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Quick Links to the Study

I. Context

- a. Historical
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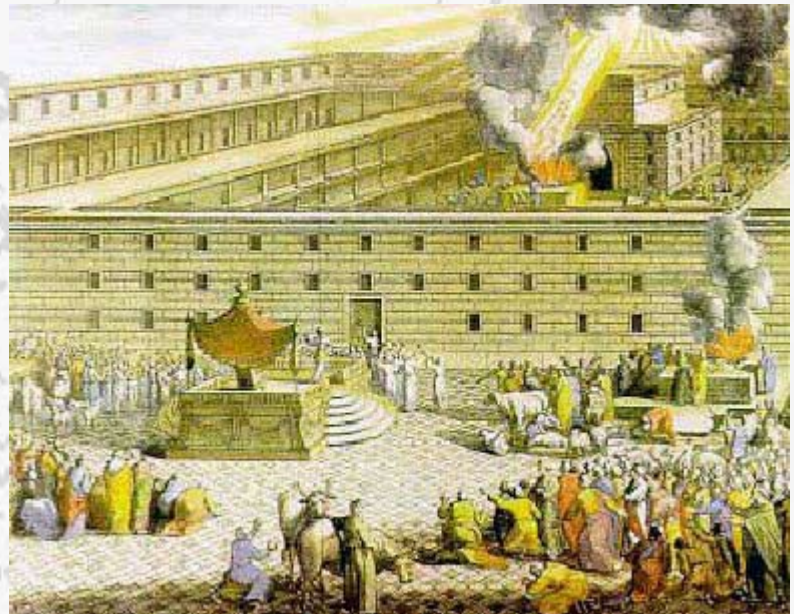
II. Message

- Who can enter?, v. 1
- Only the righteous, vv. 2-5a
- Promise to the righteous, v. 5b

Who was able to worship God in Solomon's temple in ancient Israel? Various texts in the Old Testament provide differing perspectives to this question. Psalm 15 answers the question from the Jewish wisdom religious tradition with an emphatic answer based on the lifestyle of the worshipper.

For believers today this answer remains relevant and important. We come into the presence of God to worship best when we walk through life following these same guidelines.

The presence of God is the life changing encounter with the God of this universe. To experience that presence in worship can indeed be transforming and renewing. But we must prepare!



I. Context

From [previous studies in the Psalms](#), especially from [Psalm 133](#), we will draw much of our background materials, and supplement them as needed for the study of Psalm 15.

a. Historical

External History. The beginning historical setting has to do with the composition of the psalm. With many of the 150 psalms, the challenge to identify the original compositional history is so great as to be impossible, because the content of the individual

psalm provides few, if any, clues to such historical identification.

James Crenshaw (*Eerdman's Dictionary of the Bible*, Logos Systems) provides helpful insight into the book of psalms:

The name “Psalms” derives from Gk. *psalmoí*,

“songs of praise” (Vaticanus has *psalmoi* as the title for Psalms; Sinaiticus has no title, but concludes with “*psalmoi* of David.”) “Psalter” comes from the title in Alexandrinus (*psaltérion*) and indicates a musical instrument, presumably to accompany the singing of Psalms. The MT lacks a title, but that is typical for all the books of the OT; at the end of Ps. 72 is the notation “the prayers (*tépillôt*) of David have come to an end.” Rabbinic literature prefers the terms *téhillim* or *tillim* (“praises”) to the Masoretic “prayers.” Together these two, praise and prayer, describe the contents of the Psalter.

Also helpful to note is the difference in the numbering of the Psalms between the Hebrew text (MT) and the Greek translation text (LXX). The chart below from Crenshaw’s article illustrates this difference. The English Bible follows the MT¹ text rather than the LXX²:

MT	LXX
1–8	1–8
9–10	9
11–113	10–112
114–115	113
116	114–115
117–146	116–145
147	146–147
	148–150
148–150	151

Thus the ancient Greek text of Psalm 15 is numbered Psalm 14, while the Hebrew text is number 15. The key factor in the shift in numbering is that the MT splits Psalm 9 into two separate psalms. Subsequently some of the psalms are merged together or split out in either the MT or LXX texts, thus creating more variations in numbering.

Peter Craigie (*Word Biblical Commentary*,

¹MT = [Masoretic Hebrew](#) text dating from the Middle Ages

²LXX = [Septuagint](#), Greek translation of the OT dated about 175 BCE, some 1,400 years before the MT.

b. Literary

Genre. The poetical nature of the Psalms is clear. But we are dealing with ancient Hebrew poetry, not modern American English poetry. The structural patterns between these two forms of poetry are very different, and thus cause major challenges for modern translators of the English Bible. Two chief traits characterized ancient Hebrew poetry: 1) parallelism and 2) meter. That these are present are unquestioned by modern scholars. But in the absence of any ancient Jewish writing explaining the details, as for example Aristotle’s *De Poetica* with ancient Greek poetry, modern scholarship continues to debate which of these two traits is the

Logos Systems) helps us understand the process of the compilation of the psalms into the collection that we know today:

In most contemporary forms of religion, use is made of a hymnal or service book for the purposes of worship. The hymnal is usually a collection of hymns and songs, written by many different people over the course of several centuries. It is basically an anthology, rather than the work of a single author. The individual compositions of many authors of entirely different backgrounds are brought together into a single volume by an editor or editorial team. A similar process apparently took place in the formation of the Book of Psalms. It contains the compositions of many poets and singers whose works have been brought together into a single volume, namely the Book of Psalms as it now stands. It is not possible to trace each step in the process from the composition of individual psalms to the compilation of the Psalter as a whole; nevertheless, a number of clues have survived concerning the various stages between composition and compilation. In summary form, one can trace four stages in the process: (a) a psalm is composed; (b) it is linked together with other psalms to form a small collection, analogous to the *Book of the Wars of the Lord* or the *Book of Yashar*; (c) several small collections are brought together to form a larger unit; (d) the current Book of Psalms emerged, being a “collection of collections,” with various individual psalms added by the editor(s) of the final book.

The collection of Psalms in Book I (see below on Literary Genre) containing the first 41 psalms are attributed to David. They are perhaps the oldest section of psalms in the entire collection.

