



*And he arose and rebuked the wind,
and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still."
And there was a great calm.*

Table of contents

psalm 113	2
psalm 119	4
psalm 120	22
psalm 121	24
psalm 122	25
psalm 123	27
psalm 124	28
psalm 125	29
psalm 126	30
psalm 127	31
psalm 128	32
psalm 129	33
psalm 130	34
psalm 131	36
psalm 138	37
psalm 140	39
psalm 145	41
psalm 146	46
psalm 147	48
psalm 148	50
psalm 149	52
psalm 150	53

psalm 113

(edition: August 5, 2021)

¹ *Hal'êlûyah*¹

*d*oxology

You who serve YHWH, praise² him.

Boast³ of YHWH's renown.⁴

² Pay homage⁵ to YHWH's character⁶
from this very moment and forever after.

³ From eastern to western horizon,
let YHWH's character⁷ be celebrated.⁸

⁴ YHWH is exalted above the earth.⁹
Greater is His importance¹⁰ than the universe is expansive.

*r*easons for praising yahweh

⁵ Who is like YHWH, our God;
the One who sits, exalted;

⁶ the One who¹¹ condescends¹² to look upon
heaven and earth;

⁷ the One who raises the powerless from their humiliation;¹³
the One who lifts the destitute out of their desperation,¹⁴

⁸ so that they may associate¹⁵ with those who are noble,
with the most noble citizens among my people;

⁹ the One who bestows a home upon the barren woman,
making her a mother gladdened by children?¹⁶

Hal'êlûyah

¹ Here, I have transliterated the first two Hebrew words.

² Hebrew, *hālāl II*. "Praise... is an expression of appreciation and a response to good qualities" (*NIDOTTE*, Vol. 1, p. 1035). Praise, then, focuses its attention on the worthy and exemplary character and actions of deity. It is a kind of boasting about God.

³ Hebrew, *hālāl II*.

⁴ Hebrew, *šēm*, "name." "...at a very early date the root had substantial content, being more than just a term used, e.g., to differentiate among individuals" (*TDOT*, Vol. 15, p. 133). "In addition, *šēm* incorporates those elements that are associated with the particular person or Yahweh. Thus *šēm* comes to have semantic overtones of fame, honor, influence, power, etc. Furthermore, *šēm* functions as a substitute for the person in question" (*TDOT*, Vol. 15, p. 134). This ought to be obvious: when I speak of my wife, "Estelle," to another, I am not "designating," but representing her in her entirety with all her attributes and character in mind.

⁵ Hebrew, *barak*.

⁶ Again, Hebrew, *šēm*.

⁷ Again, Hebrew, *šēm*.

⁸ Again, Hebrew, *hālāl II*.

⁹ Hebrew, *gôy*. This word seems most correctly to refer to peoples or nations. Certainly, God is above every nation as scripture so often witnesses. However, given the poetic parallelism with “heavens” in the next line, “earth” seems the better translation. That said, one wonders why the poet chose *gôy* rather than *’ereš*. Perhaps I am missing something.

¹⁰ Hebrew, *kābôd I*.

¹¹ Eaton’s “Yet humbles himself to behold... the things of heaven and earth” is very attractive and surely gets to the overall point that the psalmist wishes to make. See his, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary*).

¹² Hebrew, *šāpēl*. When used in relation to human beings, this word frequently possesses the sense of humiliation and self-abasement. It seems, often, to have the sense of one not living up to expectations. 2 Samuel 6.²⁰ is most instructive. The context is the introduction of the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem. As the ark enters the city, King David dances, naked, before the ark. His wife, Michal, accuses him of humiliating himself and, by extension, her. Such “self-exposure” is seen as beneath his dignity.

¹³ Hebrew, *’āpār*. Literally “dust.” But here, “dust” is a metaphor for the lowly state of the powerless.

¹⁴ Hebrew, *’ašpōt*. Literally “trash heap.” But again, we have metaphor. Looking for food, scraps of cloth for clothing, materials for makeshift shelter, etc. in the local land fill is emblematic of the desperation in which the poor live.

The psalm is poetry. And imagery, symbolism, etc. is at poetry’s heart. So, I am not insensitive to the criticism that I have removed the poetic imagery for a “plainer” translation and easier understanding. I struggle to weigh the advantages of a more poetic translation and a “plainer” translation. In the end, I am more preacher, with his desire to be heard by and improve an audience, than I am a poet.

¹⁵ Hebrew, *yāšab*. Literally, “sit.”

¹⁶ Due to the repeated use of the participial phrase, I take verses 5-9 in their entirety as the question, rather than ending the question with verse 5.

psalm 119

(edition: june 19, 2024)

’ālep

- ¹ How truly fulfilled¹ are those sound in principle²,
who live³ by YHWH’s teachings⁴.
- ² Fulfilled are those who search⁵ His sworn truths⁶,
and inquire after Him whole heartedly.
- ³ Indeed, they do not act unjustly⁷.
They live by His principles.
- ⁴ You have commanded that Your ordering precepts⁸
be diligently observed.
- ⁵ If only my habit⁹ was fixed
on observing¹⁰ Your norms¹¹!
- ⁶ I would¹² not be regretful¹³
by paying close attention to all Your directives¹⁴.
- ⁷ I could praise you with complete integrity¹⁵
by learning Your correct¹⁶ and sovereign decrees¹⁷.
- ⁸ I would observe Your norms,
and you would not ever¹⁸ forsake me.

bêt

- ⁹ How can a youth¹⁹ keep their behavior²⁰ guilt-free²¹?
By observing Your word.
- ¹⁰ I have sought You earnestly²².
Don’t let me wander from Your directives.
- ¹¹ I have treasured²³ Your word in my mind²⁴
so that I not offend²⁵ You.
- ¹² You are to be praised, YHWH.
Teach me Your norms.
- ¹³ I have publicly²⁶
recounted all Your sovereign decisions.²⁷
- ¹⁴ I have rejoiced in the manner of life²⁸ found in Your sworn truths,²⁹
above all riches.
- ¹⁵ I intend to meditate on Your ordering precepts,
and look to Your principles³⁰.
- ¹⁶ I will find joy in Your norms³¹.
I will not ignore Your word.

gîmel

- ¹⁷ Reward You servant, that I may live,
and observe Your word.

18 Open my eyes
that I may discern marvelous things from Your teachings.
19 I am at risk³² on earth.
Don't hide Your directions from me.
20 I am overcome³³ with strong desire³⁴
for Your sovereign viewpoint, at all times.
21 You rebuff the damnable self-serving³⁵.
They are the ones who stray from Your directives.
22 Remove from me reproach³⁶ and distain³⁷,
for I have observed Your norms.
23 Though "nobles" should sit and speak against me,
Your servant will meditate on Your standards.
24 Yes! Your sworn truths are my ultimate delight,
my companion, my counselor.

dālet

25 My life³⁸ is linked³⁹ to dirt.
Keep me alive, true to Your word.
26 I have given an accounting⁴⁰ of my conduct, and You responded.
Teach me Your standards.
27 Help me understand the principles behind Your ordering precepts,
permitting me to contemplate⁴¹ the wonder that You are⁴².
28 I⁴³ weep due to grief.
Steady me, true to Your word.
29 Remove from me fraudulent⁴⁴ conduct⁴⁵.
Favor me with Your instruction.
30 I have chosen a habit⁴⁶ of integrity.
I have adopted⁴⁷ Your sovereign viewpoint.
31 I adhere⁴⁸ to Your sworn truths, YHWH.
Don't let me experience humiliation.
32 I will run Your directed path⁴⁹
because You strengthen⁵⁰ my will⁵¹.

hēh

33 Teach me, YHWH, conduct befitting Your standards.
that I may observe them.
34 Give me discernment as I study Your teachings,
that I may observe it fully⁵².
35 Help me travel in Your directed paths,
because this is my desire.
36 Bend my will⁵³ to Your sworn truths,
rather than ill-gotten gain⁵⁴.
37 Keep me from setting my sights on what is of no value⁵⁵,
and give me life through Your principles.

38 Fulfill Your promise⁵⁶ given to Your servant—
a promise indicative of Your awesomeness⁵⁷.
39 End my disgrace, which I dread.
Truly Your sovereign decrees are beneficial⁵⁸.
40 Just look how I have longed for Your ordering precepts!⁵⁹
Give me life through Your merit⁶⁰.

Wāw

41 Give⁶¹ me Your unwavering devotion, Yahweh.
Give me⁶² Your help⁶³, true to Your promise⁶⁴.
42 Then I'll be able to respond to my detractor⁶⁵ with the promise.
For I have confidence in Your promise.
43 Don't ever⁶⁶ let the faithful promise cease from my mouth.
Truly I trust Your sovereign decrees.
44 I will fully observe Your teachings,
always and forever.
45 I live⁶⁷ expansively⁶⁸
when I follow Your ordering precepts.
46 I will present⁶⁹ Your sworn truths to monarchs,
and not be ashamed.
47 I will take pleasure in Your directives,
which I love.
48 I will accept⁷⁰ Your direction, which I love,
and meditate on Your standards.

Zayin

49 Remember what You said to Your servant⁷¹.
You have given me hope because of it.
50 This is what comforts me⁷² in my distress.
Truly, it's Your promise⁷³ that sustains me.
51 The self-serving are extraordinarily contemptuous of me
because I do not turn from Your teachings.
52 I call to mind Your sovereign decrees from the distant past, YHWH,
and am comforted.
53 Indignation⁷⁴ takes hold of me
because of the malevolently immoral who reject Your teachings.
54 Your standards have been my song
in the house where I reside.
55 During the night, I call to mind Your character⁷⁵, YHWH,
and treasure⁷⁶ Your instruction.
56 This happens
whenever I search Your ordering precepts.

hê_t

57 You are my fulfillment⁷⁷, YHWH.
I have promised to keep Your words.
58 I have intensely⁷⁸ begged for Your presence.
Be generous⁷⁹ with me, true to Your promise.
59 I have considered my actions,
and yield⁸⁰ myself⁸¹ to Your sworn truths.
60 I have been quick,
and not delayed to observe Your direction.
61 The snares of the malevolently immoral have surrounded me,
but I have not abandoned⁸² Your teachings.
62 I wake up in the middle of the night to offer You praise,
because of the correctness⁸³ of Your sovereign decisions.
63 I am a companion of all who reverence You
and of those who observe Your ordering precepts.
64 Your unwavering devotion, YHWH, fills the world.
Teach me Your norms.

ṭê_t

65 You have acted beneficently⁸⁴ toward Your servant
You have acted beneficently⁸⁵, YHWH, true⁸⁶ to Your promise⁸⁷.
66 Teach me good sense and insight
since I have relied⁸⁸ on Your directives.
67 Previously, I debased myself, going astray.
But now I observe Your word.
68 You are beneficent and act beneficently.
Teach me Your norms.
69 The self-serving have spread falsehood about me,
but I intend to observe Your ordering precepts completely⁸⁹.
70 Their minds are as thick sludge⁹⁰,
but I find pleasure in Your instruction.
71 It's been good for me to have been humiliated,
so that I would learn Your standards.
72 Instruction from Your own mouth is better
than untold thousands in gold or silver.

yô_d

73 You personally⁹¹ made me and have supported me⁹².
Teach me that I might absorb Your directions.
74 Those who worship You will see and be happy
that I trust⁹³ Your word.
75 I know, YHWH, that Your sovereign decision was right,
and that you have justifiably⁹⁴ afflicted me.
76 Please allow Your unwavering devotion to comfort me,
true to Your promise⁹⁵ made to Your servant.

77 Let Your displays of compassion appear, and I, revive,
since Your instruction is my joy.
78 Let the self-serving that wrong me without justification⁹⁶ be disappointed.
As for me, I will meditate on Your ordering precepts.
79 Let those who worship You turn to me,
as well as those who acknowledge Your sworn truths.
80 May I be entirely sound in Your norms
so that I am not disappointed.

Kap

81 I deeply⁹⁷ long for Your deliverance.
I await Your promise.
82 I⁹⁸ long for Your promise,
saying, "When will You comfort me?"
83 Though I am like a smoking scroll,
I do not ignore Your norms.
84 How many are Your servant's days?
When will you bring a ruling⁹⁹ against those who harass¹⁰⁰ me?
85 The self-serving have dug pits for me,
which is inconsistent¹⁰¹ with Your teachings.
86 All Your directions are reliable¹⁰².
Without justification they harass me. Help me!
87 They have very nearly obliterated me from earth,
but I have not forsaken Your ordering precepts.
88 Consistent with Your unwavering devotion, revive me,
and I will observe the sworn truths that come from Your own mouth¹⁰³.

lamed

89 Forever, YHWH,
Your word endures in heaven.
90 Your fidelity endures from one era to the next.
You give earth permanence, and it endures.
91 Heaven and earth¹⁰⁴ continue to endure by Your sovereign governance.
All these serve You.¹⁰⁵
92 If Your instruction was not my delight,
then I would perish from my mistreatment¹⁰⁶.
93 I'll never disregard Your ordering precepts,
since You enliven me with them.
94 I am Yours. Help me
Since I seek out Your ordering precepts.
95 The malevolently immoral are anxious to destroy me,
though I am attentive to Your sworn truths.
96 I have seen that everything comes to an end¹⁰⁷ and has limitations¹⁰⁸.
But Your directives are very broad.

