

## Psalms 26-32

### Psalms 26 through 32

#### Overview

The next section of the book of Psalms is dominated by references to the Lord's house:

Ps. 26:8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of **thy house**, and the place where thine honour dwelleth [the place of **thy glorious tabernacle**].

Ps 27:4 One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the **house of the LORD** all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in **his temple**.

Ps. 27:5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in **his pavilion**: in the secret of **his tabernacle** shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

Ps. 27:6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in **his tabernacle** sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

Ps. 28:2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward **thy holy oracle**.

Ps. 29:9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in **his temple** doth every one speak of *his* glory.

Ps. 30:1 A Psalm *and Song at the dedication of the house*, of David. *Probably not "the house of David," but "the house," that is, the temple, "of David" specifying (as usual) the author of the Psalm.*

Ps. 31:2 Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for **an house** of defence to save me.

Ps. 31:20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in **a pavilion** from the strife of tongues.

Ps. 32:7 Thou *art* my **hiding place**; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

A plot of words describing God's dwelling ( בית, אהל, היכל, ) משכן, סתר, סכה, דביר, peaks in these seven Psalms (Figure 1, chart), which Robertson calls the Royal Dwellingplace Psalms. Psalms 15-24, described the requirements for dwelling with God: now we consider that dwelling and the one who dwells there. The last group of

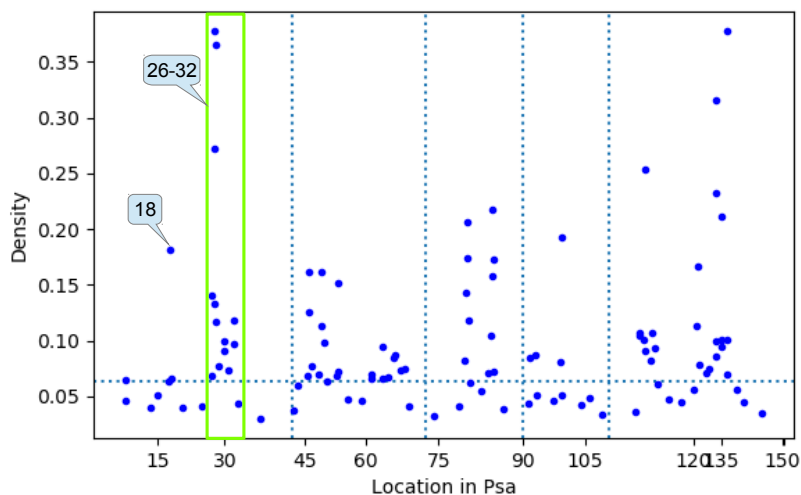


Figure 1: Words for God's house: בית, אהל, היכל, דביר, סכה, סתר, משכן

## Psalms 26-32

Psalms deals with suffering, and aligns well with Psalms 3-14, suggesting a chiasmic arrangement to Book 1 centered on Psalm 25 (Figure 2, chart).

The overall movement of this section is seen in shifts of genre (Table 1, chart).

- At the center (29) is a royal psalm, celebrating the Lord’s kingship. The Lord is presented as far too big to be contained in a physical house.
- The first three psalms are laments, with strong expression of confidence in the second (27).
- The last three are a Lament (31) surrounded by two Psalms of Thanksgiving (30, 32).

Laments and thanksgiving are closely related: both deal with God’s deliverance, the first in anticipation, the latter afterward. Many laments include thanksgiving for past deliverance.