Internal History. Time and place markers inside Psalm 15 are very limited. They are focused on verse one which will be addressed in detail in the exegesis of the passage below.

more significant and the precise definitions of both traits. The work of Robert Lowth in 1753, *De Sacra Poesie Hebraeorum Praelectiones Academicae*, has set the tone for much of modern scholarship.³

Parallelism is easier to identify and refers to two or more lines of expression being set in parallel thought to one another. Sometimes the second line is but another way of saying the same thing as the first but with different words (*Synonymous Parallelism*). The effect is a kind of bold facing emphasis on the unitary idea that is expressed. But sometimes

³ For more details see Peter C. Craigie, vol. 19, *Word Biblical Commentary : Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 25ff.

the second line states the opposite idea found in the first line (*Antithetical Parallelism*). The effect is for emphasis on the idea of the first line. Yet again, the second line can build on the thought of the first line by extending the idea a step forward (*Step Parallelism*). These are but three of many variations of pattern that have been traced by scholars in this field.

Literary Setting. The Book of Psalms in the Old Testament is the first document in the third section of the Hebrew Bible. In the Jewish tradition tracing itself back before the beginning of Christianity what we Christians called the Old Testament and what Jews for the past several centuries have called the [Tanak](#), which was divided up into three sections: [the Law](#) (Torah), [the Prophets](#) (Nevi'im), and [the Writings](#) (Ketuvim). [Jesus and the apostles](#) referred to the Old Testament in this threefold division, mostly using the first two sections. Although the content between the Christian Old Testament and the Jewish Tanak or Hebrew Bible is identical, the arrangement and division of the various 'books' is very different.

The following quote from the [Free Encyclopedia](#) on the internet provides a accurate, helpful summation:

[Ketuvim](#) is the third and final section of the Tanakh books. The Christian Old Testament (excluding the deuterocanonical books/apocrypha) counts them as thirty-nine books. This is because Jews often count as a single book what Christians count as several.

As such, one may draw a technical distinction between the text used within Judaism, the Tanakh, and the similar, but non-identical, text used within Christianity, the Old Testament. Thus, some scholars prefer Hebrew Bible as a term that covers the commonality of the Tanakh and the Old Testament while avoiding sectarian bias.

Hebrew Bible

Hebrew Bible refers to the textual canon of the Jewish Tanakh, which contains books that were originally

written mainly in Hebrew. (There are two books, Daniel and Ezra, that have parts in Aramaic, but even they are written in the same Hebrew script.) Nearly all Hebrew Bibles since the middle ages reflect the Masoretic Text.

The Hebrew Bible includes the same books as the Protestant Old Testament, but not the deuterocanonical portions of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Old Testament. The term Hebrew Bible does not impose a particular ordering of its books (as opposed to Tanakh and the Old Testament, each of which orders the books in different ways).

Psalms stands as the first and perhaps most important book of this third section, the Writings. Additionally, it served as [the hymn book](#) of ancient Israel by the time of the temple. Comprised of Hebrew poems [set to music for singing](#) first in the temple then later additionally in the synagogues, the book itself is divided into five sections modeled after the five 'Books of Moses,' that is, the first section called the Law. Most English translations will preserve [the markers](#): Book 1, Pss. 1-41; Book 2, Pss. 42-72; Book 3, Pss. 73-80; Book 4, Pss. 90-106; Book 5, Pss. 107-150.

This is explained in a

helpful summary in the [Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia](#):

The Psalter is divided, after the analogy of the Pentateuch, into five books, each closing with a doxology or benediction:

1. The first book comprises the first 41 Psalms, all of which are ascribed to David except 1, 2, 10, and 33, which, though anonymous, were also traditionally ascribed to him. While Davidic authorship cannot be relied on this probably is the oldest section of the Psalms

2. Book second consists of the next 31 Psalms (42-72), 18 of which are ascribed to David and 1 to Solomon (the 72nd). The rest are anonymous.

3. The third book contains 17 Psalms (73-89), of which the 86th is ascribed to David, the 88th to Heman the Ezrahite, and the 89th to Ethan the Ezrahite.

4. The fourth book also contains 17 Psalms (90-106),

Psalms 15

**1 LORD, who may abide in Your
tabernacle?
Who may dwell in Your holy
hill?**

**2 He who walks uprightly,
And works righteousness,
And speaks the truth in his
heart;**

**3 He who does not backbite
with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor does he take up a
reproach against his friend;**

**4 In whose eyes a vile person
is despised,
But he honors those who fear
the LORD;**

**He who swears to his own hurt
and does not change;**

**5 He who does not put out his
money at usury,
Nor does he take a bribe
against the innocent.**

**He who does these things shall
never be moved.**

(NKJV)



of which the 90th is ascribed to Moses, and the 101st and 103rd to David.

5. The fifth book contains the remaining Psalms, 44 in number. Of these, 15 are ascribed to David, and the 127th to Solomon.

Psalms 136 is generally called “the great hallel.” But the Talmud includes also Psalms 120-135. Psalms 113-118, inclusive, constitute the “hallel” recited at the three great feasts, at the new moon, and on the eight days of the feast of dedication.

Psalms 120-134 are referred to as Songs of Degrees, and are thought to have been used as hymns of approach by pilgrims.

Psalms 15 is a part of Book I in the psalter. But in modern studies of the psalms it is typically grouped with the Psalms of Liturgy. Claus Westermann (*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) has a helpful analysis:

c. Liturgical psalms. To this category only those psalms should be assigned which give clear indication that they were used on cultic occasions. It is futile to try to construct a festival liturgy out of a combination of separate psalms. Various liturgical procedures are hinted at in the psalms, but the psalms are not liturgies, and the Psalter is not the agenda for a festival....

vi. Those who ask what are the conditions for entry into the temple are given instruction in **Ps. 15:1** and **Isa. 33:14-16** (cf. the instruction in **Mic.**

6:6-8). This type of instruction has extensive affinities in the history of religions, and similar phenomena are common. A distinctive development is found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, with its instruction for entering the land of the dead.

Thus Psalm 15 has a close affinity with **Isa. 33:14-16**,⁴ along with that in **Micah 6:6-8**.⁵ Entrance into the temple for worship necessitated standards of purity and holiness. The Israelites were concerned not just with ritual purity that followed set guidelines for making offerings with acceptable sacrifices. These entrance texts underscore the demand for a personal righteousness as a requirement as well.

⁴NRSV 14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can live with the devouring fire? Who among us can live with everlasting flames?” 15 Those who walk righteously and speak uprightly, who despise the gain of oppression, who wave away a bribe instead of accepting it, who stop their ears from hearing of bloodshed and shut their eyes from looking on evil, 16 they will live on the heights; their refuge will be the fortresses of rocks; their food will be supplied, their water assured.

