

# PSALMS

## *Lyrics* OF *Prophecy*

51/150

# PSALMS - Lyrics of Prophecy

Psalm 51

Song of Repentance and Confession

## READ AND OBSERVE

Read through Psalm 51 and mark every reference to the Lord, or God, including all pronouns and synonyms (i.e., He, His, Most High, King, etc.), with a red triangle.

Read through Psalm 51 and mark every reference to the psalmist, including all pronouns and synonyms, with a blue capital "R+."

Read through Psalm 51 and mark every reference to transgressions, along with all pronouns and synonyms (i.e., iniquity, sin, evil, bloodguiltiness, etc.) with an orange "do not" sign.

Read through Psalm 51 and mark every reference to salvation, along with all pronouns and synonyms of salvation (i.e., blot out my transgressions, wash, cleanse, purify, etc.) with a blue capital "S."

Read through Psalm 51 and mark every time reference with a blue box.

Read through Psalm 51 and mark every contrast with a pink diagonal line.

Read through Psalm 51 and divide the passage into the following segments. Mark and title these segments in your text using brackets in the margin.

1. Wash me because I have sinned against You.
2. Wash me because You desire truth in my being.
3. Do not cast me away—use me to teach transgressors Your ways so they will be saved.
4. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness—that my mouth may declare Your praise.
5. Do good to Zion—You delight in righteous sacrifices.

## READ AND OBSERVE

### Psalm 51:1-4

According to the introduction, who wrote this Psalm?

According to the introduction, when did David write this Psalm? What was the occasion?

### Point of Reference

**2 Samuel 11 tells the story of David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba.**

**2 Samuel 12 records Nathan confronting David about his sin and the consequences of it.**

**It would be an excellent idea to thoughtfully read these two chapters before observing the rest of Psalm 51.**

If David gave this Psalm to the choir director, who do you think was his intended audience?

David begins with a prayer. What does he ask of God? (Hint: The answer will span the first two verses.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Even before he mentions his own sin, what attribute of God does the psalmist call attention to?

## Point of Depth

**The Hebrew word for gracious is "chanan,"  
and means to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior.  
It means to favor or provide assistance to someone in need.  
The psalmist is asking God for mercy.**

By what measure does the psalmist ask for grace? (Just exactly how much grace or mercy is the psalmist asking for?)

1.

2.

Is the measure of God's lovingkindness in abundance or short supply?

Is the measure of God's compassion minuscule or vast?

Why does the psalmist need such a considerable amount of mercy? What has he done? (From the text.)

1.

2.

3.

## Point of Depth

**In all reality, all sin is against God...  
In all reality, any sin against God is great...**

**In all reality, everyone has sinned against God...  
In all reality, each of us needs mercy...**

**In all reality, the abundant lovingkindness of the Lord is available for each sin...  
and for each sinner...**

**In all reality, the vast compassion of the Lord is at hand for each and every sin...  
and each and every sinner...**

**David was in the Old Covenant,  
where the judgment for sin was temporarily "rolled back"  
until the Messiah would come and take care of sin once and for all.**

**Today, the Messiah has already come.  
Today, believers are in the New Covenant—a much better covenant.**

**Today, when God blots out transgressions according to His lovingkindness...  
Today, when God washes a person thoroughly from his iniquity...  
Today, when God cleanses a person from his sin  
according to the greatness of His compassion...  
That person's transgression, his iniquity, his sin... all are gone forever!**

**In all reality, the Reality is... Jesus!**

***When you were dead in your transgressions  
and the uncircumcision of your flesh,  
He made you alive together with Him,  
having forgiven us all our transgressions,  
having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us,  
which was hostile to us;  
and He has taken it out of the way,  
having nailed it to the cross.  
Colossians 2:13-14***

Was David in denial about his sin, or was he fully aware of the magnitude of his sin?

How do you know?

1.

2.

*Point of Depth*

**The Hebrew word for before is "*nagad*,"  
and is a primitive root that means "to front" or "stand boldly opposite."  
It has the idea of announcing or exposing.**

**David's sin is conspicuously in his mind's eye at all times—  
he is never free from the matter... or his guilt.**

How does David define the gravity of his sin?