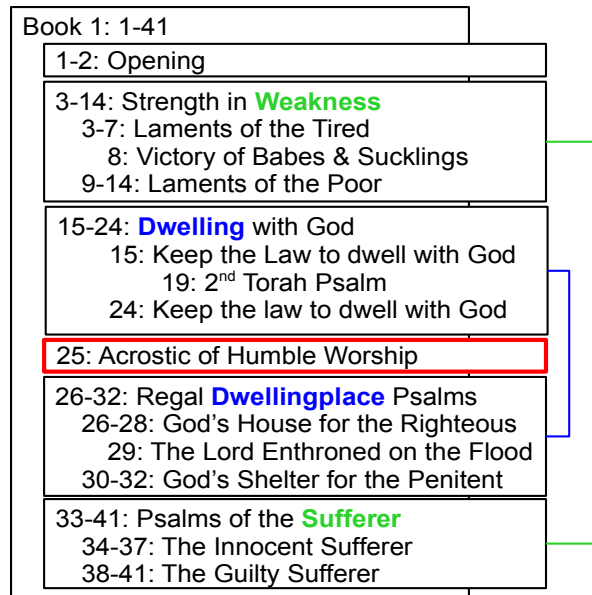


Figure 2: Structure of Book 1 (Pss 1-41)

According to Lund’s second law (shift at the center), the Psalms on each side of the center differ.

- 26-28 declare David’s Integrity: 26 (all), 28:3-4 (though he recognizes the threat of God’s anger in 27:9). But in 30-32, he confesses himself a sinner: 32:5; 30:5, 6; 31:10.
- In the first three, David’s opposition comes from the wicked; in the last three, it comes from the Lord; compare the distinction of Pss 6 and 13 from the rest of the laments in 3-14.
- In 26-28, God delivers David by punishing the wicked; in 30-32, by restoring him.
- The first three focus on a physical house of God; the last three, on God himself as a refuge.
- In 26-28, David praises God before the people (26:7, 12; 27:6) and prays for them (28:9), but 30-32 exhort the people to worship (30:6; 31:23, 24; 32:11).
- 26-28 have no type description. The center is a מזמור, like 30 and 31. 30 is also a שיר, and 32 a משכיל.

**29, Kingship Psalm**  
The LORD is enthroned over all

In summary, we read about the house of the God whom no house can contain (Ps 29). In 26-28, David longs for the physical house and chooses the people who gather there over the congregation of the wicked. This is the

Psalms 26-28, Lament Righteous David seeks God’s physical house Congregation is a passive audience	Psalms 30-32, Lament & Thanks Penitent David seeks God himself as a refuge He exhorts congregation to praise
David’s integrity	David’s sin
Opposition from the wicked	Opposition from God
Deliverance by punishing the wicked	Deliverance by restoration to fellowship
Physical house	God as the house of refuge (31:2, 20; 32:7)
David praises God before the people, 26:7, 12; 27:6; & prays for them, 28:9. Only one exhortation, singular (27:14)	David calls on the congregation (plural) to worship and praise (30:4; 31:23, 24; 32:11)
No type labels in the headings	Type labels: מזמור, שיר, משכיל.

Table 1: Structure of Psalms 26-32

## Psalms 26-32

young David, confident in his innocence. The congregation is passive; he praises God in their presence. Ps 30-32 reflect the older David, opening his heart and sharing with the congregation what he has learned about walking with the Lord, even in times of chastisement. Now he exhorts them to be active in praising God. These three Psalms are more pastoral, based on his promise in Ps 51,

Psa 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit. 13  
*Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

We may summarize the section,

The sovereign Lord (Ps 29) has established his house to gather his people together and away from the wicked (26-28), where they can learn from one another's walk with him (30-32).

### Psalm 26

David declares asks God to deliver him and vindicate his integrity so that he can worship before God's saints. His requests form chiasmic panels that alternate requests and statements, each followed by a declaration of his purpose (Table 2, chart).

**Psa 26:1 A Psalm of David.**

**Judge me, O LORD;**--The verb<sup>1</sup> is not inviting God's condemnation, but his delivery from enemies. David comes as a plaintiff, seeking justice. Note Psalm 43 (chart),

Psa 43:1 **Judge me**, O God, and **plead my cause** against an ungodly nation: O **deliver me** from the deceitful and unjust man.

