requires righteousness of man and that He hates and judges sin. It is from a lack of the fear of God that modern society is so morally corrupt. When men do not fear God, they walk after the imagination of their own corrupt hearts, not fearing God and His holy justice. Were the fear of God preached from the pulpits of the average church today in "Christianized" lands such as America and England, the people would fear God and live accordingly.

- His righteousness was based upon the Word of God (Job 23:12). We don't know all of the means by which God spoke His Word in those early days of man's history, but we know that He did speak and

# Psalms

## Outline

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    Christ  
    The Word of God  
    Praise of God  
    The Blessed Man  
    Prophecy  
    The Judgment of the Ungodly  
    The Affliction of the Saints  
    God's Watchcare of the Saints  
    Righteousness  
    Judgment and Justice  
Interpretation of the Psalms  
The Prophetic Element of the Psalms  
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Psalms of Degrees  
The Imprecatory Psalms  
The Division of the Psalms  
Favorite Verses in the Psalms

## The Splendor of the Psalms

The Psalms are so magnificent that it is difficult to know where to begin in describing their glory. Psalms is a peerless book. There is nothing like the Psalms in all of human literature.

The Bible is God's library, and there are 66 books in this Library. Together, the books speak with one voice and are worth *far* more than all the treasures of the world. And each book is a rare jewel in its own right with its own particular message. Psalms is God's hymn book, God's

worship book, God's poetry book, God's treatise on suffering, God's comfort book, God's book on prayer. Its Messianic prophecy is peerless. I love everything about the Psalms!

"Here are 150 gems of divine inspiration" (Arno Gaebelin). These gems are far more valuable than earthly gems, such as the \$250 million blue Hope Diamond, and the \$72 million Pink Star diamond, the \$35 million Orange diamond, the \$20 million Moussaieff red diamond, the \$16 million Graff Vivid Yellow diamond, the \$30 million Perfect Ruby, the \$17 million Blue Belle sapphire, the \$12 million La Peregrina pearl, the \$5 million Rockefeller Emerald, and the \$1 million Virgin Rainbow Opal. The value of these magnificent gemstones is as nothing compared to that of any one of the psalms.

"Although all Scripture breathes the grace of God, yet sweet beyond all others is the Book of Psalms" (Ambrose).

"It might be called a little Bible" (Martin Luther).

"The whole inner life of the pious man is laid open, and Christians of all ages have here the temptations, conflicts, perplexities, doubts, fears, penitent moanings, and overwhelming griefs on the one hand, and the joy and hope of pardoning mercy, the victory over the seductions of false-hearted flatterers, and deliverance from the power of Satan on the other, with which to compare their own spiritual exercises" (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown).

"What words can adequately introduce this Book of Psalms to us? Who shall say how much it has meant to godly hearts down the years? ... This Book of Psalms is a limpid lake which reflects every mood of man's changeful sky. It is a river of consolation which, though swollen with many tears, never fails to gladden the fainting. It is a garden of flowers which never lose their fragrance, though some of the roses have sharp thorns. It is a stringed instrument which registers every note of praise and prayer, of triumph and trouble, of gladness and sadness, of hope and fear, and unites them all in the full multi-chord symphony of human experience" (J. Sidlow Baxter).

"The Book of Psalms has been a royal banquet to me, and in feasting upon its contents I have seemed to eat angels' food. It is no wonder that old writers should call it--the school of patience, the soul's soliloquies, the little Bible, the anatomy of conscience, the rose garden, the pearl island, and the like. It is the Paradise of devotion, the Holy Land of poesy, the heart of Scripture, the map of experience, and the tongue of saints. It is the spokesman of feelings which else had found no utterance. Does it not say just what we wished to say? Are not its prayers and praises exactly such as our hearts delight in? No man needs better company than the Psalms; therein he may read and commune with friends human and divine; friends who know the heart of man towards God, and the heart of God towards man; friends who perfectly sympathize with us and our sorrows, friends who never betray or forsake. ... They were the love songs of the people of God; could any others be so pure and heavenly? These sacred hymns express all modes of holy feeling; they are fit both for childhood and old age: they furnish maxims for the entrance of life, and serve as watchwords at the gates of death. The battle of life, the repose of the Sabbath, the ward of the hospital, the guest chamber of the mansion, the church, the oratory, yea, even heaven itself may be entered with psalms" (Charles Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*).