David admits that his sin is against God because it was God Who determined it to be evil. This is a profound principle to understand. Although David's actions toward both Uriah and Bathsheba were wrong, the heart of the matter is that David broke God's law, which made his sin against God, Himself. Therefore, it is God Who must exact the proper justice. Does David doubt God's verdict or His judgment against him?

## Point of Reference

***Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight?  
You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword,  
have taken his wife to be your wife,  
and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.  
2 Samuel 12:9***

***Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."  
2 Samuel 12:13***

What was it that God "spoke"? What was God's judgment? What is David referring to? (Hint: 2 Samuel)

## Point of Reference

***"Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."  
Thus says the Lord,  
"Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household;  
I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion,  
and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.  
Indeed you did it secretly,  
but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.  
2 Samuel 12:10–12***

***And Nathan said to David,  
"The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.***

***However, because by this deed  
you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme,  
the child also that is born to you shall surely die."***

**2 Samuel 12:13–14**

Was God right and equable when He spoke his verdict to David?

Was God pure and utterly blameless when He judged David's sin?

**Psalm 51:5-9**

What does David say was inherent in his being?

- 1.
- 2.

## Point of Depth

**David is not accusing his mother of any sin,  
nor is he excusing himself in any way.  
He is merely continuing his full and comprehensive confession before God.**

**He has admitted his sin and guilt (verse 1).**

**And he has conceded that God is the only One Who can cleanse him from it  
(verse 2).**

**He fully recognizes both sin and guilt (verse 3).**

**He acknowledges that his sin opposes the law of God  
and therefore, God's judgment concerning it is valid and righteous (verse 4).**

**He maintains the completeness of his confession by disclosing  
the complicity of his existence to his present state of sinfulness before God—  
that sin is the very nature of his being—  
he was never at any point in time innocent before God (verse 5).**

**In his Psalm, David prays to God in penitence.  
His glorious confession accedes all the necessary components of repentance—  
contrition, regret, remorse, shame, and guilt.**

After acknowledging his innate depravity before God, David states the apparent dilemma. What is it?

God desires truth in the innermost being of man, despite man's deficiency. What is God able to do to counteract man's void of truth?

What is the "hidden part"?

What is David asking God to do in response to his penitent prayer?

1.

2.

What cleaning agent does David expect God will use to purify him (from his iniquity)?

## Point of Depth

### Levitical ceremony

**While the Abrahamic Covenant was a *promise* of The Coming Seed, the Mosaic Covenant or the Old Covenant was a *picture* of The Coming Seed, Jesus Christ. God gave Moses instructions and a pattern to build the Tabernacle. Exodus 25-31; 35-40 The real Tabernacle, the place where God dwells, is in heaven. Yet, the earthly copy gave an authentic and accurate picture of Jesus the Lord to the people here on earth. Jesus, The Seed, provided men with access to God. He showed men how to approach God → through Himself!**

**God's presence dwelt in the innermost part of the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies. Everything in the Tabernacle dealt with, giving the Israelites access to God. Everything Jesus did had a purpose—to provide us with access to God!**

**The outer walls of the Tabernacle created a rectangle that was 150 feet from east to west and 75 feet from north to south. There was a 30 foot wide by 7 and one-half foot high door or opening, always on the east side. There was no other entrance to the inside of the Tabernacle. Jesus is the door to the Father. John 10:9 Jesus is the only way to the Father. There is no other way to the Father but through Jesus. John 14:6**



**Inside of the outer walls, there was an outer court, to which the nation of Israel had access. Then, in the middle of the outer court, there was a Holy Place, where only the priests were allowed to go. And finally, inside of the Holy Place was the Holy of Holies (the Holiest of the Holy places). The high priest alone was able to enter the Holy of Holies and only one time each year on the Day of Atonement. Let's walk through that doorway and examine the outer court first as we make our way towards the Holy of Holies, where God dwelt. Exodus 29:43, 45**