⁵NRSV 6 “With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” 8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

II. Message

Literary Structure. The basic thought flow of the psalm is clear. The doublet set of questions at the beginning ask who can enter the temple? (v. 1) The answer then comes with a series of affirmations about lifestyle required to enable one to come into God's presence (vv. 2-5a). The concluding declaration affirms that those following these guidelines are established on a solid basis for life (v. 5b).

a. Who can enter? v. 1

Hebrew Text

מִי־יָגֹר בְּאַהֲלֶיךָ מִי־שָׁכֵן ^{WTT} Psalm 15:1

בְּתֵר קִדְשֶׁךָ:

LXX

Ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυιδ.

Κύριε, τίς παροικήσει ἐν τῷ σκηνώματί σου
καὶ τίς κατασκηνώσει ἐν τῷ ὄρει τῷ ἁγίῳ σου;

NASB

A Psalm of David.

O Lord, who may abide in Your tent?
Who may dwell on Your holy hill?

NRSV

A Psalm of David.

O Lord, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?

NLT

A psalm of David.

Who may worship in your sanctuary, Lord?
Who may enter your presence on your holy hill?

Notes:

In order to preserve the poetic structure of the texts, a different style of presenting the scripture texts is adopted here.

The heading **לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר** (Ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυιδ) identifies the psalm as a psalm of David. J. Hempel ("Psalms, Book of," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) provides helpful summation of the heading:

The superscriptions of seventy-three psalms contain David's name in the form **לְדָוִד**. Its exact meaning ("from David," "concerning David" [like *lil*, "concerning Ba'al," in Ras Shamra]) still remains to be deter-

mined exactly, as is the case with apparently musical terms like **נְחִילֹת** ("flutes"?), in Ps. 5:1; **גִּתִּית** in Pss. 8:1; 81; 84; or the "hind of the dawn" in Ps. 22:1. The main difficulty consists in the fact that even the Greek translators of the second century B.C. (the LXX) did not understand them, as shown by their rendering εἰς τὸ τέλος for **לַמְנַצֵּחַ**, probably "To the choirmaster." They tried to combine words unknown to them with other terms -- e.g., **גִּתִּית** with **גֵּת**, "wine press" (e.g., Judg. 6:11; Lam. 1:15); or **נְחִילֹת** with **נַחֲלָה**, "inherited property" (Ps. 8: ὑπὲρ τῶν ληγῶν; Ps. 5: ὑπὲρ τῆς κληρονομουσης; see MUSIC).

Much clearer are some allusions to certain events in David's life -- e.g., to Absalom's rebellion (Ps. 3:1),

the end of the persecution by Saul (18), or the visit by Nathan (51). Some of them follow a tradition which is not preserved in the OT as we have it or another form than that of Samuel. The Philistine king before whom David feigned madness bears the name of Achish in I Sam. 21:10 ff; of Abimelech in Ps. 34:1; and in the same story in I Samuel, David came to Gath on his own initiative and was not captured by the Philistines as in Ps. 56:1.

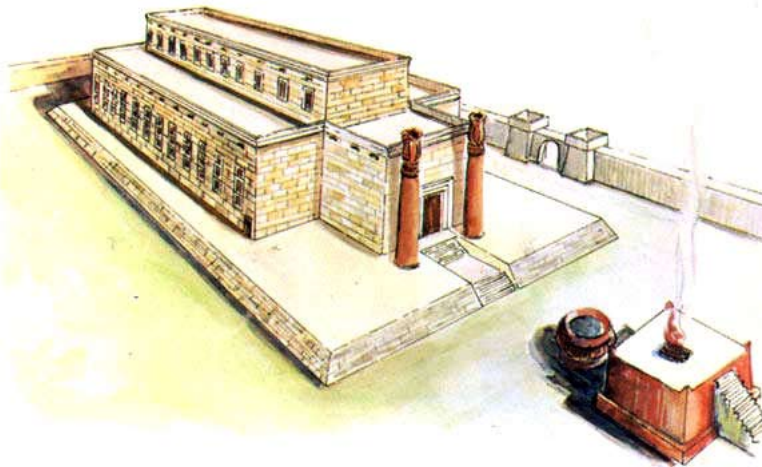
Consequently, the understanding that David is the author of this psalm represents only a guess, and is not directly asserted by the text itself when properly understood.

The questions. The two rhetorical questions of verse one raise the

concern of entering into the presence of God in His "tent" on His "holy hill." Clinton McCann (*New Interpreter's Bible*, iPreach) offers this insight:

The word "tent" (see Exod 33:7-11; Num 12:5, 10; Pss 27:5-6; 61:5) and the phrase "holy hill" (Pss 2:6; 3:4; 43:3) may certainly refer to the Temple on Mount Zion, God's chosen dwelling place on earth (see Pss 24:3; 46:4-5; 48:1-3; 132:13-14; 1 Kgs 8:1-11). The Temple symbolized God's presence. Thus, in effect, v. 1 inquires about the identity or life-position of those who belong to God (see Ps 1:1, 5). The first verb in v. 1 (**גֹּר** *gûr*) means literally "sojourn, be a resident alien." It suggests that no one can deserve to reside in God's presence. Rather, persons dwell with God only because of God's gracious permission (see Ps 5:7).

Several implications arise from the wording of the



Hebrew text. First, the point is entrance into Solomon's temple for worship of the God of the Israelites. Of course, the means that the psalm achieved its present form long after David's death. Peter Craigie (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems) elaborates:

Neither the date nor the author of Ps 15 can be specified with certainty, though the reference to the "holy mountain" (v 1) may indicate almost any period from the establishment of the sanctuary in Zion. (The reference to "tent" need not imply tabernacle, but may be synonymous to the word *temple* indicating the dwelling place and refuge of the righteous; see BDB, 14a). If Isa 33:14–15 may be understood as an adaptation of Ps 15, then the psalm was composed before Isaiah's time, though such a conclusion must remain uncertain. The presence of the psalm in the first Davidic Psalter indicates that, if its origin were indeed in the wisdom tradition, nevertheless it was incorporated eventually within the regular worship of Israel. The use of this psalm on Ascension Day, within the history of Christian worship, is entirely appropriate to its sense; the psalm speaks of admission to the presence of God, just as Christ was admitted to that full presence on his ascension.

But it underscores the intense concern of the Israelite leadership, the priests in particular, that only those who met strict requirements should be permitted to enter the temple for worship.

Second, the questions are framed from the vantage point of the resident alien living as a non-Israelite in the land of Promise, and not from an Israelite view. As McCann notes above, the Hebrew verb יָגִיר clearly stresses this angle. Harold Stigers (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Logos Systems) echoes this understanding in greater detail:

The root means to live among people who are not blood relatives; thus, rather than enjoying native civil rights, the *gēr* was dependent on the hospitality that played an important role in the ancient near east. When the people of Israel lived with their neighbors they were usually treated as protected citizens; foreigners in Israel were largely regarded as

proselytes.

