

# PSALMS

## *Introduction*

*The Psalms are the prayer of Israel. They are the expression of human experience addressed towards God. They are the expression of a people's life impelled by God. God's history is the life of the people, because he creates and suffers with the people. All these was transformed into prayers, alive and varied, on the hands of very different authors. Tradition attributes many psalms to king David: it is just a convention, the same as attributing to Solomon the wisdom compositions. An anonymous chain of poets, throughout centuries is a more realistic way to describe the authors of these writings.*

*The hymns sing praises and they are usually communitarian: their themes are the actions of God in creation and history. Close to them is thanksgiving for personal or communitarian favors. From needs spring up supplications, so varied in themes; the praying person motivates his petition so as to convince or to move God. At times, from supplications springs up an act of trust, based on past experiences or in God's promises.*

*The sinner confesses his sins and asks for forgiveness in the penitential psalms. Others we could call meditations because they deal about human life or about the history of Israel.*

*In what follows we will give the Hebraic numbering, adding in parenthesis the Greco Latin number. The psalms are also privileged prayer of the Christian community as well as of an individual. Many psalms were prayed by Jesus, thus giving them the plenitude of meaning hidden in them.*

## 8

<sup>2</sup>O Lord, our Lord,  
how great is your name throughout the earth!  
And your glory in the heavens above.  
<sup>3</sup>Even the mouths of children and infants  
exalt your glory in front of your foes  
and put to shame enemies and rebels.  
<sup>4</sup>When I observe the heavens,  
the work of your hands,  
the moon and the stars you set in their place—  
<sup>5</sup>what is the mortal that you be mindful of him,  
the son of man, that you should care for him?  
<sup>6</sup>Yet you made him a little lower than the angels;  
you have crowned him with glory and honor.  
<sup>7</sup>You made him rule over the works of your hands;  
you have put all things under his feet  
<sup>8</sup>sheep and oxen without number  
and even the beasts of the field,  
<sup>9</sup>the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,  
and all that swim the paths of the ocean.  
<sup>10</sup>O Lord, our Lord,  
how great is your name all over the earth!

<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside the still waters,  
<sup>3</sup>he restores my soul.  
He guides me through the right paths  
for his name's sake.  
<sup>4</sup>Although I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I fear no evil,  
for you are beside me:  
your rod and your staff comfort me.  
<sup>5</sup>You spread a table before me  
in the presence of my foes.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup is overflowing.  
<sup>6</sup>Goodness and kindness will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
as long as I live.

## 24 (23)

<sup>1</sup>The earth and its fullness belong to the Lord,  
the world and all that dwell in it.  
<sup>2</sup>He has founded it upon the ocean  
and set it firmly upon the waters.  
<sup>3</sup>Who will ascend the mountain of the Lord?  
Who will stand in his holy place?  
<sup>4</sup>Those with clean hands and pure heart,  
who desire not what is vain,  
and never swear to a lie.  
<sup>5</sup>They will receive blessings from the Lord,  
a reward from God, their savior.  
<sup>6</sup>Such are the people who seek him,  
who seek the face of Jacob's God.  
<sup>7</sup>Lift up, O gateways, your lintels,  
open up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may enter!  
<sup>8</sup>Who is the King of glory?  
The Lord, the strong, the mighty,  
the Lord, valiant in battle.  
<sup>9</sup>Lift up your lintels, O gateways,  
open up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may enter!  
<sup>10</sup>Who is the King of glory?  
The Lord of Hosts,  
he is the King of glory!

## 32 (31)

Blessed is the one whose sin is forgiven,  
whose iniquity is wiped away.  
<sup>2</sup>Blessed are those in whom the Lord sees no guilt  
and in whose spirit is found no deceit.  
<sup>3</sup>When I kept my sin secret,  
my body wasted away,  
I was moaning all day long.  
<sup>4</sup>Your hand day and night lay heavy upon me;  
draining my strength, parching my heart  
as in the heat of a summer drought.  
<sup>5</sup>Then I made known to you my sin  
and uncovered before you my fault,  
saying to myself,  
“To the Lord I will now confess my wrong.”  
And you, you forgave my sin,  
you removed my guilt.  
<sup>6</sup>So let the faithful ones pray  
to you in time of distress;  
the overflowing waters will not reach them.  
<sup>7</sup>You are my refuge;  
you protect me from distress  
and surround me with songs of deliverance.  
<sup>8</sup>I will teach you,  
I will show you the way to follow.  
I will watch over you and give you counsel.

