



Sunday School Lesson
Psalm 51
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Celebrating Forgiveness



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“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God” ([Col. 3:16](#)). In the history of the Judeo-Christian religious traditions, the celebration of our religious faith through music has consistently played a vital role to spiritual nourishment and religious understanding. In Central Europe in the 1500s, the Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther, carried the Protestant Reformation to a successful end largely by combining his understanding of biblical Christianity with popular musical tunes, mostly the German beer-drinking songs. Methodism in English won a lasting place in British religious life primarily through the efforts of the two Wesley brothers, John and Charles, with their enormous hymn writing activities. They put English people to singing their theology and that theology deeply rooted itself into the life of millions of English speaking people on both sides of the Atlantic.



This study of Psalm 51 is taken from the ancient hymnbook first of Judaism and then of Christianity, the Book of Psalms. The psalms reflect the everyday lives of the Hebrew people over the centuries of the Old Testament era. Sometimes that experience is personal, individual reflection on life in its harsh reality, but with a deep trust in God who controls life. Other times the experience reflects a corporate experience of the covenant people, Israel, as it probes its way through that same harsh life as a people. The variety of experiences reflected in the 150 psalms is vast.

One must remember that each psalm reflects some particular experience in its origin. But it additionally reflects -- by the final stage of development at the close of the OT era -- a corporate worship experience of God's people to be shared in temple worship and then also in synagogue sabbath worship. The psalms then enable God's people to celebrate and better understand their faith as they become instruments of worship in the praise of God. Thus the various stages of development of each psalm will mark the psalm with modification in order to make the psalm current and relevant to religious experience at that point in time. Not until the collective codification of the psalms during intertestamental Judaism does the content of the Book of Psalms become fixed and constant. From this point onward, the text remains relatively fixed, and the interpretative application becomes the constantly changing aspect. Prior to this point content and application stood mingled together and impact the wording of the psalms repeatedly.

Sorting out the various strands of development of each psalm from the original experience that pro-

duced the poetic wording to its finalized fix wording has been the challenge before modern interpreters of the psalms for the past two centuries. Success in untangling these various strands of development has been mixed. Sometimes it can be traced fairly easily, but in other instances this development is so obscure that uncovering it is worse than putting a 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle together. And sometimes the result of tracing out the development of content doesn't produce all that much helpful interpretative insight. The original meaning and the finalized interpretative meaning are not far from one another. But it is important to take note of the development of each psalm where possible. Helpful interpretative clues can be gleaned from this activity that can keep the modern interpreter from reading dumb, inaccurate ideas from the text.

I Context

The very distinctive nature of the Psalms presents unique challenges to determining the historical and literary settings. Determination of these is significantly more difficult. This, in part because of the evolution of the wording of each psalm over the centuries of its existence from the original composition reflecting the experience that motivated the composition to the finalized form that we now study. Each stage of that development has its own settings which impact the understood meaning at that particular moment. But an exploration of the traceable developments becomes helpful to contemporary understanding of the psalm.

Some attention should be given to the modern study of the psalms. J. Clinton McCann, Jr. in the *New Interpreters Bible*, iPreach, provides a helpful overview, which I will summarize down even further. Up until the beginning decades of the twentieth century, the orientation of exegesis was what has been labeled "the personal/historical method" of study. The names of the individuals found in the superscriptions of most all the psalms were assumed to be the composer, who produced the psalm as a reflection of some personal experience at a given moment of time in his life. Thus the emphasis was upon the determination of the historical circumstances which produced the personal meditation or reflection. With the emergence of critical scholarship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the historical correctness of these superscriptions was cast into doubt and the tendency was to view the composition in the third to second centuries BCE using the names of individuals who lived centuries earlier.

In the early 1900s under the influence of Prof. Herman Gunkel, a shift took place toward applying principles of Form Criticism (*Formgeschichte*) to the study. This was based upon observation of liturgical patterns etc. in most of the psalms suggesting their use in corporate worship, especially in the temple. One of Gunkel's lasting contributions was the classification of the psalms into groupings: individual laments; individual thanksgiving songs; community laments; hymns or songs of praise; royal psalms; wisdom/Torah psalms; entrance liturgies; prophetic exhortation; psalms of confidence/trust; and mixed form psalms.

In 1968, James Muilenburg laid the foundation for most of the current study with his Rhetorical Critical approach. Emphasis here moved to literary patterns present in the psalms, such as parallelism, repetition, chiasm, and figurative uses of language. The focus on literary structure has renewed study on the finalized form of the psalms with their arrangement into five books, the superscriptions, and especially a theological understanding of the psalms.

Each approach has contributions, as well as limitations, to make to the study. Elements and insights from these will form the basis of our study within the framework of our approach generally to Bible study.

a. Historical

First, the **external history** of Psalm 51. The compositional history of this psalm. The superscription contained in the early texts of the psalm is important to the historical issues (NLT):

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

This would place the origin of this psalm in the ministry of the prophet Nathan during David's reign. Very possibly it was intended to be understood against

the backdrop of David's acknowledgment of sin found in [2 Sam. 12:13-14](#): "13 David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan said to David, "Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die. 14 Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child that is born to you shall die." 15 Then Nathan went to his house." The following verses depict David passionately pleading with God to spare the life of this baby. When the baby died, David went into the house of the Lord and worshipped the Lord. Perhaps out of this time comes the origin of this psalm.



Or, perhaps it reflects a latter reflective understanding of David, as he looks back on this experience.

The editorial hand on the psalm surfaces with allusions to the Temple of Solomon in vv. 18-19, which lay in ruins at this point. This suggests the final shape of the psalm took place during the Babylonian exile (586-539 BCE), some 400 plus years after David's reign (1005-965 BCE). The placing of this psalm after Psalm 50 with its powerful emphasis on divine judgment of Israel was most likely intended to express a message urging national repentance in view of the potential of divine wrath over sinfulness.

The history of the transmission of this psalm from its origin to its final shape is impossible to determine with certainty. The assumption would be that this psalm surfaced during certain liturgies in temple worship from Solomon's time until the destruction of Solomon's temple in 586 BCE. At this point, I would disagree with Form Critics who only allow for an exilic or postexilic date of composition.