Mēm

- 97 How I love Your instruction!
It is my meditation throughout the day.
- 98 You have given me greater wisdom than my enemies through Your directives,
because they are always with me.
- 99 I have greater insight¹⁰⁹ than all my teachers,
because Your sworn truths are my meditation.
- 100 I achieve greater perceptiveness¹¹⁰ than those more mature¹¹¹,
because I observe Your ordering precepts.
- 101 I have refrained myself¹¹² from all hurtful¹¹³ behavior,
so as to¹¹⁴ observe Your word.
- 102 I have not deviated¹¹⁵ from Your sovereign decrees
because it's been You that has instructed me.
- 103 How sweet are Your words to my taste!
Sweeter than honey.
- 104 I always gain insight from Your ordering precepts,
by which I avoid¹¹⁶ every false act.

Nān

- 105 Your word is a lamp for my steps,
and a light on my path.
- 106 I have taken an oath, and will fulfill it:
to observe Your just¹¹⁷ and sovereign decrees.
- 107 I am very oppressed.
YHWH! Revive me true to Your promise.
- 108 Please accept my public voluntary offering¹¹⁸, YHWH,
and teach me Your sovereign viewpoint.
- 109 My life is always uncertain¹¹⁹.
Still, I do not discount¹²⁰ Your teachings.
- 110 The malevolently immoral have laid a trap¹²¹ for me
though I have not strayed from Your ordering precepts.
- 111 I have always taken Your sworn truths as my legacy¹²²,
because they are a deep joy to me¹²³.
- 112 I have exerted myself to observe Your norms.
Always and to the end.

Sāmek

- 113 I eschew those who have divided loyalties¹²⁴.
But I love Your teachings.
- 114 You are my shelter and my battle shield.
I await Your promise¹²⁵.
- 115 Leave me alone, you malicious ones.
I intend to observe my God's directives.
- 116 True to Your promise¹²⁶, support me that I might live.
Do not disappoint me in my expectation.

117 Sustain me that I might be delivered,
and I will always look to Your standards.
118 You reject all those who stray from Your norms
because of their deceit and treachery.
119 You put an end to the filth of all the world's maliciously immoral.
For this reason I love Your sworn truths.
120 My body trembles in dread of You,
and I am awestruck at Your sovereign viewpoint.

‘ayin

121 I have done what is just¹²⁷ and right¹²⁸.
Do not abandon me to my oppressors¹²⁹.
122 Pledge to do good by Your servant.
Don't allow the self-serving to oppress me.
123 My eyes remain fixed on Your help,
and Your promise of vindication.¹³⁰
124 Act toward Your servant with unwavering devotion¹³¹,
and teach me Your standards.
125 I am Your servant.
Give me discernment that I may understand Your sworn truths.
126 Now is the time for YHWH to act.
They violate Your teachings.
127 Contrary wise¹³², I love Your directives
more than gold, even the finest.
128 Contrary wise, I fully consider all Your ordering precepts to be right,
and hate every dishonest act.

Ṗēh

129 Your sworn truths are transcendent¹³³.
This is why I earnestly examine¹³⁴ them.
130 Your word's disclosure¹³⁵ enlightens,
providing the open-minded¹³⁶ insight.
131 As with mouth gaping wide, I have craved;
I have longed for Your direction.
132 Turn and look at me. Be favorable to me,
as is right¹³⁷ toward those who love You¹³⁸.
133 Direct¹³⁹ my behavior¹⁴⁰ through Your word,
and don't allow cruelty to dominate me.
134 Release me from human oppression
so I may observe Your ordering precepts.
135 Smile¹⁴¹ upon Your servant,
and teach me Your norms.
136 Streams of water drop from my eyes
because they will not observe Your teachings.

Šādī

- 137 You are just¹⁴², YHWH,
and equitable in Your governance.
- 138 You have decreed the correctness¹⁴³ of Your sworn truths,
and their extreme reliability.
- 139 My passionate feelings¹⁴⁴ consume me
because my enemies ignore¹⁴⁵ Your words
- 140 Your word is very sure¹⁴⁶,
So, Your servant loves it.
- 141 I am insignificant and looked down on¹⁴⁷,
but I never ignore Your ordering precepts.
- 142 Your rectitude is forever proper,
and Your instruction reliable.
- 143 Adversity and hardship come to me,
but Your directives are my greatest joy.
- 144 The correctness¹⁴⁸ of Your sworn truths is enduring¹⁴⁹.
Give me discernment that I may endure¹⁵⁰.

Qôp

- 145 I have called out with all I have. Respond, YHWH!
I fully intend to observe¹⁵¹ Your norms.
- 146 I have call out to You, “deliver me,
and I will truly obey¹⁵² Your sworn truths.”
- 147 I have greeted dawn while howling for help¹⁵³.
I anxiously await¹⁵⁴ Your response¹⁵⁵.
- 148 My eyes greet each watch of the night
to try and understand¹⁵⁶ Your word.
- 149 Respond to me¹⁵⁷ as befits Your unwavering devotion¹⁵⁸.
YHWH, restore me as befits Your justice¹⁵⁹.
- 150 Those who pursue evil plots close in.
They are far removed from Your teachings.
- 151 Be You nearby, YHWH,
and all Your directions reliable.
- 152 Early on, I came to understand this about Your sworn truths:
You have established them forever.

ŕēš

- 153 See my affliction, and deliver me,
for I do not ignore Your instruction.
- 154 Argue my case, and deliver me.
Grant me life¹⁶⁰ through Your defense¹⁶¹.
- 155 Vindication¹⁶² is far removed from the malevolently immoral,
for they do not consult¹⁶³ Your norms.
- 156 Your compassion is great, YHWH.
Grant me life commensurate with Your justice.

157 Though my dogged enemies¹⁶⁴ are many
I do not turn from Your sworn truths.
158 I witnessed the treacherous,¹⁶⁵ and loathed¹⁶⁶
that they did not observe Your word.
159 Witness how I love Your ordering precepts.
YHWH, true to Your unwavering devotion, enliven¹⁶⁷ me.
160 Your first word was trustworthy¹⁶⁸,
and forever all Your sovereign decrees are just.

Š_{in}

161 Rulers have harassed me without justification,
but I am in total¹⁶⁹ awe of Your word.
162 I am one who rejoices over Your word,
as one does upon finding a huge reward¹⁷⁰.
163 I hate and abominate deception.
Your teachings I love.
164 I praise You seven times a day
because Your sovereign decrees are just.
165 There is tremendous peace for those who love Your instruction,
and there is for them no obstacle.
166 I have hoped for Your help¹⁷¹, YHWH,
and observed Your directives.
167 I have earnestly observed Your sworn truths
and have greatly loved them.
168 I have observed Your ordering precepts and Your sworn truths.
because all my actions are in full view of You.

t_{aw}

169 Oh that my loud outbursts come¹⁷² to Your awareness¹⁷³, YHWH.
Give me discernment of Your word.
170 Oh that my plea for help¹⁷⁴ comes to Your awareness.
Deliver me true to Your promise¹⁷⁵.
171 My lips will gush with praise
when You teach me Your standards.
172 My tongue will bear witness of Your word,
because all Your directives are right¹⁷⁶.
173 Oh that Your power¹⁷⁷ be dedicated to helping me,
since I have adopted¹⁷⁸ Your ordering precepts.
174 I have longed for Your effectual help¹⁷⁹, YHWH,
and Your instruction is my delight.
175 Oh that I might live to praise You,
and Your sovereign governance protect me.
176 I have wandered off like a wondering sheep.
Seek out Your servant,
for I do not ignore Your directions.

¹ Hebrew, *'ašrê*.

² Hebrew, *derek*, literally, “way, path.” When used in association with our list of essentially synonymous words (*tôrâ*, *'ēdūt*, *piqqûdîm*, *hōq*, *mišwâ*, *mišpāt*, and *huqâ*), *derek* is translated as “principle/s” in vss. 1, 3, 27, and 37. In other settings, it is translated as “habit” in vss. 5 and 30; as “manner of life” in vs. 14; as “conduct” in vss. 26, 29, and 33; and as “path” in vs. 32 and 35.

³ Literally, “walk.”

⁴ Hebrew, *tôrâ*. In this psalm, a series of words are used for the words that God spoke to Israel, each word, essentially, being a synonym. These include, in order of appearance: *tôrâ*, *'ēdūt*, *piqqûdîm*, *derek*, *hōq*, *mišwâ*, *mišpāt*, *'ōrah*, and *huqâ*. We will address our translation of each of these words, and why we translate them as we do as we come to them in the text.

While we translate each of these words differently, the exact nuance of each is not always clear. Just how imprecise our understanding of each word’s nuance is can be seen in the great variety of ways each word is translated in various translations. While the following examples are not exhaustive, they provide a clear picture of the uncertainty of each word’s exact nuance.

Tôrâ is translated as “teaching” (Tanakh, Alter), “law” (KJV, RSV, NIV, ESV, Dahood, Eaton), and “instruction” (Kraus); *'ēdūt* as “testimonies” (KJV, RSV, ESV, Eaton, Kraus), “decrees” (Tanakh), “statutes” (NIV), “precepts” (Alter), and “stipulations” (Dahood); *piqqûdîm* as “decrees” (Alter), “precepts” (KJV, Tanakh, RSV, NIV, ESV Dahood, Eaton), and “ordinances” (Kraus); *hōq* as “statute” (KJV, RSV, ESV Alter, Dahood, Eaton, Kraus), “laws” (Tanakh), “decrees” (NIV); *mišwâ*, as “commands” (NIV, Alter), and “commandments (KJV, RSV, ESV, Tanakh, Dahood, Eaton, Kraus); *mišpāt* as “judgments” (KJV, ESV, Eaton), “rules” (Tanakh), “laws” (NIV, Alter), “ordinances” (RSV, Dahood), and “regulations” (Kraus).

In our examples, then, English “law” can stand for Hebrew *tôrâ*, *hōq*, and *mišpāt*; English “statute,” for Hebrew *'ēdūt* and *hōq*; and English “decrees” for Hebrew *'ēdūt*, *piqqûdîm*, and *hōq*.

Now, as for *tôrâ*, the first word in Psalm 119 to represent the nature of the words God had spoken to Israel. *Tôrâ* can be understood in at least three ways. Firstly, and most famously, *tôrâ* came to refer to the first five Books of the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). It is uncertain that *tôrâ* had this meaning at the time of this psalm’s composition, and so unlikely that we should understand *tôrâ* to narrowly reference only the Pentateuch in this psalm. *Tôrâ* can, in some cases, refer to the entire Hebrew Bible. But this usage is extremely late, postdating the likely composition of Psalm 119. We should not translate *tôrâ* something like, “scripture.” Finally, *tôrâ* might be understood in the general sense of “teaching”/ “instruction.” This final way of understanding *tôrâ* seems to be inherit within the Hebrew root, itself.

Though *tôrâ* is not to be associated exclusively with the Pentateuch in this Psalm, *tôrâ* can refer to the Pentateuch outside of it. But even there, it seems to me that the Pentateuch should not be thought of principally as “law” or as a “law book.” While there are portions of the Pentateuch that comprise law codes (ethical and cultic), great chunks of it are made up of “historical” narrative. However, these chunks of text, devoid of “law” or “law codes,” can be utilized to draw out principles and practices for a more fulfilled and enduring life. The Pentateuch, then, “teaches” “instructs,” and “guides” the reader independent of laws or law codes.

The noun, *tôrâ*, comes from the root *yrh*, verb, *yārâ*. The basic idea of the verb is “to throw/shoot/ guide/ direct” an arrow or rock. Figuratively, the verb can mean “to point out,” “direct one’s attention,” and “to teach, instruct.” “The three most frequent uses of this root deal with shooting/ throwing arrows/rocks, sending rain, and teaching” (*TWOT*, Vol. I. p. 403). “The semantic development is from ‘throw’ to ‘stretch out a finger or hand, point in a direction,’ and finally to ‘show the way’” (*TDOT*, Vol. XV, p. 611). “Instruction” or “teaching” have long been viewed as *tôrâ*’s primary meaning. We accept this more general meaning of *tôrâ* in Psalm 119, and have been guided by it in our translation. Thus, in our translation, *tôrâ* is “guiding instruction” or “teaching/s.” God’s teaching is not meant simply to educate. *Tôrâ* is teaching intended to guide and direct one’s life for the better, just as an archer guides or directs his arrow to its target.