Thus the focus is upon the non-Israelite living among the Israelites and seeking to worship the God of Israel. What is likely, however, is that the psalm doesn't address only the issue of the proselyte worshipping in the temple. More likely is that the resident alien language was intended to remind all Israelites that coming into the presence of God in the temple was not their right. Instead, it was exclusively at the prerogative of God as to whom He allowed into His presence. Thus anyone's entrance was permitted only so long as he met God's demands; and that the worshipper was to feel like an alien resident who dwelt in Israel solely at the hospitality of the Israelites. James Mayes (*Interpretation Commentary*, Logos Systems) underscores this:

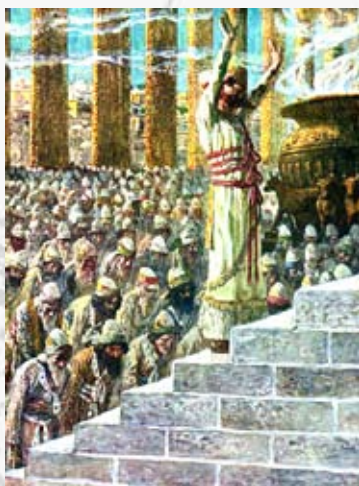
To speak about being in this sacred space, the psalm uses language from Israel's social life that referred to the resident alien, the outsider who was permitted to live along with those to whom tents and territory belonged. Those who enter the presence are like resident aliens, because they have no inherent right to be there; the privilege must be granted. The psalm's opening question is put in the style of direct address to the LORD, perhaps as recognition that only the LORD has the authority to determine who may

be there.

Third, the two questions represent synonymous parallelism. That is, they are asking the same question, not two separate questions. Although a slight shift in meaning exists between the two Hebrew verbs, וָיָגִיר and וָיָשָׁב, the essential meaning is essential the same.

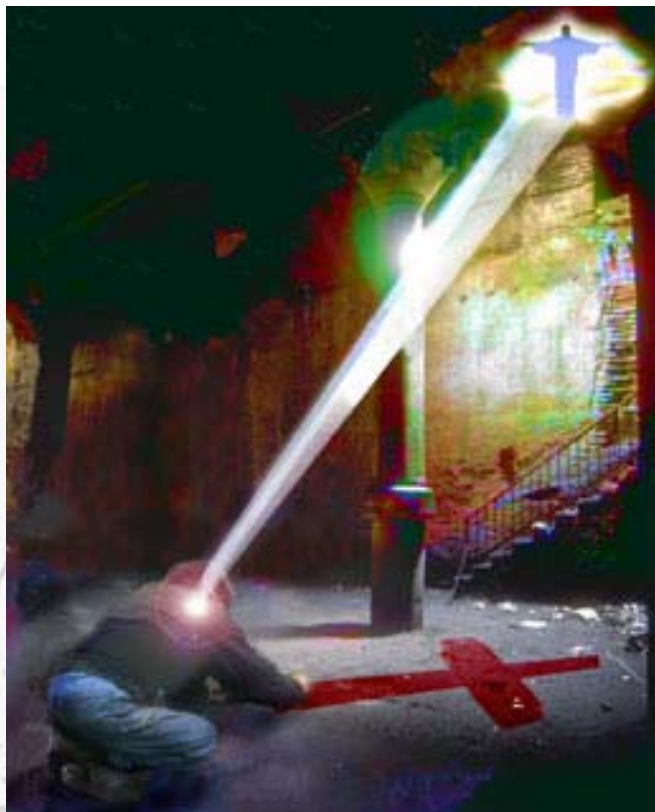
The central point is meeting the requirements for entering the temple to worship. Here is where Psalm 15 takes a slightly different direction from the Torah in the Books of Moses. In the Law of Moses the stress is mostly on cultic requirements. But here the stress shifts from the cultic to the behavioral and especially on interpersonal relationships, which comprises the content of the following section.

What does this have to do with us as Christians today? Actually a great deal. Down through the centuries of Christian interpretation this psalm has been seen as important especially as a part of the



worship in the celebration of Christ's ascension to Heaven. In Roman Catholic tradition this comes the 40th day after Easter Sunday, and is celebrated as the Feast of Ascension.⁶ It becomes an affirmation of the worthiness of Christ to ascend back to the presence of the Heavenly Father (cf. Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:2). The completion of God's plan of salvation of sinful humanity is thus accomplished.

But beyond this



comes the challenge of these questions to every believer not just on Sundays as we enter to church sanctuary for worship. But in the new covenant where **“true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth”** (Jhn. 4:23) there must be the awareness that we continuously live in the presence of God, as Paul declared to the Corinthians **“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?”** (1 Cor. 3:16). This demands a certain lifestyle on our part for the divine presence to be manifested in our lives.

⁶Wynne, John. “Feast of the Ascension.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 1. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. 30 May 2008 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01767b.htm>>.

b. Only the righteous, vv. 2-5a

Hebrew Text

² הוֹלֵךְ, תַּמִּים וּפְעֵל צֶדֶק וְדָבָר אֱמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ;
³ לֹא-רִגַל | עַל-לִשְׁנוֹ לֹא-עָשָׂה לְרַעְיָהוּ רָעָה וְחִרְפָּה לֹא-נִשְׁאַ
עַל-קֶרְבּוֹ; ⁴ נְבִיזָה | בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס וְאֶת-יְרֵאִי יְהוָה יַכְבֵּד
נִשְׁבַּע לְהִרְעֵ וְלֹא יִמָּר: ⁵ כִּסְפּוֹ | לֹא-נָתַן בְּנִשְׁךְ וְשִׁחַד
עַל-נַפְקֵי לֹא לָקַח עֲשֵׂה-אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִמּוּט לְעוֹלָם:

LXX

- ² πορευόμενος ἄμωμος καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην,
λαλῶν ἀλήθειαν ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ,
³ ὃς οὐκ ἐδόλωσεν ἐν γλώσσει αὐτοῦ
οὐδὲ ἐποίησεν τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ κακὸν
καὶ ὀνειδισμόν οὐκ ἔλαβεν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἔγγιστα αὐτοῦ,
⁴ ἐξουδένωται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ πονηρευόμενος,
τοὺς δὲ φοβουμένους κύριον δοξάζει,
ὁ ὁμνύων τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἀθετῶν,
⁵ τὸ ἀργύριον αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἐπὶ τόκῳ
καὶ δῶρα ἐπ' ἀθώοις οὐκ ἔλαβεν.