**There were two main things in the outer court: the Altar of sacrifice and the brazen Laver. The first thing to be seen when entering the outer court was the altar of sacrifice. Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7 It was made of bronze and was seven and one-half feet square while standing four and one-half feet off of the ground. Slain animals, or their parts, were laid on top. The idea was that because a person had sinned, he needed to die. Yet God allowed for the animal to die instead of the person until the supreme final sacrifice of Jesus Christ would be made that would atone for all sin. Once Jesus' sacrifice was made, there would never need to be another. His sacrifice would pay it all. Jesus is the Lamb that was slain for the sins of the world. Revelation 5:12 He was nailed to the cross and baptized with a baptism of fire. Luke 12:49-50**

**Directly behind the altar of bronze was the brazen laver. Bronze is a symbol of judgment. Without God's perfect "Sacrifice," making atonement for our sin and the daily cleansing of the water of God's word, we too would be under the judgment of God.**

**The laver was made of more exquisite, purer, and more transparent bronze than the altar. It was made from the mirrors of the women who served at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting. Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8 The priests would cleanse themselves here daily before going into the Holy Place. Jesus is the Word of God. He said that the word He spoke cleanses us. We need to wash daily with that "water." God's word washes our minds and changes our beliefs and, therefore, our actions. The more we are cleansed, the more we are conformed into the image of Jesus Christ and reflect Him—just like the mirrors used in the laver would reflect the image of the priest who looked into it! John 15:3; Hebrews 10:22; Ephesians 5:26**

**Neglecting to wash one's hands and feet when entering the Tabernacle resulted in death. Think about how much more severe the consequence is if we don't wash our hearts daily with the water of God's word! Exodus 30:20-21**

**From the outer court, the priests would enter daily into the Holy Place. It was 45 feet from east to west and 15 feet from north to south and 15 feet high. The Holy of Holies, which sat at the western edge within this rectangle, is included in these measurements. Exodus 40:24 refers to the Holy Place as the Tent of Meeting.**

**If you were a priest and could have entered the Holy Place, you would have seen the Table of Showbread to the right. The table was 3 feet from east to west while only one and one-half feet from north to south. It stood about 2 and one-fourth**

feet tall. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. Twelve loaves of bread were placed on it representing the 12 tribes of Israel, God's Covenant people, the Jews. On the Sabbath, the priests would eat these loaves and replace them with new ones. **Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16** Jesus is the Bread of Life. **John 6:48-51** If we eat of Him, we will never die. The bread that He gives for the life of the world is His flesh.

**If you were a priest and could have entered the Holy Place, you would have seen a Candlestick with seven branches on it to the left. It was to burn continually, 24 hours a day! They used olive oil to keep it burning day and night. It was the only light inside the Tabernacle. It was made of pure gold. Exodus 25:31-40; 37:17-24** Jesus is the Light of men. If we follow Him, we will not walk in darkness, but have the Light of Life! If we believe in Jesus, we won't remain in darkness! **John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46**

There was a veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Directly between the Table of Showbread and the Candlestick and next to the veil was the altar of incense. The altar might have been inside the Holy of Holies, according to **Hebrews 9:3-4** However, most scholars tend to believe it was in the Holy Place. **Exodus 30:6; 40:26** Either way, this altar was made of acacia wood and gold and stood 3 feet tall, which was three-fourth of a foot higher than the showbread table. The altar was the place for burning pure fragrant spices in the form of incense, which continually floated throughout the Holy Place. The aroma represented prayers coming before God. Jesus prays for us continuously. He is our High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us before God. **Hebrews 7:25**

A veil, made of blue, purple, and scarlet fine twisted linen, served as a partition between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. It was hung with golden hooks on four pillars that were made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. **Exodus 36:31-38; 40:3** The Veil is a picture of Jesus' Own flesh. We must enter through Jesus to come to the Father. And the way to enter through Jesus is to surrender yourself to Him by entering into Covenant with Him through belief! There is no other way! Jesus' torn flesh gives us access to the very presence of God! **Hebrews 10:19-22**

Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies where the presence of God was, and even he could only go in once a year on the Day of Atonement. He would bring with him the blood of animals to offer for his own sin and for the sins of the people. He had to do this every year because the people, and the priest himself, kept on sinning! The blood of Christ, however, was offered to God once for all! It cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God! We don't go on sinning! **Philippians 2:13** We now have the desire and the ability to obey! Our High Priest, Jesus, entered the real Holy of Holies in heaven where God reigns from His throne, offering His Own blood to pay for *our* sin. **Hebrews 9:11-15** God accepted the payment as final and complete! Now, through Jesus, we have access to the Father at all times! In fact, we may come boldly before the throne of God in our time of need to find mercy and grace! **Hebrews 4:16** WOW! What a Covenant!