Clinton McCann (*New Interpreters Bible*, iPreach) supplies an exilic assessment of this psalm:

The superscription identifies the psalm as a prayer made by David after the prophet Nathan had confronted him with his sin in the affair with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11—12). The learned scribe who found a setting for the psalm in the story of David saw a verbal connection between verse 4 and 2 Samuel 11:27 and 12:13 (see Introduction, sec. 3.5; and Psalms 3, sec. 4). The superscription has been the basis for the interpretation of the psalm as the expression of David's individual experience and penitence. This approach has produced moving and profound readings of the psalm, but it has always, especially in the modern period, stood in a certain tension with the liturgical use of the psalm for general, corporate, and individual penance.

There are many features in the psalm that suggest it was composed during or after the exile and

was used in Israel as a general penitential prayer. The psalm may be the product of considerable development; verses 16-17 and 18-19 are often thought to be expansions of an individual prayer for help. But its history may even be more complex than that of two expansions. In its present form, its language and thought are connected with that of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah 40—66. It reads like an anticipation of or response to the promises of a new heart and spirit in Jeremiah (Jer. 24:7; 31:33; 32:39-40) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 36:25ff.). Interpreted in this context, some of the prayer's difficult points will make better theological sense, and verses 18-19 form an appropriate conclusion rather than a contradictory addition. The prayer seeks a cleansing and purification from all transgressions, iniquities, and sins (vv. 1-2, 9). It may have been composed for use by the congregation, and individuals as part of it, in connection with the Day of Atonement (see Lev. 16:30). Understanding the psalm as a prayer composed for the community and for individuals in their identity with the community has important consequences for its interpretation and liturgical use.

The **internal history** of Psalm 51. McCann (*New Interpreter's Bible*, iPreach) summarizes the internal history issue well:

Although it is possible to conclude that the superscription dates the psalm accurately,²¹³ it is much more likely that it was added later by the editors of the psalter to invite readers to hear Psalms 51 against the background of the story of David's taking of Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah (2 Samuel 11), as well as the subsequent confrontation between Nathan and David (2 Sam 12:1-14; cf. Ps 51:4 and 2 Sam 12:13).

The interpretation of this psalm depends upon the perceived historical backdrop from which the words are to be interpreted. The original backdrop is the sinful conduct of King David with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. When David saw this beautiful woman bathing he became so enamored with her that he eventually arranged for her husband's death after he got her pregnant with his child. When David took her as a widow into his house to become his wife, God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David with his sin and to pronounce God's judgment that the baby conceived in sin would die. According to [2 Sam. 12:13](#), David acknowledged his sin to the prophet. Thus the psalm provides a commentary of sorts on this acknowledgment of sin by David.

The one cannot ignore the other backdrop that is clearly in the psalm as well: the Babylonian Exile. As a penitential psalm it served to express both individual and corporate repentance to those Jews seeking to hang on to their religious heritage during the time of captivity in Babylon. This subsequent use

provides us with helpful clues for application to our life today. The psalm provides one of the more detailed presentations of the biblical idea of repentance

and forgiveness. Thus its importance takes on even greater significance through its theological function in the Bible.

b. Literary

The literary **genre** of Psalm 51. The 150 psalms have [several groupings](#). In the original Hebrew text they are arranged according to five books, in following the example of the five books of Moses. Psalm 51 falls in book two. The rationale for the arrangement and grouping of each psalm this way has eluded scholars for centuries. In the Form Critical era of studies, identification of this psalm as an individual lament has become standard. This is one of several such psalms, e.g., 4, 11, 16, 23, 62, 131. Typically, these psalms contain a cry out to God for help with a prayer for deliverance. Psalm 51 is unique in that it focuses on repentance and forgiveness.

The cry for help is the acknowledgment of sin; the prayer for deliverance is the prayer for forgiveness.

The **literary setting** of Psalm 51. The listing of this psalm in book two is the nearest thing to the issue of literary setting. But this doesn't provide much insight, since the rationale for the arrangement of the 150 psalms into the five books has been a mystery to scholars for many centuries. The exilic setting for the finalized form of the psalm suggests that it was intentionally placed after psalm 50 in order to set the idea of confession and forgiveness in context with the assertion of the severity of divine wrath in psalm 50.

II. Message

The **literary structure** of Psalm 51. As is stated in the notes of the *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, the psalm can be divided grammatically into two parts, vv. 1-9; vv. 10-19. [“Each part begins with a vocative appeal to God and ends with a reference to the Temple.”](#) We will follow a modified form of this in our study.

a. Plea for mercy, vv. 1-6

LXX

¹ εἰς τὸ τέλος ψαλμὸς
τῷ Δαυιδ ² ἐν τῷ ἔλθειν
πρὸς αὐτὸν Ναθαν τὸν
προφήτην ἠνίκα εἰσηλθεν
πρὸς Βηρσαβее ³ ἐλέησόν
με ὁ θεὸς κατὰ τὸ μέγα
ἔλεός σου καὶ κατὰ τὸ πλή-
θος τῶν οἰκτιρισμῶν σου
ἐξάλειψον τὸ ἀνόμημά μου
⁴ ἐπὶ πλείον πλύνόν με ἀπὸ
τῆς ἀνομίας μου καὶ ἀπὸ
τῆς ἀμαρτίας μου
καθάρισόν με ⁵ ὅτι τὴν
ἀνομίαν μου ἐγὼ γινώσκω
καὶ ἡ ἀμαρτία μου
ἐνώπιόν μου ἐστίν διὰ
παντός ⁶ σοὶ μόνῳ
ἤμαρτον καὶ τὸ πονηρὸν
ἐνώπιόν σου ἐποίησα
ὅπως ἂν δικαιωθῆς ἐν τοῖς
λόγοις σου καὶ νικήσῃς
ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε

NASB

1 Be gracious to me,
O God, according to
Your lovingkindness; Ac-
cording to the greatness
of Your compassion blot
out my transgressions. 2
Wash me thoroughly
from my iniquity And
cleans me from my sin.
3 For I know my trans-
gressions, And my sin is
ever before me. 4
Against You, You only, I
have sinned And done
what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified
when You speak And
blameless when You
judge. 5 Behold, I was
brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother
conceived me. 6 Behold,
You desire truth in the in-
nermost being, And in
the hidden part You will
make me know wisdom.