NASB

- 2 He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness,
And speaks truth in his heart.
- 3 He does not slander with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor takes up a reproach against his friend;
- 4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,
But who honors those who fear the Lord;
He swears to his own hurt and does not change;
- 5 He does not put out his money at interest,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

NRSV

- 2 Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,
and speak the truth from their heart;
- 3 who do not slander with their tongue,
and do no evil to their friends,
nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;
- 4 in whose eyes the wicked are despised,
but who honor those who fear the Lord;
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;
- 5 who do not lend money at interest,
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

NLT

- 2 Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right,
speaking the truth from sincere hearts.
- 3 Those who refuse to gossip
or harm their neighbors
or speak evil of their friends.
- 4 Those who despise flagrant sinners,
and honor the faithful followers of the Lord,
and keep their promises even when it hurts.
- 5 Those who lend money without charging interest,
and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent.

Notes:

This second section of the psalm provides a detailed answer to the introductory questions. The arrangement of the ten points in the answer poses some interesting background possibilities. Peter Craigie (*WBC*, Logos Systems) suggests a fascinating likelihood for there being ten answers to the questions:

As Mowinkel and other scholars noted (*The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, I, 179), the conditions for admission appear to be *ten* in number; there is some uncertainty about this “decalogical” structure, for it depends in part on the stichometric analysis and interpretation of vv 2–5b. Nevertheless, the number ten is fairly certain, and may be confirmed by the inner grouping of positive and negative conditions. Three positive conditions are

followed by three negative conditions, then two positive followed by two negative — total ten. The structure may be set forth in four groups as follows:

A. Positive Conditions	B. Negative Conditions (v
(v 2)	3)
(i) walking blamelessly	(iv) no falsity
(ii) doing right	(v) no evil
(iii) speaking truth	(vi) no reproach
C. Positive Conditions	D. Negative Conditions
(v 4)	(v 5)
(vii) despise reprobates	(ix) no usury
(viii) swear to do good	(x) no briber

This tenfold structure of conditions is analogous to the Decalogue in principle and with respect to the sense of wholeness, though there are no precise inner correspondences between the conditions and the Commandments. Rather, the tenfold structure suggests once again the didactic context of the wis-

dom school; young persons were being instructed to tick off, as it were, on their ten fingers the moral conditions prerequisite to participation in worship. Thus the conditions for admission to worship are apparently presented here in the curriculum of moral instruction and symbolically represent morality in its entirety, rather than covering every facet of the moral life in detail.

A chiasmic pattern sequences the six conditions in verses 2-3:

- a broad principle (2a) (+)
- b conduct (2b) (+)
- c speech (2b) (+)
- c' speech (3a) (-)
- b' conduct (3b) (-)
- a' broad principle (3c) (-)

These strophes as a unit form an antithetical parallelism with the positive followed by the negative lines. Thus line a' defines the opposite of line a. And so forth.

A. Positive Conditions (v. 2): “Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart;” (πορευόμενος ἄμωμος καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην, λαλῶν ἀλήθειαν ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ,). Three requirements are set forth here.

First, the worshiper is to *walk blamelessly*. As J. Barton Payne (TWOT, Logos Systems) notes,

With the verb's fundamental idea of completeness, Samuel

inquired of Jesse, “Are here all (Heb *hātammû*) thy children?” (I Sam 16:11). Cf. *tāmîm* (the root *tāmam*'s most common derivative), describing an entire day (Josh 10:13) or a whole, and therefore healthy, vine (Ezk 15:5). *mētōm* indicates soundness of flesh (Ps 38:3). *tāmîm* delimits Israel's sacrifices, which were to be without blemish, perfect in that respect, so as to be accepted (Lev 22:21–22) as types of Christ, the spotless Lamb of God (I Pet 1:19). Speech which is *tāmîm* (Amos 5:10) corresponds to “what is complete, entirely in accord with truth and fact” (BDB, p. 1071). Elihu was enabled to assure Job, “My words are not false; one who is perfect (*tāmîm*) is with you” (Job 36:4), because



of his inspiration by God, who is perfect (*tāmîm*) in knowledge (37:16, cf. 32:8, 18; 33:4). In the fullest sense it is Yahweh's acts (Deut 32:4; II Sam 22:31 = Ps 18:30 [H 31] and law (Ps 19:7 [H 8]) that are perfect.

tāmam moves naturally toward that which is ethically sound, upright (Ps 19:13 [H 14]). The “perfect” (*tāmîm*) decision, as made by lots, is the correct one (I Sam 14:41). As made by men, it is the right one (Jud 9:16, 19). Asaph praised the completeness (*tōm*) or integrity of King David's heart (Ps 78:72). *tāmam* is used with the commandments of God meaning to fulfill them (Josh 4:10). The AV translates Job 22:3, “if you make your ways perfect.” Abraham was instructed to be *tāmîm* (Gen 17:1), as was all Israel (Deut 18:13; cf. II Sam 22:33; Ps 101:2a, 6). They were to be “wholly” God's; for, even here, “the words which are rendered in English by ‘perfect’ and ‘perfection’ denoted originally something other and less than ideal perfection” (IDB, III, p. 730).

Second, the worshiper is to “do what is right.” The

Hebrew phrase וַפְעַל צֶדֶק is translated as ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην in the LXX and then as “works righteousness” (NASB) and “do what is right” (NRSV, NLT). As Clinton McCann (NIB, iPreach) says, “Those who belong to God also mirror God's character as they “do what is right,” for God is righteous (see Pss 5:8; 7:9, 11; 9:4, 8; see esp. 11:7).”

Third, the worshiper is to “speak the truth from their heart.” The Hebrew phrase ודבר אמת בלבבו is translated as λαλῶν ἀλήθειαν ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ in the LXX and then as “speaks truth in his heart” (NASB), “speak the truth from their heart” (NRSV), and “speaking the truth from sincere hearts” (NLT). Bratcher and Reyburn (*Translator's Handbook to the Bible*, Logos Systems) notes about this phrase:

The word translated *truth* (*emeTh*) comes from a root meaning “to be firm, reliable, trustworthy.” The phrase *from his heart* may be taken to indicate sincerity (so TEV; see SPCL “speak the truth with all his heart”); but see NJV “in his heart acknowledges the truth.” “*Whose words are true*” is said in some languages as “he who speaks with one mouth,” and in others, “he whose words are straight.” Many languages use expressions

based on the heart; for example, “he who speaks from a white heart.” TEV “*true and sincere*” is an attempt to include the element *from his heart*. Another way is “with his whole heart he speaks the truth” (SPCL). GECL⁷ has “he insists on thinking and speaking only the truth” (see also FRCL).