**for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted נִצַּח also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.**--Notice the combination of trust and obedience, faith and works. David seeks to live according to his profession.

**2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.**--The request differs from v. 1. There, he was a plaintiff in a civil case, seeking deliverance from his adversaries. Here he is defendant in a criminal case, standing before God's law.

**3 For thy lovingkindness נֶחֱמָה is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.**--Correspondingly, the standard by which he judges himself is different. Now it is not "mine integrity" as in v. 1, but "thy lovingkindness" (covenant love), "thy truth," to which he devotes his full attention. As in Psalm 19, he is preoccupied with God's revelation of himself.

**4 I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. 5 I have hated the congregation קהל of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.**--He repeats the verb *walk* from 1b (also in v. 11), and also denies *sitting* with evildoers. In v. 12, he will claim to *stand* in integrity. This trio of verbs recalls the opening verse of the Psalter,<sup>2</sup>

Prayer for deliverance	1a Judge me		11b redeem me, be merciful to me
Statement of integrity	1b I have walked in my integrity		11a I will walk in mine integrity
Prayer for vindication	2 Examine, prove, try me		9 Gather (destroy) not my soul
Chosen association	3-5 Not the wicked		8 God's house
Motive: encouraging the faithful	6-7 Visit sanctuary → publish God's works		12 Maintain integrity → bless the Lord publicly

*Table 2: Structure of Psalm 26*

1 The verb is שָׁפַט (Strong 8199). The request recurs in Ps. 7:9; 35:24; 43:1.

2 It is the densest concentration of these verbs since Psalm 1; see note.

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Psa 1:1 Blessed *is* the man that **walketh** not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor **standeth** in the way of sinners, nor **sitteth** in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

With this parallel, we can see that v. 3 corresponds to Ps 1:2. David's delight in the law of God and his avoidance of wicked company meet the requirements of the opening Psalm.

**6 I will wash mine hands in innocency:**--These clean hands, with the pure heart of v. 2, satisfy the requirements of 24:4, "he that hath clean hands and a pure heart."

**so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:**--This verse and the next conclude the first panel. He has claimed not only God's deliverance from his adversaries, but also the position of the righteous man of Psalm 1. On this basis ("innocency"), and consistent with the requirements of Psalms 15 and 24, he approaches the Lord.

**7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.**--The motive for his approach is to share with other saints what God has done for him. This is the counterpart to avoiding the companionship of evildoers in vv. 4-5.

**8 LORD,**--The verse-initial vocative (contrast vv. 1, 2, 6) marks a break in the text, the beginning of the second panel (Table 2). He treats the same four themes as in the first panel, but in reverse order.

**I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth [the place of thy glorious tabernacle].**--In 2-5, he pled for justification before God because he did not associate with sinners. Now he bases the same request on his deliberate preference for the house of God, which he has already described (vv. 6-7) as the place where he can glorify the Lord before other saints.

**9 Gather not my soul [= destroy me] with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: 10 In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.**--"Gather" גָּסַח (Strong 622) has a penal sense, "take me away." He has rejected the company of evildoers (vv. 3-5) and instead sought God's house (v. 8), so he should not be condemned with them. He asks that the Lord spare him the penalty that the wicked will encounter.

**11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity:**--The verse is parallel to 1b, "I have walked in mine integrity." There, he declared his past conduct; here, he promises to continue in this path.

**redeem me פִּדֵּם, and be merciful חַנּוּן unto me.**--On this basis, he claims God's covenant favor in confronting his enemies.

The last verse completes the second panel. Like the first concluding verses (6-7), it declares his motive for these requests:

**12 My foot standeth in an even place:**--"Even place" is a geographic term, "tableland," but is often used metaphorically to speak of rectitude, fairness, and justice.<sup>3</sup> In addition, in parallel with v. 6, we are invited to see God's courts, where he desires to be, as a place of righteousness, the "even place" where he desires to take his stand.