NRSV

1 Have mercy on
me, O God, according to
your steadfast love; ac-
cording to your abundant
mercy blot out my trans-
gressions. 2 Wash me
thoroughly from my iniq-
uity, and cleanse me
from my sin. 3 For I know
my transgressions, and
my sin is ever before me.
4 Against you, you alone,
have I sinned, and done
what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified
in your sentence and
blameless when you
pass judgment. 5 In-
deed, I was born guilty, a
sinner when my mother
conceived me. 6 You de-
sire truth in the inward
being; therefore teach
me wisdom in my secret
heart.

NLT

1 For the choir direc-
tor: A psalm of David, re-
garding the time Nathan
the prophet came to him
after David had commit-
ted adultery with Bathsheba. Have mercy on me,
O God, because of your
unfailing love. Because of
your great compassion,
blot out the stain of my
sins. 2 Wash me clean
from my guilt. Purify me
from my sin. 3 For I re-
cognize my shameful
deeds – they haunt me
day and night. 4 Against
you, and you alone, have
I sinned; I have done what
is evil in your sight. You
will be proved right in what
you say, and your judg-
ment against me is just. 5
For I was born a sinner –
yes, from the moment my
mother conceived me. 6
But you desire honesty
from the heart, so you can
teach me to be wise in my
inmost being.

Notes:

One of the confusing issues to be encountered in studying this psalm is the variance in verse numbering that surfaces in different commentaries and translations. This hinges on whether or not the superscription is counted as verses. When so counted it often counts as verses one and two (e.g., LXX), with verse one in the above translations being counted as verse three, rather than as verse one. Since the superscription to each of the psalms is a later scribal addition, most English translations will list it as a subheading under the numbered psalm, and begin the verse counting with the initial content of the psalm, as is found in the NASB and NRSV translations. The NLT represents a middle ground in that the superscription is counted as a part of the text of the psalm, but is not numbered separately as is the usual case when the superscription is so taken. We will follow the pattern of the NASB and NRSV translations.



Verses one and two constitute the plea for God's mercy in a twofold expression:

Have mercy on me...

Wash me thoroughly... and cleanse...

Autur Weiser in the *Old Testament Library* (iPreach) helps us grasp the depth of the plea expressed here:

In the very midst of the distress caused by his sin the worshipper stretches out his hands towards God and implores him to have mercy on him. If he were not conscious of the abundance of the divine mercy, he would surely have broken down under the weight of his guilt. How greatly he suffers from his sin is eloquently attested by the reiteration of the same petitions and by the urgency of his entreaties, but also by the remarkable fact that it does not occur to him at all to recall his previous integrity or his past good deeds in order to lessen the weight of his present guilt, a thought which in such a situation was otherwise quite familiar. This shows how completely sin dominates his mind. Whence does this tremendous earnestness in his sense of sin arise? Since there is no reference in the psalm to a particularly grave offence nor to unbearable material sufferings as a punishment for sin, it can only be the weight of the spiritual affliction caused by sin which depresses this man. And that weight in the last analysis can be understood only in the light of his relationship to God. Because the worshipper is quite serious about God, for that reason he takes his sin

quite seriously too. It means to him nothing less than failure in the sight of God caused by his own guilt. The significance which such a failure has for the poet can be properly judged only if we take into account, what can be observed throughout the psalm, that he realizes that he is wholly dependent on God in everything. This is why the forgiveness of sins is equivalent to the restoration of the broken relationship with God which forms an essential part of his life. It is true that the poet in speaking of the forgiveness of sins uses phrases which are borrowed from the range of ideas associated with the cult, phrases such as "blot out" (add: "from the book of guilt"; cf. Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28), "wash" and "cleanse"; but he envisages behind these phrases the spiritual deliverance from his sins which he asks for from God.

Against the backdrop of David's sin, the plea stand as King David's plea to God for forgiveness for his sin with Bathsheba. In the exilic backdrop the plea becomes more general and reflects both individual and national plea because Israel's abandonment of God's ways that led to the destruction of the temple and the Babylonian captivity. In order to cover

He who would know God's forgiveness must first come to grips with the depths of his own sinfulness.

both situations we will refer to the individual who speaks to God in this psalm as the "worshipper."

In either instance the worshipper bases his request for forgiveness on God's love and mercy. Nothing has been done to earn God's forgiveness. Everything depends on God.

Verses three through five reflect the depth of guilt felt by the worshipper. In verse three, transgressions and sin stand as synonyms. Full acknowledgment of wrong doing is set forth in verse four. The hounding nature of sin is declared; the worshipper can't escape his sense of guilt and awareness of wrongdoing.

Also, acknowledge is made in verse four that God would be perfectly just and righteous if He were to impose severe penalty for the wrong doing. Sin deserves punishment. That much is clear to the worshipper.

Verse five has troubled many people over the centuries, but Clinton McCann (*New Interpreters Bible*, iPreach) provides an accurate understanding of its significance:

The climactic v. 5 has traditionally been cited in discussions of "original sin," and rightfully so. It is not intended to suggest that sin is transmitted biologically

or that sexuality is sinful by definition. Rather, it conveys the inevitability of human fallibility. In each human life, in the human situation, sin is pervasive. We are born into it, and we cannot escape it. While sin is a matter of individual decision, it also has a corporate dimension that affects us, despite our best intentions and decisions.

Verse six affirms God's basic desire for us: "truth in the inward part." Weiser (*OT Library*, *iPreach*) helps us with this:

He who wants to walk in God's ways must not shrink from the truth which penetrates the innermost recesses of the human heart and ruthlessly exposes life's most secret relations and contacts. Indeed, it is precisely the deeply humiliating realization of the nature of his sin which is regarded by the worshipper as proving that in this first step of doing penance the will of God is taking effect in him. In this context the second sentence, "teachest me wisdom in secret", seems to describe the manner in which the author arrives at that profound knowledge of God's nature and of the peculiar character of his sin. His earnest meditation before God in his heart (in secret) is the place where God himself reveals to the worshipper how everything ultimately hangs together (the poet like Paul in Rom. 11:33 calls it "wisdom"). As for many other people—in this connection one might think above all of Jeremiah—so also for the psalmist prayer is that point in his life where his religious knowledge is advanced; this, however, is not brought about by his own clever thoughts but by the insight into ultimate truths which is granted to him by God.