"If I were to be marooned on a desert island with only one book of the Bible, I think I would choose the Psalms! Their range of subjects is so vast, their catalog of life's experiences so full and their worship so exalted that I would be well supplied with rich spiritual food and powerful fuel for praise and prayer for a long time to come" (*Believer's Bible Commentary*).

## The Language of the Psalms

The language of the entire Bible is beautiful, but the Psalms have a beauty all their own.

It far surpasses anything that the pens of the most acclaimed men have produced apart from divine inspiration. And the King James Bible captures the exquisite language of the Psalms in peerless English. Note the following testimonies.

Arthur Coxe, Episcopalian bishop of western New York, called the King James Bible “THE NOBLEST HERITAGE OF THE ANGLO-SAXON RACE” and “the finest of the wheat” at a time when the “English language was in its prime and purity” (*An Apology for the Common English Bible*, 1857).

Prominent Presbyterian scholar Joseph Philpot called the King James Bible a “TRANSLATION UNEQUALLED FOR FAITHFULNESS to the original, and yet at the same time clothed in the purest and simplest English” (*Gospel Standard*, February 1861).

Frederick Scrivener, one of Britain’s foremost biblical scholars, said of the King James translators, “The fulness and variety of their diction, the raciness of their idiomatic resources, SEEM ALMOST TO DEFY IMITATION” (*The Authorized Edition of the English Bible*, 1884, p. 141).

William Muir said, “IT HAS THE DIVINE TOUCH, EVEN IN ITS DICTION, which lifts it above the limitations of locality and time, and makes it valid and living for all the ages. Like a rare jewel fitly set...” (*Our Grand Old Bible*, 1911).

John Livingston Lowes, prominent English literature scholar, called the King James Bible “THE NOBLEST MONUMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE” (*Essays in Appreciation*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936).

Arthur Clutton-Brock, English essayist and journalist, said, “The Authorized Version of the Bible is a piece of LITERATURE WITHOUT ANY PARALLEL IN MODERN TIMES” (Vernon Storr, editor, *The English Bible: Essays by Various Writers*, Clutton-Brock, “The English Bible,” 1938)

Henry Louis Mencken, the most prominent newspaperman, book reviewer, and political commentator of his day, said in the 1950s that the King James Bible “is the most beautiful of all the translations of the Bible; indeed, IT IS PROBABLY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF WRITING IN ALL THE LITERATURE OF THE WORLD” (Gustavas Paine, preface, *The Learned Men*).

William Phelps, Ph.D. Yale University, wrote in 1922, “Priests, atheists, sceptics, devotees, agnostics, and evangelists are generally agreed that the Authorised Version of the English Bible is THE BEST EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE THAT THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN. It combines the noblest elevations of thought, aspiration, imagination, passion and religion with simplicity of diction” (*Human Nature and the Bible*).

Gustavus Paine, author of *The Men Behind the KJV*, wrote in 1977, “There is, in no modern language, a Bible worthy to be compared with it as literature.”

Harvard University Press’s *Literary Guide to the Bible* said of the King James Bible “IT IS STILL ARGUABLY THE VERSION THAT BEST PRESERVES THE LITERARY EFFECTS OF THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES” (1987).

Jonathan Yardley, writing in the *Washington Post*, said, “The King James Bible is THE GREATEST WORK EVER WRITTEN IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, PERIOD” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, in the section “Praise for God’s Secretaries” which follows the table of contents).