**in the congregations מִמְּקוֹלָיִם will I bless the LORD.**--As in the first motive summary (vv. 6-7), his objective is to glorify the Lord for all of his blessings.

3 HALOT meaning 4, Isa 11:4; Mal 2:6; Ps 45:7; 67:5, which is certainly where they should have put this verse rather than in meaning 1.

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### Psalm 27

Shifts in person mark the sections of this Psalm. In vv. 1-6 David speaks *about* the Lord, describing him in the third person. In verse 7 he shifts to the second person, speaking *to* the Lord, but returning to the third person in vv. 10, 13, and 14. The overall structure is thus:

- 1-6, indicative statement of trust in the Lord and delight in his sanctuary
- 7-13, imperative requests for God’s deliverance and provision
- 14, final exhortation to a single hearer

**Psa 27:1 A Psalm of David.**--Again, there is no mention of the type of Psalm.

The indicative statement of his trust has two parts.

**The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. 3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this<sup>4</sup> will I be confident.**--First he describes how the Lord has already delivered him. This opening shows how close a lament and a Psalm of thanksgiving are. But why is his deliverance important to him?

**4 One *thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. 5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. 6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me:**--He wants to be delivered so that he can come into the house of God, where he can behold the Lord’s beauty. He is preoccupied with the Lord. Yet the temple to him is more than just a place for a private religious experience.

**therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy [הריעה Strong 8643 “joyful shouting”]; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.**--It is where he will find other worshippers, to whom he can exalt the Lord with loud songs of praise.

The lament (request) begins in the second half. He speaks to the Lord, alternating positive and negative petitions, both times with a final statement of confidence (Table 3, chart).

Positive petition	7 Hear, have mercy, answer	11 Teach me, lead me
Motive	8 your invitation	11b my enemies
Negative petition	9 Hide not, leave me not	12 Deliver me not
Motive	Thou hast been my help ... God of my salvation	False witnesses are risen up
Confidence (3 <sup>rd</sup> person)	10 The Lord will care for me when my parents are no more	13 The Lord will care for me

Table 3: Alternation in vv. 7-13

**7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy חַנּוּן also**

**upon me, and answer me.**--The verb here for “have mercy” (Strong 2603) indicates gracious condescension of a high and mighty person to a lowly one. Here, as in 4:1; 30:10, this request is coupled with a desire that God would hear him. One would not expect that such an exalted Lord would pay attention to the requests of his lowly creature, but David explains his bold approach:

4 Delitzsch: “in spite of this.” Compare Lev 26:27.



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**8** *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.*--David comes boldly because the Lord has invited him to come. He may have in mind

Deu 4:29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find *him*, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

**9** *Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.*--The next request is negative, that God would not abandon him.

**10** *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.*--Now he states in the third person his confidence that whoever else might forsake him, the Lord will still care for him.

**11** *Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. 12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*--In the second panel, we again have a positive petition and a negative one. This time the motives deal not with the Lord, but with his enemies.

**13** *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*--Again, he uses the third person to summarize his confidence in the Lord.

**14** *Wait (קוה Strong 6960) on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*--The Psalm concludes with an exhortation to wait on the Lord. To whom is David speaking?

The expression “be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart” is repeated in 31:24, but there the imperative is plural. We also have plural imperatives in 30:4; 31:23; and 32:11. Here it is singular. On the one hand, David might be encouraging himself:

Psa 62:5 My soul, wait (דמם Strong 1826) thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him.

Psa 42:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance.

On the other hand, the only other instance of the exhortation “Wait on the Lord” with this Hebrew verb is in Psalm 37, which is entirely in the singular, and toward the end we read,

Psa 37:34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*.

Yet this Psalm appears to be addressed to an idealized other person (like “my son” in Proverbs), with whom all readers are invited to identify themselves. Compare also

Ps 32:8 I will instruct thee and teach **thee** in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

In keeping with the emphasis on the congregation throughout the rest of this section, this “idealized other” seems most appropriate here, at least in the mind of the editor. David is speaking to other saints individually, but not exhorting them as a group, as he will in 30-32.