## 51 (50)

<sup>3</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, in your love.  
In your great compassion blot out my sin.  
<sup>4</sup>Wash me thoroughly of my guilt;  
cleansing me of evil.  
<sup>5</sup>For I acknowledge my wrongdoings  
and have my sins ever in mind.  
<sup>6</sup>Against you alone have I sinned;  
what is evil in your sight I have done.  
You are right when you pass sentence  
and blameless in your judgment.  
<sup>7</sup>For I have been guilt-ridden from birth,  
a sinner from my mother's womb.  
<sup>8</sup>I know you desire truth in the heart,  
teach me wisdom in my inmost being.  
<sup>9</sup>Cleanse me with hyssop and I shall be clean,  
wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.  
<sup>10</sup>Fill me with joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

11 Turn your face away from my sins  
and blot out all my offenses.  
12 Create in me, O God, a pure heart;  
give me a new and steadfast spirit.  
13 Do not cast me out of your presence  
nor take your holy spirit from me.  
14 Give me again the joy of your salvation  
and sustain me with a willing spirit.  
15 Then I will show wrongdoers your ways  
and sinners will return to you.  
16 Deliver me, O God, from the guilt of blood,  
and of your justice I shall sing aloud.  
17 O Lord, open my lips,  
and I will declare your praise.  
18 You take no pleasure in sacrifice;  
were I to give a burnt offering,  
you would not delight in it.  
19 O God, my sacrifice is a broken spirit;  
a contrite heart you will not despise.  
20 Shower Zion with your favor:  
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.  
21 Then you will delight in fitting sacrifices,  
in burnt offerings and bulls offered on your altar.

## 78 (77)

Give heed, O my people, to my teaching;  
listen to the words of my mouth!  
2 I will speak in parables,  
I will talk of old mysteries  
3 which we have heard and known,  
which our ancestors have told us.  
4 We will not keep them hidden from our children;  
we will announce them to the coming generation:  
the glorious deeds of the Lord,  
his might and the wonders he has done.  
5 He issued decrees for Jacob  
and set up a law in Israel,  
which he commanded our ancestors  
to teach their children,  
6 so the next generation would learn  
and teach their own children.  
7 They would then put their trust in God,  
and not forget his deeds and his commands.  
8 And not be like their ancestors,  
stubborn and rebellious people,  
a people of inconstant heart  
whose spirit was fickle.  
9 Well-armed with bow,

the Ephraimites took flight  
when the time came to do battle.  
10It is because they did not keep  
God's covenant  
and refused to live by his law.  
11They forgot the marvels he had done,  
12what their ancestors had seen  
in the land of Egypt,  
in the fields of Zoan.  
13He divided the sea and led them across;  
he made the water stand like a wall.  
14By day he led them with a cloud,  
and by night with a fiery light.  
15In the desert he split rocks  
to give them abundant drink.  
16He made streams come out of a rock  
and caused water to flow like a river.  
17Yet they sinned even more against him  
and rebelled against the Most High  
in the desert.  
18They tested God,  
demanding the food they craved.  
19They blasphemed against God, saying:  
'Can God spread a table in the desert?'  
20He made water flow out of the rock;  
can he also give his people bread or meat?'  
21When the Lord heard this he was enraged;  
a fire raged against Jacob,  
his anger flared against Israel,  
22for they had no faith in God  
nor trust in his deliverance.  
23Yet he commanded the skies  
above and opened the doors of heaven;  
24he rained down manna upon them  
and fed them with the heavenly grain.  
25They ate and had more than their fill  
of the bread of angels.  
26Then from heaven he stirred the east wind,  
and by his power let loose the south wind,  
27to rain down meat on them like dust.  
Birds as thick as the sand on the seashore  
28fell inside their camp,  
lying all around their tents.  
29They ate till they were satisfied,  
for he had given them what they craved.  
36But they flattered him with their mouths,  
they lied to him with their tongues,  
37while their hearts were unfaithful;  
they were untrue to his covenant.  
38Even then, in his compassion,  
he forgave their offenses

and did not destroy them.  
Many a time he restrained his anger  
and did not fully stir up his wrath.  
39He remembered that they were but flesh,  
a breeze that passes and never returns.  
40How often did they rebel against him  
in the wilderness,  
how often did they grieve him in the desert!  
41Again and again they tested him,  
and provoked the Holy One of Israel.  
42They did not remember his power  
in redeeming them from the oppressor.  
52Then he led forth his people like a flock,  
and guided them like sheep through the desert.  
53He led them safely, they did not fear,  
but the sea engulfed their enemies.  
54He brought them to his holy land,  
to the mountain his right hand had won.