“Instruction” or “teaching” have long been viewed as *tôrâ*’s primary category of meaning. We accept this more general meaning of *tôrâ* in Psalm 119, and will be guided by it in our translation. God’s teaching is not meant simply to educate. *Tôrâ* is teaching intended to guide, direct, and order one’s life for the better, just as an archer guides or directs his arrow to its target. Our translation of *tôrâ* in Psalm 119 appears as “instruction” in verses 29, 55, 70, 72, 77, 92, 97, 142, 153, 165, 174 and as “teachings” in verses 1, 18, 34, 44, 51, 53, 61, 85, 109, 113, 126, 136, 150, 163.

It seems appropriate at this early stage of Psalm 119, to offer one other explanation about our translation of not only *tôrâ*, but of each of the other nearly synonymous words used in this psalm. We will not translate *tôrâ* or any

other synonymous word as “law,” as is commonly done. Neither will we translate, as is commonly done, any word found in Psalm 119 as “command” or “commandment.”

Though *tôrâ* is not to be associated exclusively with the Pentateuch in this Psalm, *tôrâ* can refer to the Pentateuch outside of it. But the Pentateuch, it seems to me, should not be thought of principally as “law” or as a “law book.” While there are portions of the Pentateuch that comprise law codes (ethical and cultic), great chunks of it are made up of “historical” narrative. However, these chunks of text, devoid of “law” or “law codes,” can be utilized to draw out principles and practices for a more fulfilled and enduring life. The Pentateuch, then, “teaches” “instructs,” and “guides” the reader independent of laws or law codes.

In addition to our sense that *tôrâ*, understood as Pentateuch, should be understood more in terms of “teaching” than “law,” we have another reason for avoiding translating *tôrâ*, as English “law.” That reason has to do with common and present attitudes about “law.” In our present society, “laws” are increasingly being thought of in terms of restricting freedom—such attitudes are probably as much about ever increasing sociopathic psychosis as about a misunderstanding of “law.” For example, a large portion of U.S. citizens consider “gun laws” only in terms of the restrictions they place on their rights and freedoms. Many give little thought to the ways that gun laws benefit society.

We must never think of God as restricting our “freedoms.” That is not God’s purpose in providing “law.” God’s laws are meant to guide and order individual and societal attitudes and behaviors for the good of the individual and society. The same could be said of human law. But, given that this truer aspect of just law is being increasingly questioned and rejected, it seems best to avoid the term “law” altogether—may purpose is, after all, less about producing a document that is true to some real or imagined antiquity and more about communicating God’s truths in a modern world.

Finally, a word about our avoidance of “command” and “commandment” for any of our roughly synonymous words is in order. If one thinks about it, these words all too easily can focus on the one giving the command or commandment, and his or her prerogatives and power. Commandments can become “orders,” and, like “law,” less about being helpful and more about being coercive. It really is easy to miss the fact that they are given to benefit rather than restrict or coerce.

Certainly, like law, God gives commandments to help, to direct, and guide humans toward greater happiness, greater freedom, and greater endurance. But we often do not so think. So, to avoid the common misconceptions about “commanding” and “commandments,” I have attempted to identify other words that more clearly reflect God’s respect for agency and his purposes in giving commandments. One might argue I am over thinking things. Perhaps I am. Still, perhaps the reader could refrain from such judgment until they have considered the ways I translate the synonymous words that Psalm 119 uses for the directive and guiding words God speaks to humankind.

⁵ Hebrew, *nāšar*. Without complaint, we could live with the translation, “observe.” We will sometimes so translate this word. However, in this instance, given the LXX translation, *exereunaō*, “thoroughly explore, investigate,” and the following line’s parallel verb, *ḏāraš*, “seek, study, investigate,” the verse’s emphasis seems to be on examining what God has said rather than obeying it—though, of course, one studies so as to the better observe. This Psalm will have plenty to say about following, observing, and obeying. And, of course, one cannot do as God encourages without in the first place knowing what he encourages.

In our translation of Psalm 119 we translate Hebrew, *nāšar*, as follows: “search” in vs. 2, 56; “observe” in vs. 22, 33, 69, 115, 145; “study” in vs. 34, 100; “examine” in vs. 129

⁶ Hebrew, *‘ēdūt*. *‘ēdūt*, comes from *‘ūd*, “to bear witness, warn, remind.” *‘ēdūt* is constructed from *‘ēd*, “witness” (person), and the abstract affix, *-ūt*, to create, “witness, testimony, attestation.” The LXX translates, *martýrion*, “witness, evidence, proof.”

In considering this word in the Hebrew Bible, we first note that in the Pentateuch, it often refers to the tablets that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai, which were then deposited in the tabernacle. Within the tabernacle, God had the *‘ēdūt* placed inside the ark. The ark was often referred to as the “ark of the *‘ēdūt*, or the “chest of the tablets.” It goes without saying, however, that *‘ēdūt* is not the physical object of the tablet itself—this is *luhot ha ‘ēdut*, “tablets of the *‘ēdūt*” (See, for example, Ex. 32.¹⁵)—but that which is written on the tablets, *‘ēdūt* becoming yet another word used by the composer of Psalm 119 for words God had spoken to Israel.

Because *‘ēdūt* is so often associated with the tablets on which God wrote the “Ten Commandments,” or the “Ten Imperatives”—each statement is presented with imperative verbs—“imperatives” is a tempting translation.

However, the consistency with which the LXX translates *martýrion* has weight and must be taken seriously. This is so, especially, 1) in light of the common Hebrew use of Hebrew *‘ūd*, “to bear witness, warn, remind,” and *‘ēd*, “witness” (person); and 2) in light of the fact that Psalm 119 seems more likely than not to be a rather late composition and so more inclined to Hellenistic influences. Most basically, *martýrion* is a “sworn statement of fact” made by a witness in court. In the eyes of the witness, at least an honest one, their sworn statement is “the truth.” In

late Jewish and then in Christianity the testimony of the martyr served not only to witness to truth but served as a warning and admonition to those who witnessed or heard of the martyrdom.

In light of all these facts, many translations and translators have settled on “testimony, witness,” and this remains a common translation. Witnesses do not generally issue “imperatives,” though their testimony can direct the verdict of the case in which they act as witness.

As we noted in note 4, *‘ēdūt* is translated as “testimonies” (KJV, RSV, ESV, Eaton, Kraus), “decrees” (Tanakh), “statutes” (NIV), “precepts” (Alter), “stipulations” (Dahood). After considering the varied and nuanced meanings of *‘ēdūt*, I considered several possible translations, I finally settled on “sworn truths” in every instance: vs. 2, 14, 22, 24, 31, 36, 46, 59, 79, 88, 95, 99, 111, 119, 125, 129, 138, 144, 146, 152, 157, 167, and 168.

⁷ Literally, “They do not do injustice, *awlâ*. See, “Index of Meaning and Translation of Common and Significant Words,” for a detailed discussion of this word.

⁸ Hebrew, *piqqûdîm*. This word appears 24 times in the Hebrew Bible, 21 of those being in this Psalm. *TWOT* quotes Speiser’s estimation that “There is probably no other Hebrew verb that has caused translators as much trouble as [*pāqad*]” (Vol. II, p. 731). The verb, *pāqad*, has a wide range of meaning: “to muster,” “to count/ number,” “care for, look after, take an interest in, commit someone/ something to safekeeping,” “entrust, appoint, commission,” “pronounce judgment, condemn.” The various nouns formed from this root, represents aspects of the verb, for example, *pāqîd*, means, “appointee, overseer,” *p^equddâ* “assignment, task,” etc.

In Psalm 119, LXX most often translates, *entolê*. *Entolê* is used for both the “commands” of rulers, and the “teachings” of a teacher.” As noted in note 4, *piqqûdîm* gets translated as “decrees” (Alter), “precepts” (KJV, Tanakh, RSV, NIV, ESV Dahood, Eaton), and “ordinances” (Kraus).

In considering the evidence, we note that *pāqad*, is used in the context of mustering an army, of taking a census, in appointing individuals, and in forensic judgment, among others. In all these settings we sense an interest in “regulating” and “ordering”—the regulation/ordering of the military and other social institutions, indeed of society itself. Also, there is an interest in regulating individuals’ behavior and their place in society. It would be fair to say that the ruler engaged in *entolê* seeks to order/ regulate society, while the teacher engaged in *entolê* seeks to help their student regulate or order their life appropriately.

Thus, we understand in YHWH’s *piqqûdîm* an attempt to “regulate” or “order” human behavior and institutions, not because he is on a power trip, but because he knows what is best for human beings. To regulate comes from Latin *regulatus* and means “to control by rule, to direct.” So, though it might sound somewhat strange to modern ears, we can speak of *piqqûdîm* as “regulation/s, with the proviso that God’s regulation of the individual and society is not selfish or dictatorial but benevolent, reflecting His knowledge of what is best for humanity and its endurance.

In our translation, we have adopted the traditional, “precepts” with the perhaps somewhat redundant modifying, “ordering” as an appropriate translation (“ordering precepts”), understanding that English “precept” comes from Latin, *praeceptum*, “maxim, rule of conduct, order” and is “a general rule intended to regulate behavior or thought.” Thus, the reader will find “ordering precepts” standing for *piqqûdîm* in verses 4, 15, 27, 40, 45, 56, 63, 69, 78, 87, 93, 94, 100, 104, 110, 128, 134, 141, 159, 168, and 173.

⁹ Hebrew, *derek*.

¹⁰ Hebrew, *šamar*.

¹¹ Hebrew, *hōq*. *TDOT* notes that the verb “can be assigned to three semantic groups: (1) “carve out, engrave”... (2) “in parallelism with *kātab*, ‘write’... (3) “fix, determine” (Vol. V, p. 141). In its concrete sense the verb, *hāqaq*, means, “to engrave, carve, hollow out, and, perhaps, sculpt.” The participle *meḥuqqeh* means “carved work” or “reliefs.” Thus, in Psalm 119 as well as elsewhere, we can think of *hōq* at the concrete level as that which God engraved or wrote. This reminds us of the Pentateuch’s concrete use of *‘ēdūt*, for the physical tablets upon which God wrote with His finger and gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. However, just as *‘ēdūt* moves from the concrete to the abstract, coming to mean not the physical tablets themselves but that which is written on them, so too does *hōq* move from the concrete act of engraving to the abstract idea of that which is engraved. *hōq*, then, like *‘ēdūt*, refers to the words of God.

In discussing *hōq*, *TDOT* mentions a possible “connection between a special meaning of Arab. *ḥaqqā*, ‘be incumbent upon,’ and Heb. *hōq*, in the sense “that which is incumbent on someone.” There are indications elsewhere of it being thought of in terms of something that is “legally binding,” and as a “law” or “precept.”

There is a strange story in Judges about one of Israel judges, Jephthah. In going to war against Ammon, he made a vow that if God gave him victory then “whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD’s and I will offer it up for a burnt offering” (11.³¹). As it turns out, his daughter was the first to greet him and so she was sacrificed in line with the vow. What does this have to do with our word, *hōq*? Each year after the young woman’s death a four-day festival was conducted to commemorate the girl’s sacrifice. This festival became a “*hōq* in Israel” (Judges 11.³⁹). The King James translates “custom.” We might translate “tradition.”

This example, among others, suggest that “law” or “commandment” or “edict,” even are too strong for *hōq*. It can have the feeling of “policy” “assignment,” “custom,” “precedent,” “decision,” etc. (See, for example, Genesis 47.²⁶, Exodus 5.¹⁴, Exodus 12.²⁴, Exodus 15.²⁵, and Exodus 18.¹⁶, 1 Samuel 30.²⁵)

The LXX translated, *dikaiōma*, which can mean, “ordinance,” “legally appropriate action,”

We finally settled on “norms,” (vss. 5, 8, 12, 22, 64, 68, 80, 83, 112, 118, 135, 145, 155) and “standards” (vss. 23, 26, 33, 48, 54, 71, 117, 124, 171). The choice of the two is strictly stylistic.

¹² I take verse 5’s “if only” to influence each of the imperfect verbs found in verses 6-8. We have entered a hypothetical world.

¹³ Hebrew, *būš*.

¹⁴ Hebrew, *mišwâ*. “The etymology of *mišwâ* is unequivocal: It derives from the verb → צוה *šiwwâ*, ‘to appoint, order, direct,’ and evokes the same connotations. It is a nominal construction of the *miqtāl*-type and means literally ‘command, order,’ though like other nouns of this pattern it designates both the action itself and its consequences or results. It thus means ‘that which is ordered, the commandment,’ and from the perspective of the person so addressed it implies ‘duty, obligation’” (*TDOT*, Vol. VIII, p. 505-506). The LXX most often translated, *entolē*. To be sure, the Greek word, like *mišwâ*, can be translated “commandment, order,” especially when used in reference to kings. However, “the [Greek] term has also the sense b. of ‘pedagogic instruction’” (*TDNT*, Vol. II, p. 546).