Dr. Leland Ryken, professor of English emeritus at Wheaton College, in his 2002 book *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation*, called the King James Bible “stylistically the greatest English Bible translation ever produced” (p. 51), “MATCHLESS IN ITS LITERARY QUALITIES among all English translations” (p. 188), “THE NOBLEST MONUMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE” (p. 258), “unquestionably the most beautiful book in the world” (p. 267), and a “PEERLESS LITERARY MASTERPIECE” (p. 270).

David Daniell, the foremost modern biographer of William Tyndale, in 2003 said, “ITS WORDS HAVE BEEN FOUND TO HAVE A UNIQUE QUALITY, of being able both to lift up a dedicated soul higher than had been thought, and to reach even below the lowest depths of human experience” (*The Bible in English*, p. 427).

Consider some examples of the literary beauty of the Psalms:

### **Psalm 23**

The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

### **Psalm 24:7-10**

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory. Selah.

### **Psalm 37:1-11**

Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall* not *be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall* not *be*.

But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

### **Psalm 41:1-3**

Blessed *is* he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

“For who *is* God save the LORD?” (Ps. 18:31); “who *is so great* a God as *our* God?” (Ps. 77:13); “O LORD God of hosts, who *is* a strong LORD like unto thee?” (Ps. 89:8); “Who *is* like unto the LORD our God?” (Ps. 113:5).

“Who can understand *his* errors?” (Ps. 19:12).

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?” (Ps. 24:3).

“Who *is* this King of glory?” (Ps. 24:8).

“O God, why hast thou cast *us* off for ever? *why* doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?” (Ps. 74:1).

“What man *is he that* liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?” (Ps. 89:48).

“LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?” (Ps. 94:3).

“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” (Ps. 130:3).

### Major Themes of the Psalms

#### Major Themes

God

Christ (Messianic)

The Word of God

Praise of God

The Blessed Man

Prophecy

The Judgment of the Ungodly

The Affliction of the Saints

God's Watchcare of the Saints

Righteousness

Judgment and Justice

#### MAJOR THEMES OF THE PSALMS - GOD

The main theme of the Psalms is God. It is a revelation of God. “God” and “Lord” are mentioned 1,227 times. God is the main thing that makes the Bible interesting. He is its Author and the main Character. He is the Beginning and the End. He is the Creator and sustainer of all things. He is life. All things are of Him, through Him, and to Him (Ro. 11:36). The Bible reader must see God. The Bible preacher and teacher must preach God.

In the Psalms, God is revealed in His marvelous character in glorious, unforgettable language.

#### **God's greatness**

God's greatness and sovereignty is a major theme of the Psalms. Men need to see God high and lifted up so they can see themselves and this world in right perspective.

The God of the Psalms is the Almighty, infinite Creator, the King over all. “The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all” (Ps. 103:19). “The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King forever” (Ps. 29:10). God is “the governor among the nations” (Ps. 22:28), “the LORD strong and mighty” (Ps. 24:8), “the great King” (Ps.

48:2), the “mighty God” (*el elohiym*, Ps. 50:1), “most mighty” (*gibbor*, Ps. 45:3), “the King of all the earth” (Ps. 47:7), “the most High” (*elyon*, Ps. 91:1), “the Almighty” (*sadday*, Ps. 91:1).

Five times Psalm 47 emphasizes God’s sovereign rule over all. “For the LORD most high *is* terrible; *he is* a great King over all the earth ... For God *is* the King of all the earth ... God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness ... for the shields of the earth belong unto God” (Ps. 47:2, 7, 8, 9).

God is the source of all authority. Men think that power comes from inheritance, family ties, human networks, wealth, education, science, politics, and force. Mao said, “Power comes from the barrel of a gun.” He knows better now. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God” (Ps. 62:11). “He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah” (Ps. 66:7). “For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Ps. 75:6-7).