55He drove out peoples before them  
and gave them the land as their inheritance;  
they pitched their tents in it.  
69He built his sanctuary like heaven,  
like the earth he founded forever.  
70He chose David his servant  
and took him from the sheepfolds;  
71from tending the sheep and their young,  
he brought him to shepherd Jacob,  
the people of Israel, his inheritance.  
72And with upright heart David pastured them;  
with skillful hands he led them.

## 104 (103)

1Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Clothed in majesty and splendor;  
O Lord, my God, how great you are!  
2You are wrapped in light as with a garment;  
you stretch out the heavens like a tent,  
3you build your upperrooms above the waters.  
You make the clouds your chariot  
and ride on the wings of the wind;  
4you make the winds your messengers,  
and fire and flame your ministers.  
5You set the earth on its foundations,  
and never will it be shaken.  
6You covered it with the ocean like a garment,  
and waters spread over the mountains.  
7But at your rebuke the waters flee,

at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.  
8 Brought to the mountains, they flow down again  
to settle in the valleys.  
9 You set a limit they could not cross,  
never again to flood the earth.  
10 You make springs gush forth in valleys  
winding among mountains and hills,  
11 giving drink to the beasts of the field,  
quenching the thirst of wild donkeys.  
12 Birds build their nests close by  
and sing among the branches of trees.  
13 You water the mountains from your abode  
and fill the earth with the fruit of your work.  
14 You make grass grow for cattle  
and plants for man to cultivate,  
that he may bring forth food from the earth:  
15 wine to gladden his heart,  
oil to make his face shine,  
and bread to make him strong.  
16 The Lord waters his trees to their fill,  
the cedars of Lebanon which he planted.  
17 The birds build their nests,  
the stork has its home in the pine trees.  
18 High mountains are for wild goats,  
the cliffs a refuge for badgers.  
19 You made the moon to mark the seasons,  
and the sun that knows when to set;  
20 when you bring the darkness of the night,  
all the beasts of the forest begin to prowl:  
21 the young lions roaring for their prey  
claiming their food from God.  
22 When the sun rises, the beasts steal away,  
returning to rest in their dens.  
23 Man then goes out to his work,  
and toils till evening comes.  
24 How varied O Lord, are your works!  
In wisdom you have made them all—  
the earth full of your creatures.  
25 Behold the sea, wide and vast,  
teeming with countless creatures,  
living things both great and small,  
26 a strange world reserved for the ships,  
for Leviathan, the dragon you made to play with.  
27 They all look to you  
for their food in due time.  
28 You give it to them,  
and they gather it up;  
you open your hand,  
they are filled with good things.  
29 When you hide your face they vanish,  
you take away their breath, they expire  
and return to dust.

<sup>30</sup>When you send forth your spirit,  
they are created,  
and the face of the earth is renewed.

<sup>31</sup>May the glory of the Lord endure forever;  
may the Lord rejoice in his works!

<sup>32</sup>He looks on the earth, and it quakes;  
he touches the mountain, and it smokes.

<sup>33</sup>I will sing to the Lord all my life;  
I will sing praise to God while I live.

<sup>34</sup>May my song give him pleasure,  
as the Lord gives me delight.

<sup>35</sup>May sinners vanish from the earth,  
and may the wicked be no more.  
Bless the Lord, my soul!

## 105 (104)

<sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;  
make known his works among the nations.

<sup>2</sup>Sing to him, sing his praise,  
proclaim all his wondrous deeds.

<sup>3</sup>Glory in his holy name;  
let those who seek the Lord rejoice.

<sup>4</sup>Look to the Lord and be strong;  
seek his face always.

<sup>5</sup>Remember his wonderful works,  
his miracles and his judgments,

<sup>6</sup>you descendants of his servant Abraham,  
you sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!

<sup>7</sup>He is the Lord our God;  
his judgments reach the whole world.