As has been noted by many commentators, the connection between these three is to set forth the broad principle first and follow it by two specific areas of living illustrating the application of the broad principle. Life is a journey through which we walk. And as we do, we do what is right and speak the truth genuinely.

B. Negative Conditions (v. 3): “who do not slander with their tongue, and do no evil to their friends, nor take up a reproach against their neighbors.” Again three conditions are set forth here and are framed negatively as opposites of their counter part in verse two.

First, the Hebrew phrase לֹא-רִגֵּל עַל-לִשְׁנֹו is translated as ὃς οὐκ ἐδόλωσεν ἐν γλώσσῃ αὐτοῦ by the LXX and then as “He does not slander with his tongue” (NASB), “who do not slander with their tongue” (NRSV), and “Those who refuse to gossip” (NLT).

The translation of the Hebrew text has a fascinating history, evidently because of some transcriptional errors made very early on, as Charles Briggs (*Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, Logos Systems) noted many years ago:

play the spy upon]. This is the ordinary meaning of the Heb. phr.; but a copyist in the omission of a single letter of the original “neighbour,” substituted a Hebrew word meaning “tongue,” and so made an obscure and unexampled phr. and construction, which has been rendered in various ways. Those most familiar to English readers, are: “He that hath used no deceit in his tongue” PBV; “He that backbiteth not with his tongue” AV.; “He that slandereth not with his tongue” RV.; none of which is well sustained.

Thus most English translations depend on the rendering of the LXX and the later Latin Vulgate for their understanding of this difficult Hebrew expression. As it stands, the perception is to not denigrate the character or reputation of another person by one’s

talk. Thus the meaning of רִגֵּל as “to slander” is a remote meaning of the verb, as is noted in most Hebrew lexicons.⁸ The context here is what favors this understanding.

Second, the Hebrew phrase לֹא-עָשָׂה רָעָה לְרֵעֵהוּ is translated as οὐδὲ ἐποίησεν τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ κακὸν by the LXX and then as “Nor does evil to his neighbor” (NASB), “and do no evil to their friends” (NRSV), and “or harm their neighbors” (NLT).

The Hebrew text here is clearer in its thrust. The righteous person refuses to do harm to those close to him as a friend (רֵעֵה), that is, a fellow countryman. This reflects from the negative angle the same idea in the above parallel “does what is right.”

Third, the Hebrew phrase עַל-קִרְבּוֹ לֹא-נִשָּׂא וְיִחַרְפֶּה is translated as καὶ ὀνειδισμὸν οὐκ ἔλαβεν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἑγγιστα αὐτοῦ by the LXX and then as “Nor takes up a reproach against his friend” (NASB), “nor take up a reproach against their neighbors” (NRSV), and “or speak evil of their friends” (NLT).

Once again the Hebrew text is not as clear and the English translations would lead one to believe, as Peter Craigie (WBC, Logos Systems) notes: “The precise sense of not taking up “reproach against his neighbor” is uncertain; the implication may be that such a person has not contributed to slander, spread rumors or perpetuated gossip about his neighbor.” Bratcher and Reyburn (*Translator’s Handbook to the Bible*, Logos Systems) offer this explanation:

Reproach (TEV “*rumors*”) translates a word meaning taunt, scorn, contempt. Dahood has “slur”; NEB “tells no tales against”; FRCL “does not insult”; NJB “casts no discredit on.” From the meaning of the verb *take up* in line c, NJV gets a different sense altogether: “or borne a reproach for [his acts

⁸For example, see the listing for “slander” in the [Hebrew lexicons](#) based on the NASB at Bible Study Tools. *Ragal* (רִגֵּל) is far from the most commonly used Hebrew verbs for the idea of slander. Ps. 15:3 and 2 Sam. 19:28 are the only two instances of the verb with this meaning in the entire OT out of over two dozen uses of the verb.

⁷GECL GERMAN COMMON LANGUAGE VERSION

toward] his neighbor,” that is, he has never so acted against his neighbor as to have been reproached for it. This does not seem very likely.

The text here comes back to the broad principle defined stated at the beginning of verse two (“walk blamelessly”), but here stated negatively.

In this first set of conditions we see a full orbit expression dealing with a foundational principle followed by references to conduct and speech. This is then restated in chiasmic reverse order from the negative view and thus adding emphasis to the overall thrust of the text.

The third and fourth sections that follow in vv. 4-5a stand as a triplet and a doublet pair of poetical strophes.

C. Positive Conditions (v. 4): “in whose eyes the wicked are despised, but who honor those who fear the Lord; who stand by their oath even to their hurt.”

Again a threefold set of conditions are put on the table.

First, the Hebrew phrase נִבְזָה בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס is translated as ἐξουδένωται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ πονη-ρευόμενος by the LXX and then as “In whose eyes a reprobate is despised” (NASB), “in whose eyes the wicked are despised” (NRSV), and “Those who despise flagrant sinners” (NLT). Bratcher and Reyburn (THB, Logos Systems) offer this helpful explanation:

The next qualification is literally “despised in his eyes (is) the reprobate.” A *reprobate* is a person who has been reprovved or rejected by God because of his or her evil way of life. The verb is used in the active voice with God as subject in 53.5; 78.59, 67; 89.38; with a person as subject in 36.4; 118.22. FRCL translates “he does not respect those of whom God disapproves.” SPCL takes *reprobate* to reflect human judgment and translates “he looks with contempt on those who deserve contempt.” NEB has “who shows his scorn for the worthless.”

The verb “to despise” in Psalms usually has God as the subject: 22.24; 51.17; 69.33; 73.20; 102.17 (see also 22.6b; 119.141). *Despised* is sometimes expressed as “to consider as nothing,” “to look down upon.” Line a is rendered in some languages “he looks down on the person God has considered evil” or “he considers as nothing the evil person whom God says ‘No’ to.”

Peter Craigie (WBC, Logos Systems) adds this

observation about the Hebrew text: “The one who despises the reprobate avoids the company and influence of evil persons.” The righteous person then does not indulge himself in the lifestyle of those whom God has condemned.

Second, the Hebrew phrase וְאֵת־יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה is

translated as τοὺς δὲ φοβουμένους κύριον δοξάζει by the LXX and then as “But who honors those who fear the Lord” (NASB), “but who honor those who fear the Lord” (NRSV), and “and honor the faithful followers of the Lord” (NLT).

Bratcher and

Reyburn (THB, Logos Systems) note:

“To honor” someone is to applaud his actions, to think highly of him, to speak of him with praise and admiration. *Honors* may be rendered by such expressions as “to say he is great” or “to speak well of his name.” This line is rendered in some languages as “he says that the man is great who follows God’s way.” To *fear the Lord* means to reverence, obey, worship, serve him (see comments on 2.11). *Those who fear the Lord* are the exact opposites of the *reprobate*.