**Inside the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant, the box which held the Mosaic Covenant agreement. It was made of acacia wood covered with gold and stood two and one-fourth feet high. It was two and one-fourth feet from east to west and three and three-fourth feet from north to south. The Ark held the tablets of stone that God had written His Covenant commandments on, a jar of the manna from the 40 years of wilderness breakfasts, and Aaron's rod that had budded to show that his leadership was from God. Above the Ark was the Mercy Seat of God. Two cherubim angels covered the Mercy Seat with their outstretched wings. God's presence hovered over the Mercy Seat in a great cloud called the Shekinah Glory. This is where God dwelt.** When they approached God, they were approaching Jesus. Jesus is God. **John 8:24, 58; 10:30-33** Jesus and God are One. What God did, Jesus did. One must believe that Jesus is God to be saved. Jesus is the same I AM that made the covenant with the people of Israel!

**The Mercy Seat, which was on top of the Ark of the Covenant, was the place where the High Priest would put the blood he was offering to God, which would cover the sins of the people.** This is where Jesus Himself, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God. God was propitiated. Because He was satisfied with the offering, He was able to extend mercy to those who would believe. **Hebrews 9:14**

Excerpt—H1Story: From Event to Event, the Bible is One Story

Do you realize...  
that the blood of Jesus was laid before God on the actual Mercy Seat in heaven?

Do you realize...  
that very blood was offered to pay the price for your sin?

God accepted the payment...

Have you?

Does David expect that God's purification process will do the job of cleansing him?

Once again, David asks God to wash him (from his sin). What does he expect that the result will be?

What is the point of saying "whiter than snow"? What does David teach us regarding God's purification process?

## Point of Reference

**Isaiah 1:15-18 is a compelling cross-reference for the phrase "whiter than snow."**

***"So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you;  
Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen.***

***Your hands are covered with blood.***

***Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;  
Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight.***

***Cease to do evil,***

***Learn to do good;***

***Seek justice,***

***Reprove the ruthless,***

***Defend the orphan,***

***Plead for the widow.***

***Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord,  
"Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow;  
Though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool."***

**Isaiah 1:15–18**

**In this passage, the nation of Israel had been sinning to the extreme,  
their hands were covered with blood,  
which, of course, is a stark contrast with white.**

**The Lord tells them that things can still be set right if they will obey.  
Their sins, though they are red as scarlet, can be made white like snow.  
If they refuse and rebel, however, no such thing will happen.**

**In our Psalm passage, I find some fascinating and remarkable contrasts.**

**First, David has ceased from sinning—he has repented  
(whereas the nation of Israel in Isaiah's time had not).**

**Second, David asks the Lord to wash him thoroughly from his iniquity  
and to cleanse him from his sin.**

**David asks the Lord to purify him with hyssop to make him clean.  
He realizes that the Lord must cleanse him  
for him to be white.**

**(The Israelites were told to wash *themselves* by ceasing from their evil.)**

**Third, David is not just asking to be white as snow—  
he is asking to be *whiter* than snow.**

**What a great picture of the truth!  
Although we are required to repent and cease from our evil deeds,  
we cannot ever really make ourselves clean—  
only God can do that through the blood of His Son.**

**In the Old Covenant,  
the priests stood daily  
ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices—  
ones that could never take away sins.  
In other words, their job was never ever finished.**

**In the New Covenant, our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ,  
offered one sacrifice for sins for all time.  
It was utterly and forever sufficient for all sins.  
Therefore, He was able to sit down at the right hand of God—  
having completed the task of a priest perfectly... forever...**

What does David expect the practical result to be in his own life?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Point of Depth

**The Hebrew word for rejoice is "giyl,"  
and means to spin around because of emotion, whether joy or fear.**

**Think about that definition for a moment.  
In the same way that David expected to be thoroughly cleansed from his sin  
(by the Lord,  
so too, he expects a full recovery from his crushing consequences.  
He is fully expecting the bones which the Lord had broken  
to circle around and dance with joy over his forgiveness and atonement.**

What earnest request does David make of the Lord?