So as we begin Psalms 26-32, we encounter the confident, youthful David, insisting on his innocence as he rejects the company of the wicked in preference for God’s people at the temple.

## Psalms 26-32

### Psalms 28

**Psa 28:1** *A Psalm of David.*

A lament is a cry to God for deliverance, but often has other elements. This Psalm illustrates most of the usual elements (Table 4, chart).<sup>5</sup>

#### 1-4, *Petition*

**Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. 2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.**--These verses form the invocation—a request, not for God’s action, but for his attention.

“Oracle” דבִּיר (Strong 1687) appears only here in the Psalms. Kings and Chronicles use it often to describe the holy of holies in the temple, called “the holy place” Lev 16:2 or “the holy of holies” Ex 26:33, 34. 1 Kings 8:6 equates the two. But this Psalm is the earliest use of the term, and it’s worth thinking about why David introduces it.

Etymologically, the term comes from the root דבר, describing speech.<sup>6</sup> And indeed, the Holy of Holies was the place from which God communed with Israel (chart):

Exo 25:22 And there I will meet with thee, and **I will commune דבר with thee from above the mercy seat**, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. (cf. Num 7:89)

David asks that the Lord would not be silent, but would respond to his prayer. He directs his attention toward the ark. It was not at the tabernacle during David’s reign, so he could not use that term, but he coins the word “oracle,” one that Solomon adopts for the temple.

In Psalms 26-27, God’s dwellingplace was a place to gather with other believers and offer thanks to God for past blessings. Here, it is where one addresses oneself in time of need. From this verse Solomon derives, not only the name of the holy of holies in the new temple, but also his prayer of dedication in 1 Kings 8:22-53, where seven times he asks that if the people direct their prayers toward the temple, God would hear in heaven. He is following the example of his father.

Element	Verses in Psalm 28
Invocation	1 Unto thee will I cry; 2 Hear the voice of my supplications
Plea for help	3a Draw me not away with the wicked
Complaint	3b which speak peace to their neighbors, but mischief is in their hearts
Confession of sin	(Lacking)
Declaration of innocence	(Implicit in asking for judgment on the wicked)
Curse on enemies	4 Give them according to their deeds
Confidence in God’s response	5 He shall destroy them, and not build them up 7 The Lord is my strength and shield 8 The Lord is their strength
Hymn or blessing	6 Blessed be the Lord

*Table 4: Psalm 28 as Typical Lament*

5 The list is adapted from T. Longman, *How to Read the Psalms* (InterVarsity, 1988), ch. 1. We should not expect both confession of sin and declaration of innocence in the same Psalm, though confession and curse on enemies can come together (31:10, 17-18). These appear to be distinct categories. But Psalm 6 has imprecation in a lament where the main complaint is against God, not man. There is no confession of sin in either 6 or 13—perhaps these deal with a sickness for which David could not understand the source.

6 Thus Hengstenberg, following the ancient Jewish tradition and rejecting the more recent derivation from Arabic *duburun*, the back part.

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**3 Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.**--In Psalm 26, he rejected the company of the wicked, and prayed that God would not gather him with them in judgment (v. 9). Here he repeats that prayer. In fact, this is the only request he makes. He does not ask to be delivered from their abuse, but only that he would not share their judgment.

**4 Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.**--Such imprecations are common in the Psalms, and many believers feel they are contrary to our Lord's teachings. But he also taught that God would judge evildoers in "outer darkness," with "wailing and gnashing of teeth."<sup>7</sup> These curses are an inescapable part of the Psalms, and echoed in the New Testament. We should recognize in them a) a focus on God's honor rather than just our comfort, b) a desire for God to intervene to deal with injustice, c) a willingness to leave that intervention in God's hands ("Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord"), and d) a caution to examine ourselves, lest we fall into that same consuming fire.