<sup>8</sup>He remembers his covenant forever,  
his promise to a thousand generations,

<sup>9</sup>the covenant he made with Abraham,  
the promise he swore to Isaac.

<sup>10</sup>He confirmed his decree to Jacob,  
to Israel his eternal covenant:

<sup>11</sup>‘To you I will give the land of Canaan  
as part of your inheritance.’

<sup>12</sup>When they were few in number,  
strangers in the land,

<sup>13</sup>wandering from nation to nation,  
from one kingdom to another,

<sup>14</sup>he allowed no one to oppress them,  
and for their sake he rebuked kings:

<sup>15</sup>“Touch not my anointed ones,”  
he warned, “do my prophets no harm!”

<sup>16</sup>Then he sent a famine

and ruined the crop that sustained the land;  
17he sent a man ahead of them, Joseph,  
who was sold as a slave;  
18his feet in shackles, his neck in irons  
19till what he foretold came to pass,  
and the Lord's word proved him true.  
20The king sent for him, set him free,  
the ruler of the peoples released him.  
21He put him in charge of his household  
and made him ruler of all his possessions,  
22that he might train his princes  
and teach his elders wisdom.  
23Then Israel came to Egypt,  
Jacob settled in the land of Ham.  
24The Lord made his people fruitful  
and much stronger than their foes,  
25whose hearts he turned to hate his people,  
to deal deceitfully with his servants.  
37He led Israel out of the alien land,  
laden with silver and gold,  
and none were left behind.  
38Egypt was glad when they departed,  
so filled were they with dread.  
39He spread a cloud as covering,  
and fire to give them light at night.  
40They asked for food;  
he gave them quails and fed them  
with bread from heaven.  
41He opened the rock, and water gushed out,  
flowing like a river through the desert.  
42For he remembered his promise to Abraham,  
his servant.  
43So he led forth his people with joy,  
his chosen ones with singing.  
44He gave them the lands of the nations,  
and let them take the fruit of others' toil,  
45that they might keep his statutes  
and remain obedient to his laws.

## 106 (105)

*Alleluia!*

1Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his love endures forever.  
2Who can count the Lord's mighty deeds,  
or declare all his praises?  
3Blessed are they who always do just and right.  
4Remember me, O Lord,

when you show favor to your people;  
rescue me when you deliver them;  
5let me see the triumph of your faithful,  
let me share the joy of your nation,  
and join your people in praising you.  
6We have sinned like our ancestors;  
we have done wrong and acted wickedly.  
7When they were in Egypt,  
our ancestors had no regard  
for your wondrous deeds;  
they forgot the abundance of your love;  
they rebelled against the Most High  
by the Sea of Reeds.  
8Yet he saved them for his name's sake,  
to make his mighty power known.  
9He rebuked the sea, and it dried up;  
he led them through the deep as on dry land.  
10He saved them from hostility,  
freeing them from the hand of the enemy.  
11Waters covered their pursuers,  
and none of them was left alive.  
12Then they believed his promises  
and all at once sang his praises.  
13But soon they forgot his works  
and did not wait for his counsel.  
14They gave way to wanton craving  
and tempted God in the desert.  
15He gave them what they wanted,  
then sent them a wasting disease.  
16In the camp they grew envious  
of Moses and Aaron,  
the holy one of the Lord.  
17So the earth opened, swallowed Dathan,  
and buried the company of Abiram;  
18fire broke out against them,  
burning up the wicked.  
19They made a calf at Horeb  
and worshiped the molten image.  
20They exchanged the glory of God  
for the image of a bull that eats grass.  
21They forgot their Savior God,  
who had done great things in Egypt,  
22wonderful works in the land of Ham,  
and awesome deeds by the Sea of Reeds.  
23So he spoke of destroying them,  
but Moses, his chosen one,  
stood in the breach before him  
to shield them from destruction.  
24Yet they despised the promised land,  
for they had no faith in his word.  
25They grumbled in their tents  
and would not listen to the voice of the Lord.