Third, the Hebrew phrase לְהִרְעֹ וְלֹא יִמָּר is

translated as ὁ ὀμνύων τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἄθετῶν by the LXX and then as “He swears to his own hurt and does not change” (NASB), “who stand by their oath even to their hurt” (NRSV), and “and keep their promises even when it hurts” (NLT).

Again the explanation of Bratcher and Reyburn (THB, Logos Systems) is most helpful:

The meaning of the next qualification is disputed. (a) The Septuagint (followed by Syriac, Vulgate) combines the consonants of the Hebrew text (after the verb *who swears*) with vowels that make it mean “to his neighbor” (“he makes a promise to his neighbor and does not break it”). Briggs favors this. (b) The Hebrew text seems to mean “who swears to (do) evil,” which is obviously wrong. Dahood understands the Hebrew preposition here to indicate



separation, and translates “to do no wrong.” (c) The majority of commentaries and translations take it in the sense that RSV and TEV take it: a person who keeps his promise even though it hurts him, financially or otherwise.

Swears to his own hurt implies that the person invokes the supernatural as a witness or sanction for his statements. *Swear* is rendered in some languages as “I say this before God” or “I say this and God cuts it,” meaning that God decides if it is true and applies the appropriate sanction if it is not true. This line may be rendered “he swears before God that what he says he will do, and does not change his words” or “he tells God he will do something, and he really does it.”

Thus the righteous person is one who takes the same stance toward people as does God, and can be absolutely counted on to keep his promises.

D. Negative Conditions (v. 5a): “who do not lend money at interest, and do not take a bribe against the innocent.” Here a twofold set of conditions from a negative view are presented. Most likely they have close affinity with the preceding set as well.

First, the Hebrew phrase **כַּסְפּוֹ לֹא־נָתַן בְּנִשְׁךְ** is translated as τὸ ἀργύριον αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἐπὶ τόκῳ by the LXX and then as “He does not put out his money at interest” (NASB), “who do not lend money at interest” (NRSV), and “Those who lend money without charging interest” (NLT).

Peter Craigie (WBC, Logos Systems) throws light on the meaning and implications of this condition:

The last two conditions are in some ways the most specific of the ten. The person who would enter God’s presence must have avoided both usury and bribery. The implied condemnation of usury reflects a quite specific concern in ancient Israel. It is not the case that lending on interest was wrong in principle, but that it normally involved exploitation and abuse. Thus the Hebrew law prevented loans on interest to fellow Hebrews, but permitted them in business transactions with foreigners (see Deut 23:19–20, and Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 302–3). The reason was that a fellow Hebrew who was in need of a loan was almost certainly in distress; to make a loan to such a person and charge exorbitant interest would culminate in the aggravation of distress rather than its removal, so that if a

loan were to be made at all to a fellow Hebrew, it could only be secured by a pledge (cf. Deut 24:6), without interest. On bribery, see Exod 23:8 and Deut 16:19.

The ancient Hebrew world did not function as does the capitalist oriented American economy does. Loaning money to others was quite limited in that world. One borrowed money only in emergency situations. But the general principle of not taking advantage of those in need in order to profit off them remains the timeless principle here. And the righteous man follows such principles.

Second, the Hebrew phrase **עַל־נֶפֶשׁ לֹא לָקַח**



וְשֹׁחַד is translated as καὶ δῶρα ἐπὶ ἀθώοις οὐκ ἔλαβεν by the LXX and then as “Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent” (NASB), “and do not take a bribe against the innocent” (NRSV), and “and who cannot be bribed to lie about

the innocent” (NLT).

Bratcher and Reyburn (*THB*, Logos Systems) catch some of the flavor of the Hebrew text in their comments:

To take a bribe against the innocent means to accept money or some other kind of favor as payment for testifying falsely against an innocent person at a trial (see Exo 23:8; Deut 16:19; 27:25). *Bribe* is often expressed idiomatically; for example, “to bite with money” or “to close the eyes with gifts.” *Innocent* may be rendered “who has done no bad deed.” Line b may be translated “People cannot close his eyes with money to make him speak against those who have done no wrong” or “he does not accept gifts so that he will say things against”

Thus the picture painted by this tenfold response to the beginning questions outline a life lived in imitation of God and thus pleasing to Him. The response stresses more than ritual fitness to enter the temple, as Artur Weiser (*Interpretation Commentary*, iPreach) notes:

A song which opens with the question of who may sojourn in the house of God and then names the conditions governing admission to the sanctuary



obviously originated in the cultus. Questions such as the one which is asked here, the question of the ritual fitness required for taking part in public worship, were customary in antiquity in various forms and have been preserved right into the Christian cultus. Once every sanctuary probably laid down its own rules in accordance with which admission was granted by the priest. Those rules above all included the requirement of ritual purity. Similarly, at the shrines of Israel, and in particular at the Jerusalem Temple of which we have to think in this context (v. 1), such enquiries into the conditions of admission, followed by the instructions of the priest, seem to have been customary, as is evident from 2 Sam. 21:1 ff.; Zech. 7:3; Hag. 2:11 ff., just as even in the time of Jesus it was still the duty of the priests to decide whether or not someone was cleansed from leprosy; they also decided the associated question, whether he was fit to participate in the cult (Luke 17:14). The form of our psalm is likewise to be understood in the light of that custom....

The answer [in vv. 2-5b] is remarkable in several respects. First of all, it is a striking fact that in a song designed for the cultus no mention whatsoever is made of cultic matters such as sacrifices, offerings and purity rites, but only of moral requirements. It is these which are especially emphasized here. It is part of the essence of the Old Testament cult of the Covenant that "obedience" matters more than sacrifices. This is in keeping with the line of action taken by the prophets who in face of a wrong cultic development fought for the spiritualization of religion (Amos 5:21 ff.; Hos. 6:6; Is. 1:11 ff.; Micah 6:6 ff.; Jer. 7:21 ff.). The spiritual grandeur of the psalm rests on the high level of its ethics.

Thus Ps. 15:2-5b stands in the tradition of Ps. 24:3-6⁹ and Isa. 33:14-16,¹⁰ along with that in Micah 6:6-8.¹¹ To come before the Lord means we must prepare ourselves appropriately. And the Lord defines the guidelines.

What is the connection of these verses to us today? The liturgical setting of the psalm suggests the need to prepare ourselves for worshipping God in His house, whatever location that may be, all the way from a store-front church to a magnificent cathedral. And that preparation must take place long before we walk through the front door of the church.