Commands can be capricious and inspired by a thirst for power and control. They can be more about advancing the individual issuing the orders than about the needs or advancement of the individuals or groups commanded. This is not the nature or purpose of God’s “commands.” His “commands” are given only to benefit those to whom they are given. For this reason—and in harmony with the sense of “pedagogic instruction”—I choose to translate *mišwâ* as “directive.” *Mišwâ* are intended to guide and direct human action for the good of humans, not for the ego of God.

As for our translation of *mišwâ* in this psalm, the following translations appear in the verses indicated: “directives” in vss. 6, 10, 21, 47, 66, 96, 115, 127, 143, 166, 172; “direction/s” in vs. 19, 48, 60, 73, 86, 131, 151, 176; and “directed” in vs. 32, 35.

¹⁵ Hebrew, *yōšer*.

¹⁶ Hebrew, *šedeq*, “sovereign decrees of Your righteousness.”

¹⁷ Hebrew, *mišpāṭ*. The reader should see my extended discussion of this very versatile word in *Index of Meaning and Translation of Common and Significant Words*. There is probably no Hebrew word that I translate with more variety than *mišpāṭ*. Most fundamentally, I understand it to encompass everything having to do with decisions making in governance, including but not limited to such things as the act of instituting laws, the act of adjudicating laws, the consequences of such decisions, the place where such decisions are made, etc. *Mišpāṭ*, then, can stand for such concepts as “governance,” “case/ hearing,” “judgement,” “justice,” “place of governance,” etc.

In Psalm 119, *mišpāṭ* has traditionally been translated as “laws” (NIV, Alter), “ordinances” (RSV, Dahood), “judgements” (ESV, Eaton), “regulations” (Kraus), and “rules” (Tanakh). In our translation, *mišpāṭ* is translated as follows: “sovereign decrees” in vss. 7, 39, 43, 52, 102, 106, 160, 164; “sovereign viewpoint,” in vss. 20, 30, 108, 120; “sovereign decisions” in vss. 13, 62, 75; and “sovereign governance” in vss. 91, 175. The word also appears in context in which the word is not used as a technical synonym for God’s word to Israel. Here, we translate *mišpāṭ* as “ruling” in vs. 84; “just” in vs. 121; “right” in vs. 132; governance in vs. 137; “justice” in vss. 149, 156.

¹⁸ Hebrew, ‘*ad-m^e’ōd*.

¹⁹ Hebrew, *na'ar*, is male, but as is my practice, unless there is good reason to distinguish the gender, I translate without gender. Certainly, what is true here of a young man is true of a young woman.

²⁰ Hebrew, *'ōrah*., literally, “path.” However, it is often used figuratively. In Psalm 19, we translate Hebrew, *'ōrah*, as follows “behavior, in vs. 9, 101; “principles” in vs. 15; “act” in vs. 104, 128.

²¹ Hebrew, *zāḱā*.

²² Literally, “with all my heart.”

²³ Hebrew, *ṣāḫan*, literally, “to hide, store.”

²⁴ Literally, “heart.”

²⁵ Hebrew, *hāṭā*'.

²⁶ Literally, “with my lips.”

²⁷ Literally, “the sovereign decrees of Your mouth.”

²⁸ Hebrew, *derek*., literally, “path, way.”

²⁹ Literally, “in the path/life of Your sworn truths”

³⁰ Hebrew, *'ōrah*, “path, way. In its metaphorical sense, we treat it just like *derek*.

³¹ Hebrew, *huqā*. This is the feminine form of masculine *ḥōq*. There is no discernable difference in meaning between the two words formed from the same root.

³² Hebrew, *gēr*. This is most often a resident alien, a refugee from elsewhere. As such, the *gēr* is often vulnerable, unprotected, and without legal rights and recourse. I believe that it is this vulnerability that often makes the greatest impression on how the ancient reader understood this word and viewed one so identified. It is vulnerability, I believe, that is the Psalmist’s concern here.

³³ Hebrew, *gāras*, literally, “crushed.”

³⁴ Hebrew, *ta'abā*. This is its only occurrence in the Hebrew Bible.

³⁵ Hebrew, *zēd*. Again in verses 69, 78

³⁶ Hebrew, *herpā*.

³⁷ Hebrew, *būz*.

³⁸ Hebrew, *nepeš*.

³⁹ Hebrew, *dāḅaq*, “cleave, cling, be joined.”

⁴⁰ Hebrew, *sāpar*.

⁴¹ The verb is in the cohortative.

⁴² Literally, “Your wonders.” I take the wonder to be intrinsic to God rather than extrinsic.

⁴³ Hebrew, *nepeš*.

⁴⁴ Hebrew, *šeqer*.

⁴⁵ Hebrew, *derek*.

⁴⁶ Hebrew, *derek*.

⁴⁷ Hebrew, *šāwā*, “set, place, be like, agree with.”

⁴⁸ Hebrew, *dāḅaq*.

⁴⁹ Literally, “the path of your direction [*mišwā*].”

⁵⁰ Hebrew, *rāḥab*, in the Hiphil. To maintain the imagery of running found in the preceding line, we might have translated, “You strengthen my heart.”

-
- ⁵¹ Literally, “heart.”
- ⁵² Literally, “with all my heart.”
- ⁵³ Literally, “heart.”
- ⁵⁴ Hebrew, *bəṣa’*.
- ⁵⁵ Hebrew, *šāw’*.
- ⁵⁶ Literally, “word.”
- ⁵⁷ Literally, “which is of (belongs to) Your awesomeness.”
- ⁵⁸ Hebrew, *tôb*.
- ⁵⁹ Literally, “have longed for Your directives.”
- ⁶⁰ Hebrew, *šēdāqâ*.
- ⁶¹ Hebrew, *bô’*, in the Hiphil, literally, “cause to come, enter.”
- ⁶² We carry over the verb from the previous line to this line.
- ⁶³ Hebrew, *l’šû’â*.
- ⁶⁴ Literally, “word.” Again in 42a and 43a.
- ⁶⁵ Hebrew, *hārap*.
- ⁶⁶ Hebrew, *‘ad-m’ôd*.
- ⁶⁷ Literally, “walk or go about.”
- ⁶⁸ Hebrew, *rāhāb*.
- ⁶⁹ Hebrew, *dābar*.
- ⁷⁰ Literally, “lift my hand.”
- ⁷¹ Literally, “Your word to Your servant”
- ⁷² Literally, “my comfort,” *nehāmâ*.
- ⁷³ Literally, “Your word.”
- ⁷⁴ Hebrew, *zal’āpâ*.
- ⁷⁵ Literally, “name.”
- ⁷⁶ Hebrew, *šamar*.
- ⁷⁷ Hebrew, *hēleq*. This is a difficult word to translate into something that is understandable to the modern mind and experience. At its most basic, it is a partial allotment of land from a larger holding. For the inheritor, to receive such an allotment is life changing. It signifies their acceptance as an adult member of society, with all the responsibilities to family and community that come with it. It also signifies the ability to be self-sustaining and to have the resources necessary for a happy and secure life. Our translation of “fulfilment” stems from these facts, though it is my no means literal. It focuses on the sense of self that an allotment grants rather than the allotment itself. It seems better than the meaningless “portion” or some such translation. Some opt for “inheritance.” This is undoubtedly closer to the literal meaning than my “fulfillment.” However, “inheritance” is not a meaningful idea in our modern culture.
- ⁷⁸ Literally, “with all my heart.”
- ⁷⁹ Hebrew, *hānan*.
- ⁸⁰ Hebrew, *šûb*.
- ⁸¹ Literally, “my feet.”
- ⁸² Hebrew, *šākaḥ*, “forget.”

-
- ⁸³ Hebrew, *šedeq*. Literally, “the understanding of Your correctness.”
- ⁸⁴ Hebrew, *tôb*.
- ⁸⁵ We apply the verb from the first line to this one as well.
- ⁸⁶ Literally “according to, consistent with,” etc.
- ⁸⁷ Hebrew, *dābār*, “word.”
- ⁸⁸ Hebrew, *’āman*.
- ⁸⁹ Literally, “with all heart.”
- ⁹⁰ The verb used here, *tāpaš*, is used only here in the Hebrew Bible. Its meaning is uncertain. But it is certain that whatever is being said of the self-serving is uncomplimentary.
- ⁹¹ Literally, “Your hands”
- ⁹² Hebrew, *kûn*, in the Polel stem.
- ⁹³ Hebrew, *yāhal*.
- ⁹⁴ Hebrew, *’emûnâ*.
- ⁹⁵ Literally, “Your word to Your servant.”
- ⁹⁶ Hebrew, *šeqer*, literally, with “deception.” Again, in verse 86.
- ⁹⁷ Literally, “my soul.”
- ⁹⁸ Literally, “my eyes.”
- ⁹⁹ Hebrew, *mišpāt*, in the singular rather than this psalm’s normal plural.
- ¹⁰⁰ Hebrew, *rāḏaq*.
- ¹⁰¹ Literally, “Which is not according to Your teachings.” Most read Hebrew, *’āšer*, as referring to the self-serving, but I take it as referring to their actions.
- ¹⁰² Hebrew, *’emûnâ*.
- ¹⁰³ Literally, “the sworn truthss of Your mouth.”
- ¹⁰⁴ The verb, *’āmad*, “stand, endure,” is in the 3rd person plural. I take it to refer to heaven and earth of the preceding lines.
- ¹⁰⁵ Literally, “are Your servants.”
- ¹⁰⁶ Hebrew, *’enî*. We translate it like this because of the appearance and threat of the malevolently immoral in verse 95.
- ¹⁰⁷ Hebrew, *tiklâ*.
- ¹⁰⁸ Hebrew, *qēš*.
- ¹⁰⁹ Hebrew, *šākal*.
- ¹¹⁰ Hebrew, *ḥîn*.
- ¹¹¹ Hebrew, *zāqēn*.
- ¹¹² Literally, “my feet.”
- ¹¹³ Hebrew, *ra’*.
- ¹¹⁴ Hebrew, *l’ma’an*.
- ¹¹⁵ Hebrew, *sûr*.

¹¹⁶ Hebrew, *śānē'*, literally, "hate." But "hate" brings avoidance. The two are closely linked. This link can be seen in a passage such as Ezekiel 35.⁶, where Seir is threatened for not "hating bloodshed" against Judah. Clearly it is not the lack of emotion that is being criticized, but an action. Seir did not avoid and even repudiate violence.

¹¹⁷ Hebrew, *śedeq*.

¹¹⁸ Literally, "the voluntary offering of my mouth."

¹¹⁹ Literally, "in my hand." The meaning of this is uncertain. One might consider, "my own," or "mine to live." However, this doesn't really fit with the following line.

¹²⁰ Hebrew, *śākaḥ*.

¹²¹ Hebrew, *paḥ*.

¹²² Hebrew, *nāḥal*.

¹²³ Literally, "joy of my heart."

¹²⁴ Hebrew, *sē'ēp*. There are numerous and wide differences about the meaning of this word. The best we can say is that the word is indicative of something that is not positive and good.

¹²⁵ Literally, "word."

¹²⁶ Literally, "word."

¹²⁷ Hebrew, *mišpāṭ*.

¹²⁸ Hebrew, *śedeq*.

¹²⁹ Hebrew, *'āśaq*. Again in verse 22b.

¹³⁰ Literally, "the word of Your vindication."

¹³¹ Hebrew, *ḥesed*.

¹³² Hebrew, 'al-ken.

¹³³ Hebrew, *pele'*.

¹³⁴ Literally, "my soul examines them."

¹³⁵ Hebrew, *pētaḥ*.

¹³⁶ Hebrew, *peî*. The word can also have a more negative connotation of "ill-informed, ignorant." But give the next line, the more positive connotation seems appropriate here.

¹³⁷ Hebrew, *mišpāṭ*.

¹³⁸ Literally, "Your name."

¹³⁹ Hebrew, *kûn*. "the specific sense of the hiphil is rendered as 'determine' or 'be determined' (in the psychological sense). For *THAT*, too, the hiphil is 'broad and vague in meaning'" (*TDOT*, Vol. x, p. x).

¹⁴⁰ Literally, "my steps."

¹⁴¹ Literally "cause Your face to shine."

¹⁴² Hebrew, *śaddîq*.

¹⁴³ Hebrew, *śedeq*.

¹⁴⁴ Hebrew, *qin'â*.

¹⁴⁵ Hebrew, *śākaḥ*.

¹⁴⁶ Hebrew, *śārap*. This word is literally used for the purification of metals, "to purify." It also means to test. That is the sense I take it here. The Lord's word has been tested and found pure, or sure.