### 5-8, Confidence

**5 Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.**--David is confident that the Lord will hear his prayer.

**6 Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. 7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.**--As in Psalms 26 and 27, he resolves to offer praise to the Lord for his deliverance.<sup>8</sup>

**8 The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.**--The plural, "their strength," is associated with David's reference to God's anointed. God hears him, not just as an individual Israelite, but as the chosen leader of God's people, and in that capacity he is confident that the God who is his strength (v. 7) will be the strength of his people as well.

### 9, Petition

**9 Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.**--As in 25:22, he ends the Psalm by applying his personal longing to the nation as a whole. As in that example, it serves a similar function to the dedication of other Psalms "to the chief musician."

## Psalm 29

Psalms 26-28 and 30-32 all have to do with circumstances in David's life, either asking for (26-28, 31) or giving thanks for (30, 32) God's help. In contrast, this Psalm focuses on the Lord.

**Psa 29:1 A Psalm מזמור of David.**--This is the first Psalm description in this group, מזמור, intended for accompaniment.

The Psalm begins and ends with a group of beings proclaiming the Lord's glory (Figure 3, chart). In vv. 1-2, the group is "ye mighty," literally "sons of God," a reference to the heavenly court,

7 Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30.

8 Hengstenberg suggests that v. 8 is in fact the content of the promised song.



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and they are being exhorted to praise the Lord. In 9b-11, the group is “his people,” gathered in the temple, and they are already proclaiming his glory. The two paragraphs are further united by references to “strength,” as an attribute of the Lord in v. 1, and as his endowment to his people in v. 11.

**Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. 2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**--The “mighty” are literally “the sons of the gods” בני אלים, probably the same as the “sons of God” בני האלהים in Job 2:1. Compare the same expression as here in Psalm 89 (chart):

Psa 89:6 For who **in the heaven** can be compared unto the LORD? *who* among **the sons of the mighty** can be likened unto the LORD?

These are members of the heavenly council, including wicked angels (like Satan, or the deceiver in 1 Kings 22) as well as righteous ones, and probably those whom the pagans worship (1 Cor 10:20). All of these heavenly beings must acknowledge that only the Lord is worthy of worship. This verse recalls the song of Moses in Exodus 15,<sup>9</sup>

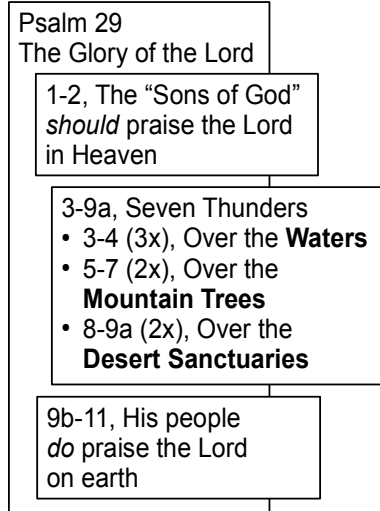
Exo 15:11 Who *is* like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods אֱלֹהִים? who *is* like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful *in* praises, doing wonders?

The psalm refers seven times to “the voice of the Lord.”<sup>10</sup> It describes the Lord as a thunderstorm moving from the sea, to the wooded mountains, and then on to the desert beyond, the usual course of a storm in this region (Figure 4). Each geographical reference is followed by an effect of the Lord’s voice.

A thunderstorm is one of the most powerful natural events, comparable in energy to an atomic bomb (see notes). Many ancient nations associated their deities with thunder and lightening. The Greek Zeus, the Roman Jove, and the Norse Thor were all gods of lightening; so was the semitic Hadad, often called by his title “Lord,” or Baal. David challenges the pagan gods of lightening to recognize the superiority of Israel’s Lord.

**3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. 4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.**--The storm starts over the Mediterranean. The Lord rules where Israel feared to go.