What seems to be synonymous with the Lord hiding His face from David's sins?

**Psalm 51:10-13**

David seems to be looking forward; what does he ask God to do in him?

1.

2.

What does David ask God to *not* do?

1.

2.

What does David ask God to restore to him?

If David needed the joy of his salvation restored, what had left him?

Why?

What does David want the Lord to provide for him?

Point of Depth

**The Hebrew word for sustain is "*camak*,"  
and is a primitive root that has the idea of support.**

**The Hebrew word for willing is "*nedivah*," and means voluntary or generous.**

What does David intend to do (with his clean heart, his joy over his salvation, and his willing spirit)?

Does David believe his efforts will be effective?

What will be the result of his efforts?

**Psalm 51:14-17**

What is David asking and hoping that God will do for him?

Where does David know deliverance comes from?

What does David pledge to do upon his deliverance?

What will be the theme of David's song?

What will be the tone of David's song?

What does David want the Lord to do?

Why?

What will David's mouth declare if the Lord opens his lips?

Because verse 16 starts with the word "for" what do we know it is connected with?

What is the connection?

What does God not delight in?

What does David say he would do if God delighted in sacrifice?

What is God not pleased with?

What sacrifices does God delight in?

What sacrifices will God not despise?

- 1.
- 2.

Just to put it another way, what is God pleased with, or what, exactly, will God accept?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Psalm 51:18-19**

What does David pray for God to do for Zion?

By what measure or standard does David ask God to do good to Zion?

Point of Depth

**The Hebrew word for favor is "ratsown" and means delight.**

Specifically, what does David ask God to do?

How would walls benefit the city of Jerusalem?

Once Jerusalem's walls were built, what did David expect would be given to God?

- 1.
- 2.



3.

4.

Would God be pleased with Israel's offerings?

Why?

How would it all come about?

## READ AND REASON

David's prayer in Psalm 51:18-19 only makes sense when you see it in terms of the Covenant Israel was in with God.

According to Israel's Covenant with God, if she obeyed Him, He would bless her, prosper her, and give her life, but it was also clear that if she disobeyed Him, He would curse and bring adversity and death upon her.

One of the determined "types" of death was that Israel would be expelled from the land (another nation being God's instrument of eviction). Having walls around a capital city was the gold-standard for empirical protection.

It was Israel's responsibility to be righteous and faithful to their God and His Law, but it would be God's power that provided the means necessary to build a wall around Jerusalem. If Israel obeyed, God would keep her in the land... but if she disobeyed, He would take her out.

When Israel was righteous, she would bring righteous sacrifices and offerings. Then, and only then, would God be pleased. Israel would be secure in her land permanently once she submitted herself to the True God.

David wanted Israel to be righteous... but the only way for that to happen was for God to send His Messiah, Who would bring a New Covenant which would give the people a new heart—a heart that wanted to do the will of God. The new covenant would bring the power to do the will of God by placing the very Spirit of God inside of each and every believer.

God sent the Messiah, the Jews rejected Him and His Covenant, but God is not finished with Israel... May it never be!

*For He said, "Surely, they are My people, Sons who will not deal falsely." So He became their Savior. Isaiah 63:8*

Truly... by God's favor... He will do good to Zion...

## Segment by Segment

**Try titling these segments yourself.  
Ask God to help you.**

**Verses 1-4**

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**Verses 5-9**

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**Verses 10-13**

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**Verses 14-17**

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**Verses 18-19**

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## Purpose of Psalm 51

**Try to identify the purpose of Psalm 51.  
The purpose simply states, "why the Psalmist wrote the Psalm."**

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## Theme of Psalm 51

**Try giving Psalm 51 a title by identifying its theme.  
The theme simply states, "*what* the Psalm is about."**

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