¹⁴⁷ Hebrew, *bāzâ*.

-
- ¹⁴⁸ Hebrew, *ṣedeq*.
- ¹⁴⁹ Hebrew, *l' 'ōlām*.
- ¹⁵⁰ Literally, “live.”
- ¹⁵¹ This is *nāṣar* in the cohortative voice, which often carries the sense of intension.
- ¹⁵² Again, we have the cohortative voice, this time for the verb, *šāmar*.
- ¹⁵³ Hebrew, *šāwa '.*
- ¹⁵⁴ Hebrew, *yāḥal*.
- ¹⁵⁵ Literally, “word.”
- ¹⁵⁶ Hebrew, *śīyah*, “to muse, meditation, mull over, complain.”
- ¹⁵⁷ Literally, “hear my voice.”
- ¹⁵⁸ Hebrew, *ḥesed*.
- ¹⁵⁹ Hebrew, *mišpāt*.
- ¹⁶⁰ Hebrew, *ḥāyā.*
- ¹⁶¹ Literally, “word.” However, the word here is clearly that which God speaks in defense of the Psalmist.
- ¹⁶² Hebrew, *yešū 'ā.*
- ¹⁶³ Hebrew, *ḏāraš.*
- ¹⁶⁴ Literally, “my pursuers and my enemies.”
- ¹⁶⁵ Hebrew, *bāgaḏ.*
- ¹⁶⁶ Hebrew, *qūt.*
- ¹⁶⁷ Hebrew, *ḥāyā.*
- ¹⁶⁸ Hebrew, *'emet.*
- ¹⁶⁹ Literally, “my heart.”
- ¹⁷⁰ Hebrew, *šālāl*, literally, “plunder, loot, spoils”
- ¹⁷¹ Hebrew, *y'šū 'ā.*
- ¹⁷² Hebrew, *qārab.*
- ¹⁷³ Literally, “to/ before Your face.”
- ¹⁷⁴ Hebrew, *ḥinā.*
- ¹⁷⁵ Literally, “word.”
- ¹⁷⁶ Hebrew, *ṣedeq*.
- ¹⁷⁷ Literally, “hand.”
- ¹⁷⁸ Hebrew, *bāḥar*, “chose, accept.”
- ¹⁷⁹ Hebrew, *y'šū 'ā.*

psalm 120

(edition: September 15, 2022)

¹ *A processional hymn¹*

the psalmist remembers

It was YHWH that I, in my anguish, called upon.
How he responded to me!²

the psalmist's plea

² “YHWH! Deliver me³ from deceitful⁴ lips;
from a treacherous tongue.

the psalmist's confidence

³ What will you procure for yourself?
What will you gain for yourself, you with the treacherous tongue?
⁴ A⁵ hero's⁶ arrows, sharp pointed,
burning hot.⁷

the psalmist's trial

⁵ I was in despair⁸ because I lived, an alien, in Mešek; ⁹
I lived a transient life in Qêdâr.¹⁰
⁶ Many a year did I live
among them who distained peaceful coexistence¹¹—
⁷ though I spoke up for camaraderie,¹²
they remained antagonistic.”¹³

¹ The Hebrew word often has the physical meaning of “stair,” “step,” or “slope.” It could be so translated here, in which case we would have something like “A Song Performed on the Steps of the Temple.” It could also be more figurative, “A Song Performed in Preparation to ascend to (meet with) Yahweh.”

² I take the following to be the prayer that the Psalmist presented to Yahweh in his anguish—an anguish caused by defamation brought against him personally or against him as a representative of Israel.

³ Hebrew, *nepeš*.

⁴ Hebrew, *šeqer*. This word is about more than inaccuracies and the distribution of bad facts, untruths. There is a very personal element to it. It suggests betrayal of another, the acting out in bad faith.

⁵ This verse provides the answer to the question posed in the previous verse.

⁶ Hebrew, *gibbôr*. Obviously, the hero is Yahweh.

⁷ Hebrew *gaḥlê-r^étāmîm*. This is something like “coals of juniper.” Accusations made against the Psalmist are often likened to arrows. See, for example, Psalm 11.², 57.⁴, 58.⁷, and 64.³. It is thus a just restoration when God's judgement (delivered in words, speech) takes the same form, which it frequently does in the

Psalms. See, for example, 7.¹³, 21.², 45.⁵, 64.³. God's fiery and piercing words of judgement can also be directed at the Psalmist, himself: see, 38.².

⁸ Hebrew, *'ōwyāh-lî*.

⁹ *Mešek* appears to be an area of eastern Anatolia where Israelites were exiled.

¹⁰ Literally, "I dwelt in a Qêdârîte tent."

¹¹ Hebrew, *šālôm*.

¹² Hebrew, *šālôm*.

¹³ Hebrew, *miḥāmâ*.

psalm 121

(edition: September 15, 2022)

¹ *A processional hymn¹*

the psalmist seeks assurance in trial

I will raise my eyes to the hills.

Is this from whence my relief² will come?³

² Will my help come from YHWH,
Creator of heaven and earth?

the psalmist's question is answered

³ He will not allow your feet to stumble.

He who watches⁴ out for you will never slumber.

⁴ Be assured, He will not relax or ever fall asleep—

He who is Yisrā'el's Guardian.⁵

⁵ YHWH is your shield.⁶

YHWH is your shade, right beside you.⁷

⁶ Daytime sun will not beat down on you;

nor shall the moonlight at night.

⁷ YHWH will protect⁸ you from every evil.

He will safeguard⁹ your life.

⁸ YHWH will watch¹⁰ over all your comings and goings¹¹
from this moment, and ever more.

¹ The Hebrew word often has the physical meaning of “stair,” “step,” or “slope.” It could be so translated here, in which case we would have something like “A Song Performed on the Steps of the Temple.” It could also be more figurative, “A Song Performed in Preparation to ascend to (meet with) Yahweh.”

² Hebrew, *‘ēzer I*.

³ In Hebrew, this second line begins with an interrogative, *me’ayin*. I take this question to extend to verse 2.

⁴ The root is *šmr*. This is the first of six times this root will appear in this psalm. We could title this psalm, *Šmr*, “The Guardian.”

⁵ This is the second time our root, *šmr*, as appeared in this psalm.

⁶ This is the third time our root, *šmr*, as appeared in this psalm.

⁷ Literally, “on your right hand”

⁸ This is the fourth time our root, *šmr*, as appeared in this psalm.

⁹ This is the fifth time our root, *šmr*, as appeared in this psalm.

¹⁰ This is the sixth time our root, *šmr*, as appeared in this psalm.

¹¹ Literally, “your going out and your coming in.”

Psalm 122

(edition: June 4, 2020)

¹ *A processional hymn¹ to Dāwid²*

the joy of anticipation

I rejoiced when they said to me,
“Let’s go to YHWH’s temple.”

the beauty of y^erûšālayim

² Our feet stood
within your gates, Y^erûšālayim—
³ Y^erûšālayim, built up,
united, as one—³
⁴ where⁴ the familiar tribes ascend,
the tribes of Yāh,
as enjoined upon Yisrā’ēl
to profess YHWH’s character.⁵
⁵ For it is there that the thrones of governance are established;
thrones belonging to Dāwid’s line.⁶

Prayer for y^erûšālayim

⁶ Seek Y^erûšālayim’s welfare⁷.
May they be at ease, who love you.
⁷ May there be peace within your walls;
security within your fortifications.
⁸ For family and fellow citizens⁸
I pray for peace within you.
⁹ Because of the temple of YHWH, our God,
I can anticipate⁹ your success¹⁰.

¹ The Hebrew word often has the physical meaning of “stair,” “step,” or “slope.” It could be so translated here, in which case we would have something like “A Song Performed on the Steps of the Temple.” It could also be more figurative, “A Song Performed in Preparation to ascend to (meet with) Yahweh.”

² The might be read as “the King,” meaning the earthly king, the divine King, or both. Slightly less likely, it might also be read as “Beloved One.”

³ This is a somewhat difficult phrase, as can be seen from the myriad translations.

⁴ Hebrew, *šeššām*.

⁵ Literally, “name.”

⁶ Literally, “house,” or “dynasty.”

⁷ Hebrew, *šālôm*.

⁸ Both “family” and “fellow citizens” have the 1st person singular possessive, “my.” I have chosen not to translate this as the entire admonition to pray for Jerusalem is addressed to many.

⁹ Hebrew, *biqqēš*. “The meaning of *biqqesh* varies according to the degree of intensity and the difference in the mode of seeking (‘to seek out,’ ‘search,’ ‘search for,’ ‘seek,’ ‘wish,’ ‘long for,’ ‘desire,’ ‘demand or ask,’ etc.).

¹⁰ Hebrew, *ṭôb*.

psalm 123

(edition: September 21, 2022)

¹ *A processional hymn¹*

*t*rust in yahweh

It is to You that I lift my eyes,
The One who sits in heaven.

² See how, as the eyes of servants are on their master,
as the eyes of maid servants are on their mistress,
so are our eyes on YHWH, our God, until He has pity on us.

*p*lea

³ Have pity² on us, YHWH, have pity on us,
for we are covered³ in contempt.
⁴ Our lives are overflowing⁴ with the mockery⁵ of the self-assured⁶,
with the disdain of elites⁷.

¹ The Hebrew word often has the physical meaning of “stair,” “step,” or “slope.” It could be so translated here, in which case we would have something like “A Song Performed on the Steps of the Temple.” It could also be more figurative, “A Song Performed in Preparation to ascend to (meet with) Yahweh.”

² Hebrew, *ḥānan*.

³ Hebrew, *śāḇa*‘. This is “to be filled or sated.” However, the speakers are not full of contempt for others, but of others contempt. Our English idiom, “Covered in” comes closer to capturing the direction of the contempt than the more traditional “filled.”

⁴ Again, Hebrew, *śāḇa*‘.

⁵ Hebrew, *la*‘ag.

⁶ Hebrew, *ša*^a*nān*.

⁷ Hebrew, *ga*^a*yôn*.

psalm 124

(edition: September 21, 2022)

¹ *A processional hymn¹. For Dāwid²*

Wonder at yahweh's rescue

If YHWH had not been for us—
Yiśrā'ēl should surely say—
² if YHWH had not been for us
when mortals³ rose up against us,
³ then they would have consumed us alive
when their blazing anger came upon us;
⁴ then the waters would have swept over us,
the torrential flow surged⁴ over our necks⁵,
⁵ then the churning water would have surged over us⁶.

Praise for yahweh's rescue

⁶ YHWH be praised,
Who did not yield us, prey for their teeth.
⁷ As a bird we⁷ escaped the fowler's net.
Breaking the net, we escaped.
⁸ Our help is found in the character⁸ of YHWH,
Maker of heaven and earth.

¹ The Hebrew word often has the physical meaning of “stair,” “step,” or “slope.” It could be so translated here, in which case we would have something like “A Song Performed on the Steps of the Temple.” It could also be more figurative, “A Song Performed in Preparation to ascend to (meet with) Yahweh.”

² The might be read as “the King,” meaning the earthly king, the divine King, or both. Slightly less likely, it might also be read as “Beloved One.”

³ Hebrew, *'ādām*.

⁴ I understand this to be *'ābar II* as proposed in *TDOT* (Vol. X, p. x).

⁵ Hebrew, *nepes̄*.

⁶ Hebrew, *nepes̄*

⁷ Hebrew, *nepes̄*

⁸ Literally, “name.”

psalm 125

(edition: January 18, 2023)

¹ *A processional hymn*¹

Those who trust in YHWH are like mount Ṣiyyôn.

They cannot be moved, always enduring²

² Y^erûšalāyim has mountains encircling it

and YHWH encircles his people, now and forever.

³ So, governance³ of the ungodly should never dictate⁴ the decisions⁵ of the just
so that the just never become complicit⁶ with injustice.

⁴ Be good, YHWH, to those who are good

and to those who are sincerely⁷ just.

⁵ As for those who yield to⁸ perversion,

YHWH will remove⁹ them with those who act with cruelty¹⁰.

Peace be upon Yiśrā'ēl.

¹ The Hebrew word often has the physical meaning of “stair,” “step,” or “slope.” It could be so translated here, in which case we would have something like “A Song Performed on the Steps of the Temple.” It could also be more figurative, “A Song Performed in Preparation to ascend to (meet with) Yahweh.”

² Hebrew, *yāšab*.

³ Hebrew, *šēbet*, “rod, scepter.” Here we take it as “scepter” and indicative of ruling. The Hebrew is literally, “the scepter of the ungodly.”

⁴ Hebrew, *nūah*, “to rest, settle upon.” Here, we understand the “resting upon” or the “settling upon” to mean that the just never let the wicked governance of the ungodly “rest upon” or “settle” upon the just as they make decisions. Hence, my “adopt.” We take the imperfect to be modal rather than temporal.