Connection to us today? These verses challenge modern Christians to the core of our being. God is loving and merciful without question. But that love and mercy is understood ONLY inside the depths of

forgiveness of sin that thoroughly understands and freely confesses sin to God. To see God's love and mercy as an excuse for continued sinning is a tragic mistake. Just the opposite is reality. The worshipper in our psalm profoundly understood that and experienced that in his confession of sin and acknowledgment of God's judgment and righteousness.

Another challenge here is the call to confess sin to God. Roman Catholic tradition has attempted to emphasize this with its system of the Confessional. Protestants sometimes fail to go even this far in stressing the responsibility of each person to own up to his/her personal wrong doing. We Americans don't like to admit mistakes and usually attempt to gloss over them as insignificant when forced to take responsibility for our actions. But the challenge here is profound. We are sinners; we have been born sinners; we live in the midst of sinfulness. This we all must acknowledge deeply and profoundly to our God. But it must go deeper. The psalm is couched in the first person singular: "I know my transgressions." Sin and confession must be personalized. We can't get away with generalizations.

The key to coming to grips with our own sinfulness is understanding God's desire for truth deep down inside us. In our "secret heart" we sense God's wisdom about who we are and what we have done. It is there that the solution to our sinfulness begins as well. God is committed to teaching us His insights about ourselves and about sin. That insight must sink deep down inside us in order to become life-changing.

b. Plea for cleansing, vv. 7-19

LXX

⁷ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἐν ἀνομίαις
συνελήμφθην καὶ ἐν
ἀμαρτίαις ἐκίσησέν με
ἡ μήτηρ μου ⁸ἰδοὺ γὰρ
ἀλήθειαν ἠγάπησας τὰ
ἄδηλα καὶ τὰ κρύφια τῆ
ς σοφίας σου ἐδήλωσάς
μοι ⁹ῥαντιεῖς με ὑσώπω
καὶ καθαρισθήσομαι
πλυνεῖς με καὶ ὑπὲρ χιόνα
λευκανθήσομαι ¹⁰ἀκουτιεῖ
ς με ἀγαλλιάσιν καὶ
εὐφροσύνην
ἀγαλλιάσονται ὅσα

NASB

7 Purify me with hys-
sop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be
whiter than snow. 8 Make
me to hear joy and glad-
ness, Let the bones
which You have broken
rejoice. 9 Hide Your face
from my sins And blot out
all my iniquities. 10 Cre-
ate in me a clean heart,
O God, And renew a
steadfast spirit within me.
11 Do not cast me away
from Your presence And

NRSV

7 Purge me with hys-
sop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be
whiter than snow. 8 Let
me hear joy and glad-
ness; let the bones that
you have crushed rejoice.
9 Hide your face from my
sins, and blot out all my
iniquities. 10 Create in
me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right
spirit within me. 11 Do not
cast me away from your
presence, and do not

NLT

7 Purify me from my
sins, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be
whiter than snow. 8 Oh,
give me back my joy
again; you have broken
me – now let me rejoice.
9 Don't keep looking at
my sins. Remove the
stain of my guilt. 10 Cre-
ate in me a clean heart,
O God. Renew a right
spirit within me. 11 Do not
banish me from your
presence, and don't take

τεταπεινωμένα ¹¹
 ἀπόστρεψον τὸ πρόσωπόν
 σου ἀπὸ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν
 μου καὶ πάσας τὰς
 ἀνομίας μου ἐξάλειψον ¹²
 καρδίαν καθαρὰν κτίσον
 ἐν ἐμοί ὁ θεὸς καὶ πνεῦ
 μα εὐθὲς ἐγκαίνισον ἐν
 τοῖς ἐγκάτοις μου ¹³ μὴ
 ἀπορρίψῃς με ἀπὸ τοῦ
 προσώπου σου καὶ τὸ πνεῦ
 μα τὸ ἅγιόν σου μὴ
 ἀντανέλης ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ¹⁴
 ἀπόδος μοι τὴν
 ἀγαλλίασιν τοῦ σωτηρίου
 σου καὶ πνεύματι
 ἡγεμονικῶ στήρισόν με
¹⁵ διδάξω ἀνόμους τὰς
 ὁδοὺς σου καὶ ἀσεβεῖς ἐπὶ
 σὲ ἐπιστρέψουσιν ¹⁶ ῥῦσαί
 με ἐξ αἰσμάτων ὁ θεὸς ὁ
 θεὸς τῆς σωτηρίας μου
 ἀγαλλιάσεται ἡ γλῶσσά
 μου τὴν δικαιοσύνην σου
¹⁷ κύριε τὰ χεῖλη
 μου ἀνοίξεις καὶ τὸ
 στόμα μου ἀναγγελεῖ
 τὴν αἴνεσίν σου ¹⁸ ὅτι
 εἰ ἠθέλησας θυσίαν
 ἔδωκα ἂν ὀλοκαυτώματα
 οὐκ εὐδοκήσεις ¹⁹ θυσία
 τῷ θεῷ πνεῦμα
 συντετριμμένον καρδίαν
 συντετριμμένην καὶ
 τεταπεινωμένην ὁ θεὸς
 οὐκ ἐξουθενώσει
²⁰ ἀγάθυνον κύριε ἐν
 τῇ εὐδοκίᾳ σου τὴν
 Σιών καὶ οἰκοδομηθήτω
 τὰ τεῖχη Ἱερουσαλημ ²¹
 τότε εὐδοκήσεις θυσίαν
 δικαιοσύνης ἀναφορὰν
 καὶ ὀλοκαυτώματα τότε
 ἀνοίσουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ
 θυσιαστήριόν σου
 μόσχους

do not take Your Holy
 Spirit from me. 12 Re-
 store to me the joy of
 Your salvation And sus-
 tain me with a willing
 spirit. 13 *Then* I will teach
 transgressors Your
 ways, And sinners will be
 converted to You.