God’s sovereign power is the fundamental aspect of God’s character that is revealed in the very first verse of the Bible. “In the beginning God (*elohiym*) created the heaven and the earth” (Ge. 1:1).

It is impossible to have a right relationship with God apart from the knowledge of, and surrender to, His greatness. This is the essence of the fear of God. It is the essence of repentance toward God. The creature must bow before God as the most High.

This is the great God that we come to know in salvation. We call Him Abba Father!

This is a fundamental aspect of trusting God in every situation. He knows everything and is in control of everything. God is on His throne and all is well for His redeemed people! “If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?” (Ro. 8:31).

### ***God’s Righteousness (Holiness, Justice, Judgment)***

The God of the Psalms is righteous, holy, just. He is the righteous Judge. He is the standard of righteousness for the created universe, and His righteousness is enshrined in His holy law. God made man to be righteous. He demands righteousness of man and judges all unrighteousness. God’s wrath and anger toward man’s sin are mentioned about 50 times in the Psalms.

“for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins” (Ps. 7:9).

“holy and reverend is his name” (Ps. 111:9).

“But thou *art* holy, O *thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (Ps. 22:3).

“The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works” (Ps. 145:17).

“Thy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high” (Ps. 71:19).

“God is angry *with the wicked* every day” (Ps. 7:11).

“But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness” (Ps. 9:7-8).

“The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah. The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God” (Ps. 9:16-17).

“The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: *this shall be* the portion of their cup. For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright” (Ps. 11:5-7).

“... verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth” (Ps. 58:11).

“But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. For in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring *them* out, *and* drink *them*” (Ps. 75:7-8).

“Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne” (Ps. 89:14).

“For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale *that is told*” (Ps. 90:7-9).

### **God's Mercy (Compassion, Kindness, Longsuffering)**

God is the terrible Judge who is angry at man's offences against His holy law and will judge them, but He is also the Saviour who planned redemption and carried it out by Himself, and this is gloriously revealed in the Psalms.

The Psalms celebrate God's mercy, compassion, kindness, and longsuffering. These lovely characteristics are often mentioned together to emphasize this aspect of God's character. It is in these terms that God's love is expressed in the Psalms. These are the characteristics of God as Saviour, Father, Shepherd.

“But thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth” (Ps. 86:15).

“The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy” (Ps. 103:8).

“The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works” (Ps. 145:8-9).

Consider some lessons from Psalms about God's mercy:

- God's mercy is mentioned 135 times in Psalms, beginning in Psalm 4:1. Mercy is one of God's names and titles (“the God of my mercy,” Ps. 59:10). Mercy is a fundamental essence of God's character. This theme rises to a great crescendo in Psalm 136, which repeats the expression “for his mercy endureth for ever” in all 26 verses. The psalmist recounts some major aspects of God's deeds and character: goodness Ps. 136:1, God of gods and Lord of lords Ps. 136:2-3, doer of great wonders Ps. 136:4, creator of the heavens Ps. 136:5-9, judge of Egypt Ps. 136:10-12, divider of the Red Sea Ps. 136:13-15, leader of Israel through the wilderness Ps. 136:16, conquerer of the Canaanite kings Ps. 136:17-20, giver of the land to Israel Ps. 136:21-22, protector of Israel Ps. 136:23-24, and provider of sustenance to all creatures Ps. 136:25. But in the midst of all this, and as the basis for all of this, is God's eternal mercy, for which men should continually give thanks.



snares of death” (Pr. 14:27). The fear of the LORD requires humility (Pr. 15:33). The fear of the LORD is one of the chief characteristics of the Messiah (Isa. 11:2-3).

- The New Testament church, as the outpost of Christ’s kingdom, walks in the fear of the Lord (Ac. 9:31).

Christ’s kingdom is eternal (Ps. 72:5, 17).

- The millennial kingdom will last 1,000 years and will be concluded with Satan’s final rebellion and the Great White Throne judgment (Re. 20:4-15), but Christ’s reign will not end there. His reign is eternal. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, and Christ will rule forever in the eternal city, the New Jerusalem (Re. 21-22).