⁵ Hebrew, *gôrāl*. This is literally “lot,” an instrument used for decision making.

⁶ Hebrew, *šālah*. Literally, “the just do not extend their hands with injustice.” This might mean that the just, themselves never use their power (hands) to act unjustly. But I see it as being indicative of their not extending their hands to those (the ungodly of the previous line) who govern unjustly.

⁷ Literally, “in their heart.”

⁸ Hebrew, *nāṭā*, “to stretch out, extend.”

⁹ Hebrew, *hālāk*, in the Hiphil.

¹⁰ Hebrew, *’āwen*.

psalm 126

(edition: March 30, 2022)

¹ *A Processional hymn.*

Remembrance of and appeal to yahweh's past benefits...

Whenever YHWH has reversed Šîyôn's captivity
we have been like those who dream.

² At such times our mouths are imbued¹ with laughter;
and our tongue raises a shout for joy.

At such times those in other nations say,

“YHWH has shown his greatness in what he has done for them.”

³ YHWH has indeed shown his greatness in what he has done for us.
We are joyful.

For help in the present trials of draught and famine

⁴ Return, O YHWH, our fortunes,
as a torrent of water² in the desert³

⁵ that those who plant while weeping⁴
may harvest with shouts of joy;

⁶ that he who goes out weeping
as he bears his sack of seeds
may finally return, rejoicing
bearing his bunches of wheat⁵.

¹ Hebrew, *mâlê'*, “be filled with.”

² Hebrew, *'āpîq I*. The worshippers hope that their fortunes, lost in draught, will be return as a dry wadi bed suddenly runs with a torrent of water after a rain storm.

³ Hebrew, *negeb*.

⁴ After an extended draught, planting season is accompanied by uncertainty about the outcome of the planter's labors.

⁵ Traditional “sheaves.”

psalm 127

(edition: march 1, 2023)

- ¹ *A processional hymn¹. Belonging to Šēlōmōh.*
- If YHWH does not wish to build a house²,
it is to no avail for its builders to labor on it.
If YHWH does not intend to protect a city,
it is to no avail for guards to keep watch.
- ² It is to no avail whether you arise early
or stay up late.
eating food produced through much labor.³
Still,⁴ its God⁵ who grants repose to those He loves.⁶
- ³ Know⁷ that children are YHWH's inheritance.
One's wage is the fruit of the womb.
- ⁴ As arrows in the hero's hand,
even so are the children of one's prime⁸.
- ⁵ Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them.
He will not be disappointed.

¹ The Hebrew word often has the physical meaning of “stair,” “step,” or “slope.” It could be so translated here, in which case we would have something like “A Song Performed on the Steps of the Temple.” It could also be more figurative, “A Song Performed in Preparation to ascend to (meet with) Yahweh.”

² Here, I understand the imperfect verb, *ḥānā*, to be in the subjunctive/ optative mood. Hebrew has no independent modal grammatical forms and so must be understood through context.

³ Literally, “bread of labors.”

⁴ Hebrew, *kēn*.

⁵ Literally, “He.”

⁶ The difficulty of this verse is clearly seen by the plethora of different translations and interpretations. There is no room for dogmatism here. It is one of the many times when one is tempted to translate. “...” as one does when reading an impossible broken text.

⁷ Hebrew, *hinnēh*.

⁸ Hebrew, *nē'ûrîm*.

psalm 128

(edition: December 13, 2023)

¹ *A processional hymn.*

Confident¹ can everyone be who reverences YHWH,
who lives² by His principles³.

² You will certainly live off⁴ what you have toiled over⁵.
You will be secure⁶ and well off⁷.

³ Your wife will be like a bountiful vine on the side of your home.
Your children will be like transplanted olive trees around your table.

⁴ Bear witness! Thus is a man⁸ blessed
who reverences YHWH.

⁵ May YHWH bless you from Şîyôn,
allow you to experience⁹ Y^erûşalāyim's benefits throughout your life,
⁶ and to see your grandchildren.

Peace be upon Yîsrā'ēl!

¹ Hebrew, *'ašrê*. See my discussion of this word in "Index of Meaning and Translation of Common and Significant Words."

² Literally, "walk."

³ Literally, "in his paths/ways"

⁴ Literally, "eat."

⁵ Literally, "the toil/or product of your hands."

⁶ Hebrew, *'ašrê*, again.

⁷ Hebrew, *tôb*.

⁸ Though I might and do justifiably translate *geber* in a genderless fashion in other settings, here the context clearly calls for a gender specific translation. Such were the times that the focus is on men.

⁹ Literally, "to see."

psalm 129

(edition: December 14, 2023)

¹ *A processional hymn.*

Israel's history of harassment

They have greatly harassed me from my earliest times¹,
Yiśrā'ēl can certainly say.

² They have greatly harassed me from my earliest times,
but they have not prevailed against me.

³ The ploughers ploughed upon my back.
They made long furrows.

The future of israel's harassers

⁴ YHWH is just.
He will sunder² the shackles³ of the malevolently⁴.

⁵ They will be thwarted⁵ and go into retreat,
all that have enmity⁶ for Šîyôn.

⁶ They will be as grass on a roof—
before it has grown, it shrivels up—

⁷ of which a reaper does not take a handful,
or bundle at his chest.

⁸ No one who passes by will say,
“YHWH's blessings be upon you.
We bless you in YHWH's name.”

¹ Hebrew, *n^e 'ûrîm*, literally, “from my youth.”

² Hebrew, *qāṣaṣ*.

³ Hebrew, *‘ābôt*.

⁴ Hebrew, *rāšā'*.

⁵ Hebrew, *būš*.

⁶ Hebrew, *šānē'*.

psalm 130

(edition: september 15, 2022)

¹ *A processional hymn*¹

Invocation/ plea

² From the deepest of places,² I cry out to you, YHWH
O Lord, hear me!³
Listen to me⁴ as I appeal to your generosity⁵.

Plea for forgiveness

³ “If you stay on the look out for sin, Yah,
My Lord, who will be able to stand before you?”
⁴ But it is in your nature to forgive.⁶
This is why you are revered.⁷

hopeful expectation

⁵ I fully expect YHWH;
every part of me is expecting him
as I await his decision.⁸
⁶ I⁹ am watching for the Lord
more than watchmen watch for the morning—
far more than watchmen watch for the morning.¹⁰

benediction/ assurance

⁷ Have hope, Yisrā’el, in YHWH,
knowing that YHWH possesses fidelity,
along with an abundant capacity to pardon;¹¹
⁸ even so far as to be able to free¹² Yisrā’el
from all their sins.

¹ The Hebrew word often has the physical meaning of “stair,” “step,” or “slope.” It could be so translated here, in which case we would have something like “A Song Performed on the Steps of the Temple.” It could also be more figurative, “A Song Performed in Preparation to ascend to (meet with) Yahweh.” I have chosen to split the difference with my translation, but have an affinity for the latter translation here.

² The verb, *‘mq*, can have the meaning of “deep,” “hidden,” and “profound.” The noun that is used here, *ma‘maqqîm*, is most often associated with the watery depths of the sea. Here, it could be referencing the watery depths of *š’ôl*, the underworld, or world of the dead, hell.

³ Literally, “my voice.”

⁴ Literally, “my voice.”

⁵ The Hebrew word, *taḥanûn*, traditionally translated “supplication,” or some such idea, is derived from the verb, *ḥānan*, meaning “to be gracious, to show grace/ mercy/ compassion.” See *Excursus: Common and Significant Hebrew Words* for an in-depth discussion of this word. To “supplicate” is not simply to ask for something from God. It is to ask him specifically to show his character and exercise his inner and natural generosity.

⁶ Literally, “forgiveness is with you.”

⁷ Hebrew *yr’*. This is traditionally, “fear.” The etymology is uncertain. Some have suggested a basic meaning of “tremble.” Some, connecting it to “lung” see in it “be short of breath” (See *TDOT*, Vol. VI, p. 291), suggesting something that is deeply stirring and impactful.

⁸ Literally, “word.” The “word” for which the Psalmist waits is “I extend my forgiveness to you.”

⁹ Hebrew, “my soul.”

¹⁰ The line is repeated twice. I understand the Psalmist’s repetition to indicate intensification from line one to line two.

¹¹ Hebrew, *pādâ*, “to spare, yield, buy, buy back, redeem, free, release (from obligation and consequence), pardon.”

¹² Hebrew, *pādâ*. See previous note.

psalm 131

(edition: june 15, 2023)

- ¹ *A processional hymn. Belonging to Dāwid.*
- YHWH, I¹ am not presumptuous².
Nor am I arrogant.³
Nor do I pursue⁴ great matters⁵,
or things beyond my comprehension⁶.
- ² I have most certainly disciplined⁷ and quieted myself
as a child weaned of its mother,
I am as a weaned child.
- ³ Let Yiśrā'ēl wait expectantly⁸ on YHWH
for as long as it takes⁹.

¹ Literally, “my heart.”

² Hebrew, *gāḇah*.

³ Literally, “nor are my eyes uplifted.”

⁴ Hebrew, *hālak*, “go, walk.”

⁵ Hebrew, *gādōl*, in the plural.

⁶ Hebrew, *pālā'*. Most often used of “extraordinary phenomena, transcending the power of human knowledge and imagination” (*TDOT*, Vol. x, p. x).

⁷ Here, I take Hebrew *šiwvîṭ* as the Shaphel form of the verb to be as Labuschagne has suggested (See, *TDOT*, Vol. x, p. x). Hence, “cause myself to be,” understanding this to indicate self-control as the weaned child in the next line learns to do over time.

⁸ Could legitimately translate, “put hope in,” but the idea of “waiting” patiently and expectantly fits the tone of the previous verses.

⁹ Literally, “now and forever.” But, again, this literal and traditional reading, tends to obscure its relationship with the proceeding verses that indicate a long period of patience and coming to terms with human limitations. My translation is also applicable to the mood of pilgrims as they anxiously await the culmination of their pilgrimage. Their waiting will not last forever. But however long it lasts, it will be long enough to produce anxiousness and excitement.

psalm 138

(edition: october 16, 2023)

¹ *Belonging to Dāwid.*

Promise of praise

I will praise You with my whole being¹.

In the presence of ʾēlōhîm, I will sing of You.

² I will bow toward Your temple preeminent²,
and testify of Your character³
because of Your unwavering devotion⁴ and fidelity⁵.

For You magnify Your character and word above all things.

³ When I cried out, You answered me.
You infused strength into me.

⁴ All the world's rulers⁶ will praise You, YHWH
when they hear the words You speak⁷.

⁵ They will sing of YHWH's actions⁸,
For YHWH's reputation⁹ is tremendous¹⁰.

Reasons for praise

⁶ Though YHWH is exalted, He is aware of¹¹ the lowly¹²
but keeps His distance from¹³ the prestigious¹⁴.

⁷ When I pass through¹⁵ adversity,
You reinforce¹⁶ me.
You exert¹⁷ Your power¹⁸ against my hostile enemies,
and with maximum power¹⁹ You deliver me.

⁸ YHWH puts an end²⁰ to it for me.
YHWH, Your unwavering devotion²¹ is ever present²².
You have no intention of abandoning²³ what You have made²⁴.

¹ Literally and traditionally, “with all my heart.”

² Hebrew, *qōdeš*. Literally, “Your temple of preeminence.”

³ Literally, “name.”

⁴ Hebrew, *hesed*.

⁵ Hebrew, *ʾemet*.

⁶ Literally, “kings.”

⁷ Literally, “the words of Your mouth.”

⁸ Hebrew, *derek*.

⁹ Hebrew, *kābôd*.

¹⁰ Hebrew, *gādōl*.

¹¹ Hebrew, *râ'â*, literally, “sees.”

¹² Hebrew, *šāpāl*.

¹³ Literally, “he knows from a distance.”

¹⁴ Hebrew, *gābōah*.

¹⁵ Literally, “walk.”

¹⁶ Hebrew, *hāyâ*.

¹⁷ Hebrew, *šālah*, literally, “send, stretch out, extend.”

¹⁸ Literally, “hand.”

¹⁹ Literally, “Your right hand.” The right hand is the dominant hand, the stronger hand.

²⁰ Hebrew is *gāmar*. Interestingly, the LXX has *antapodidōmi*, “recompense.” The derived noun can mean “retribution” (See *TDNT*, Vol. x, p. x). We might read, “Yahweh retaliates in my behalf.” Either way, it seems that the point is that God put an end to the adversity and hostility that the Psalmist mentioned in the previous verse.

²¹ Hebrew, *hesed*.

²² Hebrew, *ōlām*.