14 Deliver me from
 bloodguiltiness, O God,
 the God of my salvation;
Then my tongue will joy-
 fully sing of Your righ-
 teousness. 15 O Lord,
 open my lips, That my
 mouth may declare Your
 praise. 16 For You do not
 delight in sacrifice, other-
 wise I would give it; You
 are not pleased with
 burnt offering. 17 The
 sacrifices of God are a
 broken spirit; A broken
 and a contrite heart, O
 God, You will not despise.
 18 By Your favor do good
 to Zion; Build the walls of
 Jerusalem. 19 Then You
 will delight in righteous
 sacrifices, In burnt offer-
 ing and whole burnt offer-
 ing; Then young bulls will
 be offered on Your altar.

take your holy spirit from
 me. 12 Restore to me the
 joy of your salvation, and
 sustain in me a willing
 spirit. 13 *Then* I will teach
 transgressors your ways,
 and sinners will return to
 you.

14 Deliver me from
 bloodshed, O God, O
 God of my salvation, and
 my tongue will sing aloud
 of your deliverance. 15 O
 Lord, open my lips, and
 my mouth will declare
 your praise. 16 For you
 have no delight in sacri-
 fice; if I were to give a
 burnt offering, you would
 not be pleased. 17 The
 sacrifice acceptable to
 God is a broken spirit; a
 broken and contrite
 heart, O God, you will not
 despise. 18 Do good to
 Zion in your good plea-
 sure; rebuild the walls of
 Jerusalem, 19 then you
 will delight in right sacri-
 fices, in burnt offerings
 and whole burnt offer-
 ings; then bulls will be
 offered on your altar.

your Holy Spirit from me.
 12 Restore to me again
 the joy of your salvation,
 and make me willing to
 obey you. 13 *Then* I will
 teach your ways to sin-
 ners, and they will return
 to you.

14 Forgive me for
 shedding blood, O God
 who saves; then I will joy-
 fully sing of your forgive-
 ness. 15 Unseal my lips,
 O Lord, that I may praise
 you. 16 You would not be
 pleased with sacrifices,
 or I would bring them. If I
 brought you a burnt offer-
 ing, you would not accept
 it. 17 The sacrifice you
 want is a broken spirit. A
 broken and repentant
 heart, O God, you will not
 despise. 18 Look with fa-
 vor on Zion and help her;
 rebuild the walls of
 Jerusalem. 19 Then you
 will be pleased with wor-
 thy sacrifices and with
 our whole burnt offerings;
 and bulls will again be
 sacrificed on your altar.

Notes:

Although we've broken the psalm into two parts, in reality the Hebraeistic thought structure moves along the lines of interlocked thoughts, as is explained in the *Harper's Bible Commentary*.

The style shows expert balancing and development. Guilt and sin dominate in Ps. 51:4, 11; heart and spirit in vv. 12, 19. Sin and sinner occur six times and God one time in vv. 3-11; sin and sinner only one time and God six times in vv. 12-19. The sequence of the verbs, wipe out, wash, and cleanse, in vv. 3b-4 is repeated in reverse order in vv. 9, 11b. Structuring like this is intended for effective communication in public assembly and worship, not for private prayer. While the psalm stresses the need for personal spirituality, this quality is achieved through the community, all Israel at the Temple.

"Purge..." and "wash..." in verse seven stand as synonymous parallels, underscoring the same idea more emphatically. The temple ritual that possibly stands behind these verbs stresses cleansing and forgiveness achieved by the worshipper through following God's prescribed path of confession of sin. The command/promise structure of this verse reflects profound trust in God's ability to forgive in the "promise" side of the structure: "I shall be clean," and "I shall be

whiter than snow." Hyssop was "a small bushy plant used for sprinkling to signify cleanliness (Lev. 14; Num. 19) and divine protection (Exod. 12:22)" (Harper's Bible Commentary).

Verses 8-9 move the thought forward (Autur Weiser, *OT Library*, iPreach).

[8] The petition that God may make him to hear joy and gladness probably refers to the word of forgiveness and to the promise of salvation which he hopes for from God. Then the bones (this phrase denotes here the whole human being) which God has smitten shall rejoice. This saying does not necessarily imply an allusion to a physical malady; in the present context it can just as well refer to the depression of the poet's soul brought about by the recognition of his sin, which he attributes to God exactly as he does the grace of forgiveness for which he hopes. It is in this very interaction of judgment and grace that he first experiences God in all his fullness. [9] This is why he once more asks that God may disregard his sin and blot it out.

Verses 10-12 move beyond forgiveness to renewal, which was the next step in the spiritual process. Clinton McCann (*New Interpreters Bible*, iPreach) highlights the verb structure in these verses in a very helpful way:

The psalmist's faith in God's transforming power is particularly evident in vv. 10-12. The verb "create" (ברא *bara*) is used in the OT only of God's activity. It is particularly prominent in the opening chapters of Genesis (1:1, 21, 27; 2:3, 4) and in Isaiah 40–55, where God's creative activity involves the doing of a "new thing" (Isa 43:15-19; 48:6-7; see also Isa 41:20; 45:7-8). It is significant, too, that "create" is used in the context of God's self-revelation in Exodus 34. Immediately following God's words to Moses in Exod 34:6-7, Moses appeals to God that "the LORD go with us" and "pardon our iniquity and our sin" (34:9 NRSV). God responds by making a covenant and by promising to "perform marvels, such as have not been performed [lit., "been created"] in all the earth or in any nation" (34:10 NRSV). In short, it is God's fundamental character to restore, rehabilitate, re-create sinners. In the context of Exodus 32–34, Israel's life depended on it; in the context of 2 Samuel 11–12, David's life depended on it; and in Psalms 51, the psalmist affirms that his or her life also depends on God's willingness to forgive and God's ability to re-create sinners.

The association of the terms "clean," "heart," "new," and "spirit" calls to mind Ezek 36:25-27, which also testifies to God's willingness to forgive and ability

to re-create. The repetition of the word "spirit" (רוח *rûah*) in vv. 10-12 reinforces this message. The mention of God's "holy spirit" is unusual (see elsewhere only Isa 63:10-11), but God's Spirit elsewhere is also suggestive of God's creative activity. In Gen 1:2, God's Spirit moves over the deep; God's Spirit is responsible for all life and its sustenance (Job 34:14-15). For the psalmist to receive a new spirit (v. 10) and to live in the presence of God's Spirit (v. 11) means nothing short of new life. In biblical terms, to be saved means to be restored to conditions that make life possible, and for

the psalmist, forgiveness means salvation (v. 12; see also v. 14). What precisely is meant by "a willing spirit" is unclear, but it may connote generosity (see Exod 35:5, 22). In Isa 32:5, 8, the Hebrew word for "noble" (נדיב *nadib*)

is the opposite of "fool" (נבל *nabal*; recall "wisdom" in Ps 51:6), and the noble are those who attend to the needs of others (see Isa 32:6).