Christ’s kingdom will be flourishing (Ps. 72:6-7).

- It will be healthy, beneficial, cheerful, invigorating, satisfying, like gentle showers that water the earth. The righteous will flourish. This is *parah*, “meaning to blossom, to break forth; figuratively, it indicates the increase and prospering of the righteous” (*Complete Word Study Bible*).

- Christ’s kingdom will be the fulfillment of His promise, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly” (Joh. 10:10). It will be life in paradise. It will be “pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:11). “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures” (Ps. 36:8).

- The curse will be lifted from the earth. “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing” (Isa. 35:1-2). “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain” (Isa. 11:6-9).

Christ’s kingdom will be global (Ps. 72:8-11).

- “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. ... Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.” “And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” (Zec. 14:9).

Christ’s kingdom will be glorious (Ps. 72:10, 15, 19).

- Tarshish refers to the region of western Europe. Sheba is southern Arabia.

- The gold of Sheba will be brought to Christ, as in the days of Solomon.

- The term “glory” (v. 19), in this context, refers to kingly splendor and wealth. Christ will come in glory and sit upon a throne of glory (Mt. 19:28; 25:31). It refers to great beauty (Isa. 28:1; 63:1). The beauty and wealth of this present fallen world will seem as nothing when we see Christ in His glory. Christ’s glory was foreviewed on the Mount of Transfiguration, when He “appeared in glory” (Lu. 9:31). His “face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light” (Mt. 17:2). That is glory! The angels will be present in glory (Mt. 24:31; Lu. 9:26). The resurrected saints will be present in glory (Col. 3:4). The kingdom of Christ will be the manifestation of the sons of God, when the creature “shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Ro. 8:19-21).

- The Bible speaks of “Solomon in all his glory” (Mt. 6:29). His kingdom was the wisest and richest that has ever existed on earth. His wealth was such that silver was counted as nothing (1 Ki. 10:21).

Even his shields and throne were made of gold (1 Ki. 10:16-20). When the queen of Sheba came to see Solomon's kingdom, she was amazed and said, "Behold, the half was not told me" (1 Ki. 10:1-7). And Solomon's kingdom was but a faint foreshadowing of Christ's.

Christ's kingdom will be filled with prayer and worship ("prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised," Ps. 72:15).

- This is no secular kingdom, no republic, no humanistic democracy. This is a theocracy and worship of God will be its very heart. There will be merchandise, but merchandise will not be the first thing in its citizen's hearts. It will be merchandise for the glory of God, not for the glory of man. God will have His proper place. The first commandment will no longer be ignored: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mr. 12:30). No longer will men be rich toward themselves while ignoring God (Lu. 12:21). Then the world will no longer worship a multiplicity of gods, self being the chief of them, but the whole world will worship the true and living God and will offer to Him "the sacrifice of praise continually" (Heb. 13:15-16).

- Men will not only worship God continually, but they will take time to worship Him whenever and wherever He requires. Israel's sabbath will be kept. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD" (Isa. 66:23). Never again will men go about their own business as if God did not exist.

Christ's kingdom will be bountiful, prosperous (Ps. 72:16).

- A "handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains" describes a bountiful crop in the most unlikely places (Ge. 41:47). There will be no lack, no shortages, no famine.

- The "fruit ... shall shake like Lebanon" describes abundance. Lebanon and Carmel and Sharon were places of plentiful rain and large trees and bountiful crops and prosperity "... the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon" (Isa. 35:2). "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon" (Hos. 14:5-7).

- "The fertility of the land will be indescribable. Barns and silos will bulge with grain. Even places never previously cultivated, like the top of the mountains, will wave with fields of ripened grain, undulating in the breeze like the forests of Lebanon" (*Believer's Bible Commentary*).