²³ The verb is in the jussive mood. Almost universally, the Hebrew jussive mood has been taken as representing a statement somewhere between an overt command and suggestion. However, like the cohortative, the jussive is one of the irrealis moods that express an as yet unrealized action, a possibility. In my view, both cohortative and jussive can reflect desire and intent. That is how I take it here. It is the smallest of leaps from the frequent translation, “May you...,” “May he...,” “May I...,” to my “You intend/desire...,” “He intends/desires...,” “I intend/desire...”

²⁴ Literally, “the works of Your hands.”

psalm 140

(edition: march 8, 2023)

¹ For the Director:¹ a hymn belonging to Dāwid.

1st plea

^{2/1} Rescue me, YHWH, from the malicious person²;
protect me from violent individuals
^{3/2} who secretly,³ at all times, intend harm.
They live for conflict⁴.
^{4/3} Their tongue is sharp, like a snake's fangs⁵.
Viper's venom is under their lips.

selâ

2nd plea

^{5/4} Protect me, YHWH, from the ungodly's power.
Protect me from violent individuals,
who intend to trip me⁶ up.
^{6/5} The high and mighty⁷ hide net and snare for me.
They spread a net across my path.
They place a snare for me.

selâ

3rd plea

^{7/6} I spoke to YHWH, "You are my God.
Hear, YHWH, my pleading voice,
^{8/7} YHWH, my Lord, my powerful protection,
You have shielded me⁸ during times of conflict.
^{9/8} Do not grant, YHWH, the ungodly's deeply-held desires.
Do not grant success to their vile plans by which they hope to rise.

selâ

4th plea

^{10/9} As for the chief of those who encircle me,
may their own burdening⁹ statements¹⁰ overwhelm¹¹ them.
^{11/10} Let burning coals fall upon them.
Shove¹² them into standing fire,
into a wretchedness¹³ from which there is no escape¹⁴.
^{12/11} A slanderous¹⁵ individual¹⁶ should have no place in the land.
Let repeated disasters hunt down the violent individual.

Confession

^{13/12} I know that YHWH holds court¹⁷ for the downtrodden;
brings justice for the impoverished.
^{14/13} Certainly, the just¹⁸ laud Your character¹⁹
The upright dwell in Your presence.

¹ Hebrew *lamnaṣṣēḥa*. See Psalm 4 note.

² Literally, “man.” As is so often the case, there is no reason to take *’ādām* as gender specific in this case.

³ Literally, “in the heart.”

⁴ Hebrew, *miḥāmâ*.

⁵ Literally, “They sharpen their tongue like a snake’s.” The metaphor is not quite right. While in speech, humans do harm with their tongue, snakes’ tongues do no harm, but their fangs. So, we have supplied “fangs” for clarity. Then too, the idea of sharpening the tongue is awkward.

⁶ Literally, “my steps.”

⁷ Hebrew, *gē’eh*. The simple, “proud” will not do, it seems to me. The word does not simply indicate arrogance. It is indicative of an arrogance born of high birth or of acquired position and power.

⁸ Literally, “my head.” Like “my soul,” this is often to be translated with a simple pronoun, especially when there is no significance attached to the body part.

⁹ Hebrew, *’amal*. Literally, “labor, toil.” Also “distress, trouble.”

¹⁰ Hebrew, *šāpâ*. Being in the dual, the literally rendering would be lips. But “lips” can serve as a metonym for “language,” which, here, I extend to “statement,” reflective of the defamation the Psalmist’s enemies heap upon him. We might literally translate “the tiresomeness of their lips.”

¹¹ Hebrew, *kâsâ*. The basic meaning of “cover” can gravitate to “overwhelm,” which is how I take it here.

¹² Literally, “cause to fall.”

¹³ LXX translates Hebrew, *mahmōrâ* (appearing only here) as *talaipōria*. It is difficult to know exactly where the LXX translators were coming from or what they did. Is it possible that they concluded that the world came from the root *hmm*, “terror, panic, confusion, turmoil”?

¹⁴ Literally, “they are unable to rise.”

¹⁵ Literally, “tongue.” “An evil tongue wreaks havoc both in private and juridical life; the word thus also acquires the meaning of ‘malicious rumor, slander’” (*TDOT*, Vol. X, p. x).

¹⁶ Literally, “a man of tongue/slander.”

¹⁷ Hebrew, *dîn*.

¹⁸ Hebrew, *ṣaddîq*.

¹⁹ Literally, “name.”

psalm 145

(edition: June 6, 2020)

¹ *A song of praise belonging to David*

Invocation

I will exalt you, my God, my King.¹
I will praise² your character,³ always and forever.⁴
² Every day, I will praise you.
I repeat,⁵ I will sing to your character, always and forever.
³ YHWH is great, and worthy of loud and joyful acclamation.⁶
There is no comprehending⁷ His greatness.⁸
⁴ One generation after another finds cause to boast of⁹ all you do,
and confidently proclaim¹⁰ your surpassing deeds.¹¹

the Psalmist's person confession

⁵ Of your impossible and incomprehensible Being,¹²
and your impenetrable¹³ actions.¹⁴
⁶ Others expound upon¹⁵ your awe-inspiring deeds,
while I just keep tallying up¹⁶ the great things you do.
⁷ Others gush¹⁷ with remembrances of how incredibly good you are,
while I joyfully shout out¹⁸ the rightness of all you do¹⁹.

the divine character

⁸ YHWH is accepting²⁰ and nurturing,²¹
He is not inclined to reject,²² but is of enormous fidelity.²³
⁹ YHWH is good to all,
and his loving interest²⁴ controls his every action.

divine governance

¹⁰ All your works express gratitude to you, YHWH.
Those whose devotion you have won,²⁵ kneel reverently before you.
¹¹ They speak of the significance²⁶ of your governance,²⁷
and talk of your excellencies,²⁸
¹² in order to teach those not devoted²⁹ to you³⁰ of your excellencies
and the necessity of your dignifying³¹ governance.
¹³ Yours is a rule that lasts for all time;
a dominion that endures though all generations of time.

the divine character

¹⁴ A buttress is YHWH to all those who might be falling.
He raises up³² those who are bent over.

15 All eyes set themselves expectantly upon you,
 as you provide all with sustenance when it is needed,³³
 16 opening your hand,
 and filling all living things with what is desired.
 17 YHWH acts justly in all his dealings;³⁴
 devoted³⁵ in all that he does.
 18 YHWH stays close by those who call out to him;
 to all those who call out to him trustingly.³⁶
 19 He supplies³⁷ the acceptance³⁸ that those who fear him want.
 He hears their repeated cries for help³⁹ and comes to their assistance
 20 Yahweh protects all those who love him,
 while all those who act wrongfully he eradicates.⁴⁰

benediction

21 I will openly declare praise for YHWH.
 But more,⁴¹ every living thing will praise his incomparable⁴² character,⁴³
 always and forever.⁴⁴

¹ I understand the possessive “my” from the earlier, “my God,” to apply to “the King” as well.

² Hebrew, *bārak*. The verb is related to the noun, “knee,” and can mean, “to bow the knee.” This bowing of the knee implies a degree of submission. To bless God’s name, or character suggests an acknowledgment, a confession of dependence upon the character of God for all good things. We think, here, of Moroni’s confession that “all things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them” (Moroni 7.²⁴).

³ Literally, “name.”

⁴ Hebrew, *l’ôlām wa ‘ed*.

⁵ This is the Hebrew conjunction *w^e*, which, as we have so often said, often wants understood as something more than a simple, “and.”

⁶ Hebrew, *hālāl*.

⁷ Literally, “there is no searching his greatness.”

⁸ Hebrew, *gedûllâ*. In his ecstasy, the Psalmist will follow this up with one supreme adjective, noun, and phrase after another.

⁹ Hebrew, *šābāḥ*

¹⁰ Hebrew, *nāgād*

¹¹ Hebrew, *gebûrâ*.

¹² I have read this line of verse five, with its succession of three words, *h^adār k^abôd hôdekā* (the first two in the construct state), a hundred times, maybe more. I have read it in multiple English translations, in Hebrew, in Greek, in Latin... I have played with a dozen different translations of my own. I really have thought a great deal about it, and its attempted depiction of God. I still haven’t a clue what these three successive words really mean to say. Oh, sure, I get the basic point: “God is one amazing Being.”

All three words have the sense of “glory,” “splendor,” “majesty,” “honor,” “impressiveness,” etc. Whatever differing nuance each of these words may have is difficult to ferret out. This is actually my first problem. Perhaps some ancient “intelligentsia” might have appreciated and understood the subtle nuances

of these words in combination with each other, but could the normal ancient illiterate worshipper? Was it then and is it now only to be appreciated by a select few intellectuals or “spiritualist”?

The fact is, I don’t think even intellectuals or spiritualists fully understand or appreciate what this combination of words is trying to communicate. And I think that this may just be the point!

As I indicated, I have read dozens of translations. Neither in their translations or comments do I see any indication that these scholars have any real appreciation for what exactly is being communicated here. Here is a sampling.

“The glorious splendor of your majesty.” (NIV, NASB, Amplified, RSV, Tanakh, ESV)

“The grandeur of Your glorious majesty.” (Alter)

“The splendour of the majesty of your glory.” (Eaton)

“The glorious majesty of your honor.” (ASV)

“The magnificence of the glory of thine honor.” (Wycliff)

I don’t mean to be critical but this is all just gobbly gook. I don’t know what any of this means. I suspect the translators don’t either. But, again, maybe *this* is precisely the point! “God cannot be ‘worded.’ So the author strings together an impossible combination of sounds and words that leave us confused and frustrated in our attempts to translate and describe. We were not supposed to translate and understand the meaning of each word. We are being reminded that we cannot translate and understand God.

Perhaps I am just trying to excuse my own ignorance. It might just be that I am not very bright. I remain open to this possibility. But, once more, I cannot help wondering if this isn’t the very point. We are all ignorant as we attempt to talk about and comprehend God.

Hence, my very non-literal translation. But maybe this non-literal translation is literally what the original writer intended. Maybe we should translate and read, “glorious... honored... splendorous... Oh heck, I give up. There’s no describing him!”

¹³ Hebrew, *pele*’. “Köhler proposed ‘be different, striking, remarkable,’ but this definition is too general. The texts all deal with extraordinary phenomena, transcending the power of human knowledge and imagination. Seen from this perspective, the usual translation of the niphāl as ‘be marvelous’ comes close to the basic meaning” (*TDOT*, Vol. *, p. *).

¹⁴ Hebrew, *dābar*, “word, or thing.”

¹⁵ Hebrew, *’āmar*

¹⁶ Hebrew, *sāphar*

¹⁷ Hebrew, *nāba*’

¹⁸ Hebrew, *rānan*

¹⁹ Literally, “your righteousness.”

²⁰ Hebrew, *ḥannûn*.

²¹ Hebrew, *rahûm*.

²² This is Hebrew, *’aph*. There is so much imagery in this word, one could go on and on. First, this word also means “nose.” Some have supposed it to be an onomatopoeic word that indicates the “breath,” or, in moments of displeasure, the “snort,” that emanates from the nose. Based on the Arabic cognate and its meaning of “despise,” or “refuse,” others have suggested that the imagery of “looking down the nose” at another is involved. Both are illustrative. Anger is certainly an internal feeling. At the same time, my anger, internal to myself, spills over onto the other and my feelings for and about them. When I am angry, my inclination is to reject the other’s significance and value to me. In small and large ways, I reject or dismiss them. Especially given the witness of God’s “fidelity” in the next line, it seemed best to translate *’aph* as “rejection” in this instance.

²³ Hebrew, *ḥesed II*.

²⁴ Hebrew, *raḥamîm*.

²⁵ Hebrew, *ḥāsîd*.

²⁶ Hebrew, *kābôd*.

²⁷ Verses 11 and 12 seem to be addressing the advantage of one group over the disadvantage of another. One group knows of God's significance in their lives, the other group, having not yet made the discovery, is in need of instruction from the first group.

²⁸ Hebrew, *gebûrâ*.

²⁹ This is literally "the sons of men." As mentioned in the previous note, I take those spoken of in verse 12 to be contrasted with those who are committed to God, mentioned in verses 10 and 11. We are dealing here with "saints," and "non-saints."

³⁰ Hebrew, "to him."

³¹ Hebrew, *hādār*.

³² Hebrew, *zāqap*. The translation offered by the Jewish Publication Society's *Tanakh Translation* is appealing: "makes all who are bent stand straight."

³³ Literally, "in its time."

³⁴ Hebrew, *derek*.

³⁵ Hebrew, *ḥāsîd*.

³⁶ Hebrew, 'emet.

³⁷ Hebrew, 'āsâ I.

³⁸ Hebrew, *rāṣôn*.

³⁹ Hebrew, *šaw'â*. "The root *šw'* is used consistently in contexts reflecting negative experiences, one possible reaction to which is expressed by *šw'*. Considering the word field accompanying *šw'* (usually *qr'*, *nšl*, *yš'*, *tepillâ*, *qôl*, *taḥanûn*), one can say that this reaction takes the form of a vocal utterance probably to be understood, similar to the case of קַוֵּץ, 'as a successive series of screams' that aims at prompting helping intervention" (TDOT).