Verse 13 completes the command / promise structure in vv. 10-13 with a promise to teach and instruct. It also begins a vow contained in vv. 13-17 with the focus on helping others and worshiping God publicly. The students are "transgressors" and "sinners" in this synonymous parallel. For David this meant a promise to both set an example and verbally admonish others to follow God's ways. For the exilic worshipper this meant a promise to faithfully and passionately teach the Law of God to Israel in the hope of preventing the national disaster of the Babylonian Exile from ever happening again.

Stewart McCulloch (*Interpreters Bible*, iPreach) summarizes:

The usual vow which concludes a lament is to make a thanksgiving offering in the presence of the great congregation of God-fearing men. But here the psalmist's vow is (a) to show the truth to **transgressors** in order to turn them to God, to teach them rather than to cry out against them (Schmidt); (b) to **sing** a song of thanksgiving for his deliverance from death (cf. Ps. 34:1); and (c) to offer that which God desires above all others—a **broken and contrite heart**. In vs. 14 the Hebrew "blood(s)" means **death**, as in 30:9 (cf. Job 16:18). Many critics read the Hebrew *middamîm*, "from bloods," as *middumam*, "from silence."

Again, McCann (*New Interpreters Bible*, iPreach) provides additional insight into verses 13-17:

Despite opposition or anticipated opposition, the

Forgiveness begins with guilt, moves to confession, leads to divine cleansing and climaxes in public testimony encouraging others to avoid sin. This is God's plan for the sinner seeking divine forgiveness.

psalmist is committed to making a public witness. An inward transformation is not sufficient. The clean heart and new spirit will be accompanied by outwardly visible and audible proclamation. God's "new thing" must be declared (see Isa 48:6). Every organ of speech will participate—"my tongue," "my lips," "my mouth" (vv. 14-15). This outpouring of praise is apparently intended to replace what may customarily have been offered as a public witness—namely, a ritual sacrifice (v. 16). At this point, Psalms 51 recalls Ps 50:14, 23, where the proper sacrifice is identified as "thanksgiving"—that is, humble gratitude accompanied by faithful words and deeds (see Ps 50:17-21). Verse 16 also recalls the prophetic critiques of sacrifice that communicate God's desire that ritual actions be accompanied by personal commitment and transformation (see 1 Sam 15:22; Isa 1:12-17; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Mic 6:6-8); in short, God desires the whole self.

And this is exactly what the forgiven, transformed psalmist affirms in v. 17 and, at least implicitly, offers to God (see NIV and NRSV notes). What God desires is "a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart." The two occurrences of "broken" (נִשְׁבַּר nisbar) translate the Hebrew root very literally; and that translation may be misleading. Contemporary persons tend to hear "broken," when used in regard to people, as something like "dysfunctional." Even elsewhere in the OT, brokenheartedness is not a desirable condition but something from which God delivers (see Ps 34:18, Isa 61:1). What brokenheartedness means in Ps 51:17, however, is captured by the word "contrite," which is a more interpretive translation of a word that literally means "crushed" (see v. 8). God does not want "broken" or "crushed" persons in the sense of "oppressed" or "dysfunctional." Rather, God desires humble, contrite persons who are willing to offer God their whole selves. If pride is the fundamental sin that leads to idolatry, then the transformed psalmist now evidences a humility that inevitably leads to praise. The psalmist's offering to God is the whole self. The psalmist has much to proclaim, but it is not about self. It is about God (vv. 14-15). The psalmist's public witness is directed in precisely the same direction as was the urgent appeal: at the character of God.

The nature and function of verses 18-19 depend to a large extent on one's assumptions about the origin of this psalm. For those seeing Davidic beginnings of the psalm, these final two verses stand as later exilic or post-exilic additions. For those seeing the beginnings of the psalm in Babylon, these two verses are integral parts of the psalm. In either instance, the meaning of these verses comes from the later exilic background, rather than from the Davidic background.

They express a longing to see Jerusalem rebuilt and the temple sacrifice system restored. Directed

to God, they form a plea that God will bring all this to pass. This is predicated on the assumption that God will then be pleased with sacrifices being offered in the rebuilt temple in the way prescribed in the Law of God.

The interesting tension set up by these verses to the previous two verses, vv. 16-17, is first the declaration, v. 16, "you have no delight in sacrifice" and is now followed, v. 19, "you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings." What seems to be the point is that acceptable public worship seeking forgiveness for sin through sacrificial offerings must be preceded by private or inward confession and repentance. If the public expression doesn't flow out of a genuine private transformation, the public expression is worthless before God. Verses 18-19 longs for the day when God's covenant people will be able to express their contrition and longing for forgiveness through public offering of sacrifices in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

The connection of all this to us?

Forgiveness of sin is a central theme of the entire Bible. We humans are sinful people. For the Israelites, and for David in particular, forgiveness had to be sought from God in profound coming to grips with one's wrong doing, whatever it may have been. This psalm underscores this at both a personal and a corporate level. Any light hearted or casual treatment of sin always blocks divine forgiveness.

Also underscored here is both the private and public aspects of forgiveness. Public worship seeking forgiveness MUST be preceded by private acknowledgment and confession. Otherwise, public worship becomes mockery and hypocrisy.

The relation of this psalm to Christian experience is deep. In the New Covenant God's forgiveness is based upon Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross, not a burnt offering made in the temple. But the principles of confession and contrition set forth in this psalm hold true for the believer seeking divine forgiveness. Nothing changed in the move from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Confession of faith in Christ has no meaning if not incorporating in it this profound sense of acknowledgment of one's sinfulness and guilt before God.

Just as for the worshipper in this psalm, the believer in Christ stands obligated to give testimony and witness of the transformation of life brought about by God's cleansing from sin. One's sees this repeated in the NT miracles where individuals could not contain themselves from sharing their experience.