- The cities will increase and prosper: "they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." But there will be no slums, no pollution, and no moral filthiness.

Christ's kingdom will be a kingdom where men are blessed ("men shall be blessed in him," Ps. 72:17).

- Through Christ, and on the basis of His atonement, all men will be blessed in His kingdom. "In accordance with the promise God made to Abraham, all men shall bless themselves in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed" (*Believer's Bible Commentary*).

- Even now, the born again believer is blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3), but the full reality of those blessings will be seen in Christ's kingdom.

Christ's kingdom will be a kingdom where His name is exalted ("His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun ... all nations shall call him blessed ... blessed be his glorious name for ever," Ps. 72:17, 19).

- The name of Jesus Christ is glorious indeed. It is the name of the Creator and sustainer of life. It is the name of the Lord of lords and King of kings. It is the name of the only Saviour. It is a name which is above every name (Php. 2:9).
- In this present world, Christ's name is neglected, despised, debased, and cursed. Countless tracts bearing this name have been discarded and trampled under men's feet.
- In Christ's kingdom, His name will be what it should be. It will be the highest name. His name will be honored, revered, loved. His name will be precious. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow (Php. 2:10).

Christ's kingdom will be a kingdom where God is blessed ("Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things," Ps. 72:18).

- In Christ's kingdom, God will be God. The usurper, called "the god of this world," will be gone.
- God is the LORD Jehovah. He is Elohim. He is the God of Israel, the God who has revealed Himself through Israel and her prophets. He is God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
- Christ's kingdom will be the culmination of God's eternal plan to reveal Himself to the creation by the act of Christ's incarnation and redemption and to place Christ on the throne of the universe. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him" (Eph. 1:10).

## MAJOR THEMES OF THE PSALMS - THE WORD OF GOD

Another major theme of Psalms is the Word of God and its importance in the believer's life. This is where the book begins (Ps. 1) and it is the theme of the longest Psalm (119). The Psalms even tell us that God has magnified His Word above all His name (Ps. 138:2). That is an amazing statement. God's name is very high (i.e., *Jehovah, Jesus*), but His Word has been magnified above all of it.

### *Psalm 1*

Here we see that the man of God is blessed because he delights in God's Word and meditates therein day and night (Ps. 1:2).

This is no casual relationship with God and Scripture. It is intense, passionate.

It requires separation from the world (v. 1). This is put first by way of emphasis. If you aren't willing to separate from the world, you will not learn the Bible well. You must reject the counsel of the ungodly (every wrong thinking, philosophy). You must reject the way of sinners (every wrong thing). You must reject the scorners. Messing around with the world, will corrupt your Christian life.

"*Delight*" is *hepes*, "pleasure, desire; the root idea is to incline toward something" (*Complete Word Study Bible*). It is translated "desire," referring to the things that the queen of Sheba desired from Solomon (1 Ki. 10:13) and "pleasure" (Job 21:21). It is translated "willingly" (Pr. 31:13) and "purpose" (Ec. 3:1). The individual who delights in God's Word is the individual who loves it, who has an intense desire toward it, who gets pleasure from it, who is purposed to make the Bible the chief book of one's life.

To "*meditate day and night*" is not the person who reads a little portion of Scripture every day and then goes about his business and focuses his mind and heart on other things. It is the

Psalm 101: The Messiah will punish all evildoers when He reigns.

Psalm 102: Israel recounts her afflictions but expresses faith that God will bless her and will rule over all the world from Zion.

Psalm 103: God is to be praised for His mercy.

Psalm 104: God is to be praised for His power.

Psalm 105: God will fulfill His covenant with Abraham.

Psalm 106: Israel's history of disobedience is recounted, but His mercy and everlasting covenant is also remembered.

#### **V - Psalm 107-150**

The fifth and final section of Psalms (Ps. 107-150), for the most part, finds God reigning in Zion (Jerusalem) and Israel glorified and praising God in His eternal kingdom. Some of these psalms describe the day of the Lord and the deliverance of Israel from her enemies.