⁴⁰ Hebrew, *šāmad*. "Clearly *šmd* almost always denotes an act of destruction; the dictionaries therefore give its meaning as 'destroy, annihilate.' Certain observations, however, support a more abstract meaning, which need not necessarily imply 'annihilation'—something more like 'remove'" (TDOT). The verse begins with *sāmar* and ends with *šāmad*. This seems a good example of how assonance can enhance, and sometimes clarify meaning. Here, the verbs are applied to populations of opposite character. Thus, their treatment is opposite. Those who trust in God—and by extension, avoid wrongful behavior—are protected. Those who engage in wrongful behavior thus experience the opposite of protection

⁴¹ This is the simple conjunction, *w^e*. It might be argued that my translation would want a Hebrew particle such as *gam*, and I would agree if we were translating prose. But poetry is notorious for its economy of words. It seems to me that the poet has upped the ante from the first to the second poetic line. In the first line, we have one lone reveler in God. In the second we have every living thing. This elevation from the first to the second line seems to justify our, "but more," and then some.

⁴² Hebrew, *qōdeš*.

⁴³ Again, as earlier, literally, "name."

⁴⁴ The Psalm returns to and ends with its earlier, *l'^eôlām wa'ed*. The Psalm, having established God's infinite capabilities, all living beings will forever confess that their happiness, their very existence rests in the infinitely capable hands of Yahweh. No one and no thing will ever be so grand that they will rise

above this confession of dependence. Even the “sanctified” and those in possession of celestial glory will spend eternity secure in this confession. “All things bow in humble reverence, and give him glory forever and ever” (DC 76.93). We “say the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever” (DC 76.²¹).

psalm 146

(edition: september 22, 2023)

Invocation

- ¹ Hall¹lûyah
Praise YHWH¹, my all².
² I will praise YHWH as long as I live.
I will sing of my God always.

On human frailty

- ³ Don't put trust in even the best³ of human beings⁴,
for there is no salvation⁵ to be found in them.
⁴ He expires his final breath, he returns to the soil.
In that very day, all⁶ his intentions are destroyed⁷.

On the fullness of yahweh

- ⁵ Enduring⁸ is he whose help comes from Ya⁹ 'aqōb's God;
His hope placed on YHWH, our God—
⁶ The One who created heaven and earth and ocean
and all that is in them,
the One who is always reliable⁹,
⁷ the One who effects justice for the oppressed,
the One who provides food for the hungry,
YHWH, who liberates those held captive,
⁸ YHWH, who gives sight to the blind¹⁰,
YHWH, who lifts those who are exhausted¹¹,
YHWH, who loves those who do right,
⁹ YHWH, who watches after foreigners;
He adopts¹² orphans and widows
but undermines the pursuits¹³ of the malevolently immoral¹⁴.

Benediction

- ¹⁰ YHWH will reign forever,
Your God, Šiyôn, generation upon generation.

Hall¹lûyah.

¹ Hebrew, *Yāh*, shortened form of YHWH.

² Hebrew, *nepeš*, traditionally, “soul.”

³ Hebrew, *nāḏīb*. According to *TDOT*, “For all occurrences of the word group in the OT, as well as in Postbiblical Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic, the element of free will is determinative. The act of giving, the

gift, and the decision are all free and voluntary. The basic meaning of the root *ndb* can therefore be defined as ‘prove oneself freely willing’” (Vol. x, p. x). The word is sometimes parallel with “king,” and so can mean “nobleman” as though, perhaps, the “nobleman” gives freely of his time, energy, and resources to the community. Of course, kings and “nobleman” rarely turn out to be so noble, generous, or altruistic so that the word use for such individuals is likely to be a bit of self-promoting propaganda.

⁴ Literally, “the sons of man.”

⁵ Hebrew, *t^ešû ‘â*.

⁶ Greek, *pas* is found in the LXX translation.

⁷ Hebrew, *‘âbad*.

⁸ Hebrew, *‘ašrê*. See my comments on this word in the notes for Psalm 1. I take the basic meaning as “advancing.” In the previous two verses, all human beings, whether they put their trust in others or have trust place in them by others, die and cease to have influence. But this verse is to be seen as contrasting those of the previous two verses with those who trust in Yahweh. Whereas the former “perish,” the latter “endure.”

Both vocabulary and grammar show this psalm to be of likely latter composition. Do we see here the suggestion of some form of “eternal” or “enduring life”?

⁹ Hebrew, *‘emet*.

¹⁰ Literally, “opens the blind.”

¹¹ Hebrew, *kâpap*, “bent or bowed down, over.” *TWOT* assumes it to come from *kap*, hand. Thus, perhaps we should envision individuals who have fallen “on all fours,” or have fallen “to their hands and knees.”

¹² Hebrew, *‘ûd*. LXX translates, *analambanō*, “to take up, take to oneself.”

¹³ Hebrew, *derek*.

¹⁴ Hebrew, *rāšā‘* in the plural.

Psalm 147

(edition: april 2, 2023)

Invocation

- ¹ Hall^elûyah.
Truly,¹ it is good to sing of our God!
Yes, delightful, glorious is a song of praise!

First exposition on why yahweh is to be praised

- ² YHWH is rebuilding Y^erûšalāyim,
Gathering Yisrā'ēl's refugees.
³ Healing the heartbroken,²
putting an end³ to their emotional distress.

⁴ Tallying up the number of stars,
He is able to name every single one of them.
⁵ Our Lord is **awesome** and abounding in power.
There is no limit⁴ to his understanding.
⁶ YHWH restores the downtrodden.
He reduces the ungodly lower than dirt⁵.

Second exposition on why Yahweh is to be praised

- ⁷ Sing thankfully to YHWH.
With the accompaniment of lyre, sing to our God
⁸ who fills the sky with clouds;
who ensures⁶ rain for the soil;
who causes mountain grasses to grow.
⁹ He provides food to animals;
and to the chirping⁷ offspring of ravens.

¹⁰ It is not in the horse's power that He finds pleasure.
It is not in human muscle⁸ that he finds delight.
¹¹ YHWH is One who accepts those who reverence Him;
those who trust in his fidelity.

Third exposition on why yahweh is to be praised

- ¹² Praise YHWH, O Y^erûšalāyim.
Praise your God, O Şiyyôn.
¹³ For He has strengthened your barred gates,
blessing your children within.
¹⁴ He has established peace in your land.
He has satisfied you with high-quality⁹ wheat.

- 15 He sends his word out to the world.
 Ever so swiftly, His word rushes out
 16 sending snow like tufts of wool.
 He spreads frost like dust.
 17 sending his hail as tiny morsels of bread.
 Who can endure in the face of cold weather?
 18 He sends out his word, and it all melts.
 He sends a¹⁰ wind, and water flows.
- 19 He reveals his word to Ya^aqōb;
 His stipulations and resolutions¹¹ to Y'isrā'ēl.
 20 He has not done so for any other nation.
 They do not know his decisions¹².

*b*enediction

Hall^elûyah.

¹ Hebrew, *kî*. Here, the particle serves to give reason for and justify for the opening word's call for praise.

² Literally, "the shattered of heart."

³ Hebrew, *hābaš*. In medical settings, it is most often translated of "binding up" or "bandaging" a wound. Arabic has a root, *ḥbs*, meaning "to obstruct, confine, restrict."

⁴ Hebrew, *mišpār*, "number, measure."

⁵ Hebrew, *'ereš*.

⁶ Hebrew, *kân*.

⁷ Hebrew, *qārâ'*. This is a parade example of the need to give context precedent over strict and literal lexicography. Here we should understand the "call" of newly hatched birds, chirping for their food.

⁸ Literally "the leg of a man."

⁹ Hebrew, *hēleb*, literally, "fat."

¹⁰ Literally, "his."

¹¹ This is our familiar, *mišpāt*, often translated, "judgement." But, as we have so often pointed out, in moder usage this word is most often used forensically. God's *mišpāt* embraces the decisions or conclusions to which he has come, which he then passes on to humankind. In this sense, the word comes very near to the "wisdom" or "understanding" that God possesses. God has concluded what makes for the happiest life for individuals and for the most healthy and enduring existence for societies. He has passed these conclusions on to Israel in his *Torâ*.

¹² Again, *mišpāt*.

Psalm 148

(edition: December 30, 2023)

¹ Hallûyah.

☉raise from above...

Praise YHWH from the heavens.

Praise YHWH from the highest of places.

² Praise Him, all His divine messengers¹.

Praise Him, all His divine ministers².

³ Praise Him, sun and moon.

Praise Him, all glittering stars.

⁴ Praise Him, heaven's skies,
and waters above the heavens.

⁵ Praise YHWH's authority³
because He commanded, and they were created.

⁶ He fixed them forever and ever.

He issued the decree and it will not end⁴.

☉raise from below...

⁷ Praise YHWH from the earth,
sea creatures⁵ and all those of the depths,

⁸ fire and hail, snow and fog,
windstorm that does as He commands⁶,

⁹ mountain ranges and hills,
deciduous⁷ trees and all evergreens⁸,

¹⁰ all wild⁹ and domesticated animals¹⁰,
small animal¹¹ and winged bird,

¹¹ the earth's rulers¹² and all peoples,
government officials¹³ and all who govern on earth,

¹² young men as well as young women,
the elderly with the youthful.

☉raise from near...

¹³ Praise YHWH's character¹⁴
for only His character¹⁵ is unimaginably lofty¹⁶.

¹⁴ He increases the power¹⁷ of His people;
the renown¹⁸ of all His devotees¹⁹,
Yisrā'el's people²⁰, a nation close to Him.

Hallûyah.

¹ Hebrew, *mal`āk*.

² Hebrew, *šābā`*, traditionally, “host.” Here, “all His servers/ministers.”

³ Literally, “name.”

⁴ Hebrew, *‘āḇar*.

⁵ Hebrew, *tannin*.

⁶ Literally, “does His word.”

⁷ Hebrew, *p̄rî*, “fruit.”

⁸ Hebrew, *‘erez*, traditionally, “cedar.”

⁹ Hebrew, *ḥayyâ*, “animal,” “wildlife.”

¹⁰ Hebrew, *b̄hēmâ*, traditionally, “beasts.”

¹¹ Hebrew, *remeś*, traditionally, “creeping thing.”

¹² Literally, “kings.”

¹³ Hebrew, *śar*.

¹⁴ Literally, “name.”

¹⁵ Again, literally, “name.”

¹⁶ Hebrew, *śāḡab*, literally, “too high, inaccessibly high.”

¹⁷ Literally, “horn.”

¹⁸ Hebrew, *ḥilâ*.

¹⁹ Hebrew, *ḥāsîd*.

²⁰ Literally, “children.”

psalm 149

(edition: January 1, 2024)

¹ Hallûyah.

†he call to praise

Sing a new song to YHWH;
sing of His renown¹ in the gathering of devotees².

² Yîsrâ'êl should rejoice in the One who made it.

The people of Şîyôn should be exuberant³ about their King,
³ praise His character in dance.

and sing of Him with cymbals and harp.

†he reasons for the call to praise

⁴ For YHWH takes pleasure in His people.

He adorns the downtrodden⁴ with victory⁵.

⁵ The devoted should rejoice⁶ abundantly⁷.

They should outwardly rejoice⁸ upon their beds.

⁶ Their praise of God is deep-throated,

and a two-edged sword is in their hand

⁷ to execute retribution against the nations,
punishments for peoples;

⁸ to bind their kings with chains,

and their elites⁹ with iron chains;

⁹ to accomplish the prescribed justice.

This is the privilege¹⁰ belonging to all His devotees.

Hallûyah.

¹ Hebrew, *t^ehillâ*.

² Hebrew, *ḥāsîd*. Again in vs. 5.

³ Hebrew, *gîl*.

⁴ Hebrew, *'ānāw*.

⁵ Hebrew, *y^eśū'â*.

⁶ Hebrew, *'ālaz*.

⁷ Hebrew, *b^ekābôd*, “in/with abundance.”

⁸ Hebrew, *rānan*.

⁹ Hebrew, *kābad*.

¹⁰ Hebrew, *hādār*.

psalm 150

(edition: January 6, 2024)

¹ Hallûyah.

Praise God in His preeminent place.

Praise Him in heaven, His stronghold.

² Praise Him for His mighty acts.

Praise Him as His bounteous greatness deserves.

³ Praise Him with trumpet blast.

Praise Him with harp and lyre.

⁴ Praise Him with tambourine and dance.

Praise Him with strings and pipe.

⁵ Praise Him with crashing cymbals.

Praise Him with clanging cymbals.

⁶ Everything that breaths should praise Yah.

Hallûyah.