That preparation centers on the way we live day

⁹ 3 Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? 4 Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. 5 They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation. 6 Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. (Selah)

¹⁰NRSV 14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: "Who among us can live with the devouring fire? Who among us can live with everlasting flames?" 15 Those who walk righteously and speak uprightly, who despise the gain of oppression, who wave away a bribe instead of accepting it, who stop their ears from hearing of bloodshed and shut their eyes from looking on evil, 16 they will live on the heights; their refuge will be the fortresses of rocks; their food will be supplied, their water assured.

¹¹NRSV 6 "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" 8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"



to day before God and with the people around us. These ten profiles define a righteous life to be lived as preparation to worship our God. That remains just as true today as it was for ancient Israel at she prepared to enter the temple in Jerusalem for worship.

c. The promise to the righteous, v. 5b

Hebrew Text

עֲשֵׂה-אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִמּוֹט לְעוֹלָם

LXX

ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα οὐ σαλευθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

NASB

He who does these things will never be shaken.

NRSV

Those who do these things shall never be moved.

NLT

Such people will stand firm forever.

Notes:

Unquestionably this declaration comes as the climax of the psalm. The nature of the promise offered to the righteous seeking to worship God is described helpfully by Peter Craigie (WBC, Logos Systems):

The promise (15:5c). The promise does not merely concern itself with security or freedom from trouble, oppression and the like. Indeed, the righteous very often were “shaken” (cf. Ps 13:5) in a literal sense, to the rejoicing of their enemies. The promise pertains to a more fundamental stability, indicated in the opening verse: “Who may reside in your tent?” (v 1). Answer: the righteous person (vv 2–5b), and come what may, he would not be shaken from that residence in the divine presence. Thus the “answer” of Ps 15 sets a useful perspective for the many laments contained within the

Psalter. From a human perspective, the psalmists were constantly shaken by their experience of human oppression and the vicissitudes of life, and so they issued their laments; but the only possibility of transforming lament into confidence or praise lay in the fact that there was an unshaken position transcending the vicissitudes of a shaken and uncertain life. That position was in the presence of God,

whether in public worship or private devotion.

Added to this are the interesting insights of Bratcher and Reyburn (THB, Logos Systems) from a translator's perspective:

The psalm closes with a promise for those who comply with these requirements: they will *never be moved* (for comments on the verb see 10.6). The security here spoken of is no doubt spiritual, but it also includes the material aspect, since in the thought of that time the two were obviously related (see 30.6). *Never be moved* (TEV “secure”) is rendered idiomatically in some languages as “not falling” or “sitting firmly.” The concluding line may sometimes be translated “People who live like this will always sit firmly” or “People who act in this way will not be carried off.”

When we as believers choose to live righteously before God through commitment to Christ and obedi-

ence to His commands we will stand unshaken by life and its ups and downs. The reason, we live in God's presence and that divine presence surrounds us with the power and love of Almighty God.

God help us then to always be prepared to enter His house for worship. For His promise to strengthen us remains firm to this very day.



Hebrew Text

מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד יְהוָה מִי־יָגֹר בְּאַהֲלָךְ מִי־שָׁכַן ^{WTT} Psalm 15:1

בְּהָר קִדְשֶׁךָ: ² הוֹלֵךְ תָּמִים וּפֹעֵל צֶדֶק וְדֹבֵר אֱמֻנָה בְּלִבָּבוֹ:

³ לֹא־רָגַל | עַל־לִשְׁנוֹ לֹא־עָשָׂה לְרַעְתּוֹ רָעָה וְחִרְפָּה לֹא־נָשָׂא

עַל־קִרְבּוֹ: ⁴ נִבְזָה | בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס וְאֶת־יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה יַכְבֵּד

נִשְׁבַּע לְהִרְעֵ וְלֹא יָמַר: ⁵ כִּסְפוֹ | לֹא־נָתַן בְּנִשְׁפָּךְ וּשְׁחָד

עַל־נֶקִי לֹא לָקַח עֲשֵׂה־אֱלֹה לֹא יָמוּט לְעוֹלָם:

LXX

Ψαλμός τῷ Δαυιδ.

Κύριε, τίς παροικήσει ἐν τῷ σκηνώματί σου

καὶ τίς κατασκηνώσει ἐν τῷ ὄρει τῷ ἁγίῳ σου;

² πορευόμενος ἄμωμος καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην,

λαλῶν ἀλήθειαν ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ,

³ ὃς οὐκ ἐδόλωσεν ἐν γλώσσει αὐτοῦ

οὐδὲ ἐποίησεν τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ κακὸν

καὶ ὀνειδισμόν οὐκ ἔλαβεν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἔγγιστα αὐτοῦ,

⁴ ἐξουδένωται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ πονηρευόμενος,

τοὺς δὲ φοβουμένους κύριον δοξάζει,

ὁ ὁμνῶν τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἀθετῶν,

⁵ τὸ ἀργύριον αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἐπὶ τόκῳ

καὶ δῶρα ἐπ' ἀθώοις οὐκ ἔλαβεν.

ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα οὐ σαλευθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

NASB

1 A Psalm of David.

O Lord, who may abide in Your tent?

Who may dwell on Your holy hill?

² He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness,

And speaks truth in his heart.

³ He does not slander with his tongue,

Nor does evil to his neighbor,

Nor takes up a reproach against his friend;

⁴ In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,

But who honors those who fear the Lord;

He swears to his own hurt and does not change;

⁵ He does not put out his money at interest,

Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

He who does these things will never be shaken.

NRSV
A Psalm of David.

O Lord, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?

- 2 Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,
and speak the truth from their heart;
- 3 who do not slander with their tongue,
and do no evil to their friends,
nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;
- 4 in whose eyes the wicked are despised,
but who honor those who fear the Lord;
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;
- 5 who do not lend money at interest,
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be moved.

NLT
A psalm of David.

Who may worship in your sanctuary, Lord?
Who may enter your presence on your holy hill?

- 2 Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right,
speaking the truth from sincere hearts.
- 3 Those who refuse to gossip
or harm their neighbors
or speak evil of their friends.
- 4 Those who despise flagrant sinners,
and honor the faithful followers of the Lord,
and keep their promises even when it hurts.
- 5 Those who lend money without charging interest,
and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent.

Such people will stand firm forever.

Summary of Rhetorical Structure:

The basic thought flow of the psalm is clear. The doublet set of questions at the beginning ask who can enter the temple? (v. 1) The answer then comes with a series of affirmations about lifestyle required to enable one to come into God's presence (vv. 2-5a). The concluding declaration affirms that those following these guidelines are established on a solid basis for life.