26 So he swore to them with his hand raised  
that he would let them perish in the desert,  
27 scatter their descendants among the nations  
and disperse them over the lands.  
28 They joined the rites of Baal-peor  
and ate sacrifices to lifeless gods.  
29 Their deeds provoked the Lord to anger,  
and a plague broke out among them.  
30 But Phinehas stood up and intervened,  
and the plague came to an end.  
31 This was credited to his uprightness,  
making him remembered for all ages.  
32 Angered by them at Meribah's waters,  
the Lord took it out on Moses  
33 for the rash words he uttered,  
when they rebelled against God.  
34 They dared not destroy the pagans,  
as the Lord commanded;  
35 they mingled with these nations  
and learned to do as they did.  
36 In serving the idols of the pagans,  
they were trapped  
37 into sacrificing children to demons,  
38 shedding the innocent blood  
of their sons and daughters  
to the idols of Canaan,

polluting the country with blood.  
39 They defiled themselves by what they did,  
playing the harlot in their worship.  
40 The anger of the Lord grew intense  
and he abhorred his inheritance.  
41 He handed them over to the nations,  
and their foes ruled them with arrogance.  
42 Brought by the enemy into subjection,  
they suffered the agony of oppression.  
43 He delivered them many a time,  
but they went on defying him  
and sinking deeper into their sin.  
44 But he heard their cry of affliction  
and looked on them with compassion.  
45 Remembering his covenant,  
he relented for their sake,  
because of his great love.  
46 He let them be pitied by all those  
who held them captive.  
47 Save us, O Lord, our God,  
gather us from among the nations,  
that we may give thanks to you  
and praise your holy name.

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<sup>48</sup>Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel,  
from eternity to eternity.  
Let all the people say:  
“Amen!” Praise the Lord!

## 132 (131)

<sup>1</sup>Remember David, O Lord,  
and all his readiness.  
<sup>11</sup>The Lord swore to David  
a promise, and he will remain true to it:  
‘I will keep your descendance  
on your throne.  
<sup>12</sup>If your sons keep my covenant  
and the decrees I have taught them,  
their sons, too,  
will sit forever upon your throne.’  
<sup>13</sup>For the Lord has chosen Zion;  
he has desired it for his dwelling:  
<sup>14</sup>‘This is my resting place forever;  
this I prefer, here will I dwell.  
<sup>15</sup>I will bless its fruits,  
its bread, and the poor will be satisfied.  
<sup>16</sup>I will clothe its priests with glory  
and its faithful will sing in gladness.  
<sup>17</sup>From here a savior shall come forth,  
a son of David;  
here shall shine forever the lamp of my anointed.  
<sup>18</sup>In shame will I clothe his enemies,  
but upon his head a crown shall shine.’

## 136 (135)

<sup>1</sup>*Alleluia!*  
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
his kindness endures forever.  
<sup>2</sup>Give thanks to the God of gods,  
his kindness endures forever.  
<sup>3</sup>Give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
his kindness endures forever.  
<sup>4</sup>He alone does great marvels,  
his kindness endures forever.  
<sup>5</sup>In wisdom he made the heavens,  
his kindness endures forever.  
<sup>6</sup>He set the earth upon the waters,

his kindness endures forever.  
<sup>7</sup>He made the great lights,  
his kindness endures forever,  
<sup>8</sup>the sun to rule over the day,  
his kindness endures forever,  
<sup>9</sup>the moon and stars to rule the night,  
his kindness endures forever.

## 148

<sup>1</sup>*Alleluia!* Praise the Lord from the heavens;  
praise him in the heavenly heights.  
<sup>2</sup>Praise him, all his angels; praise him,  
all his heavenly hosts.  
<sup>3</sup>Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars.  
<sup>4</sup>Praise him, you highest heavens  
and you waters above the skies.  
<sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name of the Lord,  
at whose command they were made.  
<sup>6</sup>He established them forever  
and gave each a fixed and lasting duty.  
<sup>7</sup>Praise the Lord from the earth,  
you sea creatures and all the depths,  
<sup>8</sup>clouds and snow, hail and lightning,  
storm winds that do his bidding,  
<sup>9</sup>you mountains and all you hills,  
you fruit trees and cedars,  
<sup>10</sup>you wild beasts and tame animals,  
you creeping things and winged fowl.  
<sup>11</sup>Kings of the earth and nations,  
princes and all rulers of the world,  
<sup>12</sup>young men and maidens, old and young together,  
<sup>13</sup>let them praise the name of the Lord.  
For his name alone is exalted;  
his majesty is above earth and heaven.  
<sup>14</sup>He has given his people glory;  
he has given a praise to his faithful,  
to Israel, the people close to him.  
*Alleluia.*