Psalm 107: Israel praises God for His redemption (vv. 1-3).

Psalm 108: God judges Israel's enemies.

Psalm 109: Israel reminds God of the wickedness of her enemies.

Psalm 110: Christ will destroy the wicked and rule in Zion.

Psalm 111: Israel praises God for fulfilling His covenant.

Psalm 112: The Blessed of the Lord will be mighty on earth.

Psalm 113: Praise is given to the God who rules and blesses the whole earth.

Psalm 114: God's ancient blessings on Israel are recounted.

Psalm 115: All Israel blesses the Lord from this time for evermore.

Psalm 116: Israel praises God in His house in Jerusalem.

Psalm 117: Israel exhorts the nations to praise the Lord for His merciful kindness and for His truth.

Psalm 118: Israel recounts God's victory over her enemies and the exaltation of her Messiah.

Psalm 119: The man of God delights in God through His Word.

Psalm 120: Israel cries out for help from God and is heard.

Psalm 121: Israel rejoices in God's deliverance.

Psalm 122: Jerusalem is the place of God's throne.

Psalm 123: Israel trusts in God to deliver them.

Psalm 124: Israel rejoices in God's deliverance.

Psalm 125: God rules in Jerusalem and protects Israel.

Psalm 126: God has turned the captivity of Zion.

Psalm 127: Israel is blessed with many children from the Lord. Compare Isaiah 54:1-2.

Psalm 128: The blessings of Israel are described when God rules in Zion.

Psalm 129: Israel rejoices in God's deliverance.

Psalm 130: God will redeem Israel out of all her iniquities.

Psalm 131: Israel is humbled before God and content with His blessings.

Psalm 132: The Seed of David rules in Zion.

Psalm 133: Israel dwells in unity and harmony under God's rich blessing.

Psalm 134 and 135: Israel blesses God in His sanctuary in Zion.

Psalm 136: Israel gives thanks unto God for His eternal mercy in redeeming them from their enemies.

Psalm 137: Israel reminds God of the unquenchable hatred of her enemies.

Psalm 138: Israel will praise God for His lovingkindness and for His Word and all the kings of the earth shall praise God when they hear His words.

Psalm 139: David recounts God's infallible and intimate knowledge of him and His faithful protection.

Psalm 140-143: David prays for protection and deliverance.

Psalm 144: David sings a song of deliverance.

Psalm 145: The saints bless God in His everlasting kingdom.

Psalm 146: Hallelujah Psalm. The Lord will reign forever in Zion.

Psalm 147: Hallelujah Psalm. The Lord has gathered the outcasts of Israel and built up Jerusalem.

Psalm 148: Hallelujah Psalm. God has exalted the horn of Israel.

Psalm 149: Hallelujah Psalm. Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King and execute judgment on His enemies.

Psalm 150: Hallelujah Psalm. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord in His sanctuary. Psalms ends with the entire creation praising God throughout eternity.

### **Favorite Verses in the Psalms**

Psalm 1:1-3; 3:6; 5:12; 7:11; 8:4-6; 12:6-7; 14:1; 16:11; 19:7-11; 23:1-6; 24:1; 25:8; 27:1, 14; 31:24; 32:1-2; 33:4, 18; 34:7, 19; 36:9; 37:1-2, 4, 23-24, 25; 40:1-3; 42:5; 46:1; 49:7-8; 55:22; 56:13; 58:3; 66:4, 18; 68:19; 73:26; 74:12; 82:5; 84:11; 86:5, 15, 17; 90:12; 91:1; 93:2; 100:3; 101:3; 107:8-12, 17; 107:2; 111:10; 113:3; 116:15; 118:5, 8, 24; 119:9, 25, 105; 121:2; 127:1, 3; 138:3; 139:14-16, 23-24; 145:18; 147:4-5.