LXX

¹ εἰς τὸ τέλος ψαλμὸς
τῷ Δαυιδ

² ἐν τῷ ἔλθειν πρὸς
αὐτὸν Ναθαν τὸν
προφήτην ἠνίκα εἰσῆ
λθεν πρὸς Βηρσαβεε ³
ἐλέησόν με ὁ θεὸς κατὰ
τὸ μέγα ἔλεός σου καὶ
κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν
οἰκτιρμῶν σου
ἔξάλειψον τὸ ἀνόμημά
μου ⁴ ἐπὶ πλεῖον πλύνον
με ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνομίας μου
καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμαρτίας
μου καθάρισόν με ⁵ ὅτι
τὴν ἀνομίαν μου ἐγὼ
γινώσκω καὶ ἡ
ἀμαρτία μου ἐνώπιόν
μού ἐστιν διὰ παντός ⁶
σοὶ μόνῳ ἤμαρτον καὶ
τὸ ποιηρὸν ἐνώπιόν
σου ἐποίησα ὅπως ἀν
δικαιωθῆς ἐν τοῖς
λόγοις σου καὶ νικήσῃς
ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε

⁷ ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἐν
ἀνομίαις συνελήμφθην
καὶ ἐν ἀμαρτίαις
ἐκίσησέν με ἡ μήτηρ
μου ⁸ ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἀλήθειαν
ἠγάπησας τὰ ἄδρα καὶ
τὰ κρύφια τῆς σοφίας
σου ἐδήλωσάς μοι ⁹
ῥαντιεῖς με ὑσώπω
καὶ καθαρισθήσομαι
πλυνεῖς με καὶ ὑπὲρ
χιόνα λευκανθήσομαι ¹⁰
ἀκουτιεῖς με
ἀγαλλίασιν καὶ
εὐφροσύνην
ἀγαλλιάσονται ὅσα
τεταπεινωμένα ¹¹
ἀπόστρεψον τὸ
πρόσωπόν σου ἀπὸ τῶν
ἀμαρτιῶν μου καὶ
πάσας τὰς ἀνομίας μου

NASB

1 Be gracious to me,
O God, according to Your
lovingkindness; Accord-
ing to the greatness of
Your compassion blot out
my transgressions. 2 Wash
me thoroughly
from my iniquity And
cleans me from my sin. 3 For I know my trans-
gressions, And my sin is
ever before me. 4 Against
You, You only, I have
sinned And done what is
evil in Your sight, So that
You are justified when
You speak And blameless
when You judge. 5 Be-
hold, I was brought forth
in iniquity, And in sin my
mother conceived me. 6
Behold, You desire truth
in the innermost being,
And in the hidden part
You will make me know
wisdom.

7 Purify me with hys-
sop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be
whiter than snow. 8 Make
me to hear joy and glad-
ness, Let the bones
which You have broken
rejoice. 9 Hide Your face
from my sins And blot out
all my iniquities. 10 Cre-
ate in me a clean heart,
O God, And renew a
steadfast spirit within me.
11 Do not cast me away
from Your presence And
do not take Your Holy
Spirit from me. 12 Re-
store to me the joy of
Your salvation And sus-
tain me with a willing
spirit. 13 *Then* I will teach
transgressors Your ways,
And sinners will be con-
verted to You.

14 Deliver me from

NRSV

1 Have mercy on
me, O God, according to
your steadfast love; ac-
cording to your abundant
mercy blot out my trans-
gressions. 2 Wash me
thoroughly from my iniq-
uity, and cleanse me
from my sin. 3 For I know
my transgressions, and
my sin is ever before me.
4 Against you, you alone,
have I sinned, and done
what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified
in your sentence and
blameless when you
pass judgment. 5 Indeed,
I was born guilty, a sin-
ner when my mother con-
ceived me. 6 You desire
truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wis-
dom in my secret heart.

7 Purge me with hys-
sop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be
whiter than snow. 8 Let
me hear joy and glad-
ness; let the bones that
you have crushed rejoice.
9 Hide your face from my
sins, and blot out all my
iniquities. 10 Create in
me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right
spirit within me. 11 Do not
cast me away from your
presence, and do not
take your holy spirit from
me. 12 Restore to me the
joy of your salvation, and
sustain in me a willing
spirit. 13 Then I will teach
transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to
you.

14 Deliver me from
bloodshed, O God, O
God of my salvation, and
my tongue will sing aloud

NLT

1 For the choir direc-
tor: A psalm of David, re-
garding the time Nathan
the prophet came to him
after David had commit-
ted adultery with Bathsheba. Have mercy on
me, O God, because of
your unfailing love. Be-
cause of your great com-
passion, blot out the stain
of my sins. 2 Wash me
clean from my guilt. Pu-
rify me from my sin. 3
For I recognize my
shameful deeds – they
haunt me day and night.
4 Against you, and you
alone, have I sinned; I
have done what is evil in
your sight. You will be
proved right in what you
say, and your judgment
against me is just. 5 For
I was born a sinner – yes,
from the moment my
mother conceived me. 6
But you desire honesty
from the heart, so you
can teach me to be wise
in my inmost being.

7 Purify me from my
sins, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be
whiter than snow. 8 Oh,
give me back my joy
again; you have broken
me – now let me rejoice.
9 Don't keep looking at
my sins. Remove the
stain of my guilt. 10 Cre-
ate in me a clean heart,
O God. Renew a right
spirit within me. 11 Do not
banish me from your
presence, and don't take
your Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me again
the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to
obey you. 13 Then I will

ἐξάλειψον ¹²καρδίαν
καθαράν κτίσον ἐν ἐμοί
ὁ θεὸς καὶ πνεῦμα εὐθὲς
ἐγκαίνισον ἐν τοῖς
ἐγκάτοις μου ¹³μὴ
ἀπορρίψῃς με ἀπὸ τοῦ
προσώπου σου καὶ τὸ
πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιόν σου μὴ
ἀντανέλῃς ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ¹⁴
ἀπόδος μοι τὴν
ἀγαλλίασιν τοῦ
σωτηρίου σου καὶ
πνεύματι ἡγεμονικῶ
στήρισόν με ¹⁵διδάξω
ἀνόμους τὰς ὁδοὺς σου
καὶ ἀσεβεῖς ἐπὶ σὲ
ἐπιστρέψουσιν ¹⁶ῥῦσαί
με ἐξ αἰσμάτων ὁ θεὸς
ὁ θεὸς τῆς σωτηρίας
μου ἀγαλλιάσεται ἡ
γλῶσσά μου τὴν
δικαιοσύνην σου

¹⁷κύριε τὰ χεῖλη
μου ἀνοίξεις καὶ τὸ
στόμα μου ἀναγγελεῖ
τὴν αἴνεσίν σου ¹⁸ὅτι
εἰ ἠθέλησας θυσίαν
ἔδωκα ἂν ὀλοκαυτώματα
οὐκ εὐδοκήσεις ¹⁹θυσία
τῷ θεῷ πνεῦμα
συντετριμμένον καρδίαν
συντετριμμένην καὶ
τεταπεινωμένην ὁ θεὸς
οὐκ ἔξουθενώσει

²⁰ἀγάθυνον κύριε ἐν
τῇ εὐδοκίᾳ σου τὴν
Σιων καὶ οἰκοδομηθήτω
τὰ τεῖχη Ἱερουσαλήμ ²¹
τότε εὐδοκήσεις θυσίαν
δικαιοσύνης ἀναφορὰν
καὶ ὀλοκαυτώματα τότε
ἀνοίσουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ
θυσιαστήριόν σου
μόσχους

bloodguiltiness, O God,
the God of my salvation;
Then my tongue will joy-
fully sing of Your righ-
teousness. 15 O Lord,
open my lips, That my
mouth may declare Your
praise. 16 For You do not
delight in sacrifice, other-
wise I would give it; You
are not pleased with
burnt offering. 17 The
sacrifices of God are a
broken spirit; A broken
and a contrite heart, O
God, You will not despise.
18 By Your favor do good
to Zion; Build the walls of
Jerusalem. 19 Then You
will delight in righteous
sacrifices, In burnt offer-
ing and whole burnt offer-
ing; Then young bulls will
be offered on Your altar.

of your deliverance. 15 O
Lord, open my lips, and
my mouth will declare
your praise. 16 For you
have no delight in sacri-
fice; if I were to give a
burnt offering, you would
not be pleased. 17 The
sacrifice acceptable to
God is a broken spirit; a
broken and contrite
heart, O God, you will not
despise. 18 Do good to
Zion in your good plea-
sure; rebuild the walls of
Jerusalem, 19 then you
will delight in right sacri-
fices, in burnt offerings
and whole burnt offer-
ings; then bulls will be
offered on your altar.

teach your ways to sin-
ners, and they will return
to you.

14 Forgive me for
shedding blood, O God
who saves; then I will joy-
fully sing of your forgive-
ness. 15 Unseal my lips,
O Lord, that I may praise
you. 16 You would not be
pleased with sacrifices,
or I would bring them. If I
brought you a burnt offer-
ing, you would not accept
it. 17 The sacrifice you
want is a broken spirit. A
broken and repentant
heart, O God, you will not
despise. 18 Look with fa-
vor on Zion and help her;
rebuild the walls of
Jerusalem. 19 Then you
will be pleased with wor-
thy sacrifices and with
our whole burnt offerings;
and bulls will again be
sacrificed on your altar.

Hebrew Text

לְמַנְצַח מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד׃^{wtt} Psalm 51:1
בָּבוֹא־אֵלָיו נִתָּן הַנְּבִיא פֶּאֶשֶׁר־בָּא אֶל־בֵּת־שֹׁבַע׃²
חֲנֻנֵי אֱלֹהִים כַּחֲסִדְךָ כָּרֵב רַחֲמֶיךָ מִחַה פִּשְׁעֵי׃³
(הַרְבֵּה) [הַרְבֵּה] כַּבִּסְנִי מֵעוֹנֵי וּמַחֲטָאֵתִי טָהַרְנִי׃⁴
כִּי־פִשְׁעֵי אָנֹכִי אֲדַע וְחַטָּאתִי נֶגְדִי תָמִיד׃⁵
לֵךְ לְבַדְּךָ חַטָּאתִי וְהִרְעֵ בְעֵינֶיךָ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק׃⁶
בְּרַבְרֹךְ תִּזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶךָ׃
הִרְבְּעוֹן חוֹלְלָתִי וּבַחֲטָא יַחַמְתֵּנִי אֲמִי׃⁷
הִן־אָמַת חִפְצָתְךָ בַּטְּחוֹת וּבִסְתָם חֲכָמָה תוֹדִיעֵנִי׃⁸
תַּחֲטָאֵנִי בְּאִזּוֹב וְאֶטְהַר תִּכְבֹּסְנִי וּמִשְׁלֹג אֲלַבֵּן׃⁹
תִּשְׁמִיעֵנִי שִׁשׁוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה תִּגְלָנָה עֲצֻמוֹת דַּכִּית׃¹⁰
תִּסְתַּר פְּנֶיךָ מִחֲטָאֵי וְכֹל־עוֹנֹתַי מִחַה׃¹¹
לֵב טְהוֹר בְּרָאֲלֵי אֱלֹהִים וְרוּחַ נָכוֹן חֲדַשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי׃¹²
אֶל־תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלִּפְנֶיךָ וְרוּחַ קְדְשְׁךָ אַל־תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי׃¹³
הַשִּׁיבָה לִּי שִׁשׁוֹן יִשְׁעֶךָ וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי׃¹⁴
אַל־מִדְּרָה פִּשְׁעִים דַּרְכֶיךָ וְחַטָּאִים אֵלֶיךָ יָשׁוּבוּ׃¹⁵
הַצִּילֵנִי מִדְּמִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי תְשׁוּעָתִי תִרְנַן לְשׁוֹנֵי צַדִּיקֶיךָ׃¹⁶
אֲדַנִּי שִׁפְתֵי תִפְתַּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהַלְתֶּךָ׃¹⁷
כִּי לֹא־תַחֲפֹץ זִבַּח וְאַתָּנָה עוֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה׃¹⁸
זִבְחֵי אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ נְשֻׁבְרָה לִבְנִשְׁבֵּר וְנִדְכָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִבְהַ׃¹⁹
הִיטִיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ אֶת־צִיּוֹן תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם׃²⁰
אֲזִ תַחֲפֹץ זִבְחֵי־צַדִּיק עוֹלָה וְכֹלִיל אֲזִ יַעֲלוּ עַל־מִזְבִּיחֶךָ פְּרִים׃²¹