**5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. 6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. 7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.**--The storm makes landfall in



*Figure 3: Structure of Ps 29*



*Figure 4: Regions in Ps 29*

<sup>9</sup> Craigie (VT 1972 (22:2), 143-151) notes this parallel, and also a) the dual use of רַו as “refuge” (Ex 15:2, Ps 29:11) and “strength” (Ex 15:13, Ps 29:1), and b) the Lord’s name as sign of his strength: 15:3; 29:1-2

<sup>10</sup> Is there a link here to the seven thunders of Rev 10:3-4?

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the mountains of Lebanon, where it overcomes the mighty trees. The cedars and oaks are emblems of powerful and prestigious people,<sup>11</sup> laid low before the Lord's bolts of lightening.

**8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.**--Finally, the storm moves beyond the lush mountains into the arid wilderness. Kadesh was the name of more than one ancient city.<sup>12</sup> It means means "holy," or "sanctuary," and marks the location of pagan sanctuaries at those places. The Lord shakes them violently in his power.

**9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests:**--Even the animals are terrified by the thunder, and give birth prematurely.<sup>13</sup>

In the thunderstorm, the Lord descends from heaven to earth, challenging both the high trees (important people) and the desert sanctuaries of rival deities. Psalm 18, the other cluster of dwellingplace nouns in Book 1 (Figure 1), also depicts the Lord's coming as a thunderstorm:

Psa 18:6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his **temple**, and my cry came before him, *even* into his ears. . . . 11 He made darkness his **secret place**; his **pavilion** round about him *were* dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies. 12 At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, **hail stones** and coals of fire. 13 The LORD also **thundered** in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; **hail stones** and coals of fire. 14 Yea, he sent out his **arrows**, and scattered them; and he shot out **lightnings**, and discomfited them.

**and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.**--Finally David takes us into Israel's sanctuary, where God's people are doing what v. 1 exhorts the heavenly beings to do.

**10 The LORD sitteth [sat] upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.**--The word "flood" always refers to the deluge of Noah. David cites it as a summary of the Lord's superiority to the powers of nature. In the past, the flood showed his sovereignty. He continues to rule over everything, through all time.

**11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.**--Yet this powerful God has chosen a people and shares his own strength (v. 1) with them.

## Psalm 30

**Psa 30:1 A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house, of David.**--The reference is probably not to David's palace. "Of David" comes at the head of 75 other Psalms to indicate David as the author, and it likely has that meaning here also. In this case, "the house" would be the temple, which David dedicated when he purchased the threshing floor of Araunah (or Ornan) the Jebusite.<sup>14</sup> He sacrificed there at the instruction of Gad the prophet (2 Sam 24:18). David dedicated the site to the worship of the Lord, and Solomon built the temple there (chart):

11 As in Isa 2:12; Amos 2:9; Zec 11:1.

12 In the Bible, it is usually Kadesh Barnea in the south, but Kadesh in Syria was the site of a famous battle between Egypt and the Hittites in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Kadesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Kadesh)

13 Pliny, in his Natural history 8.72, notes, "The noise of thunder produces abortion in sheep, if they are left alone; to prevent such accidents, they are brought together into flocks, that they may be rendered less timid by being in company." <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0137%3Abook%3D8%3Achapter%3D72> . In view of this ancient belief, the frequent emendation of אֵילִים "hinds" to אֵילִים, "terebinths" (e.g., H. Cohn, Jewish Bible Quarterly, 1996 (24:4), 258-259) is unnecessary, particularly given the antiquity of the received reading (as documented by Cohn).

14 Hengstenberg develops the connection at length, and I have drawn several of my parallels from his commentary.

## Psalms 26-32

1Ch 21:28 At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. 29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, *were* at that season in the high place at Gibeon. 30 But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD. 22:1 Then David said, **This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.**

2Ch 3:1 Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where *the LORD* appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Recall the context: David numbered the people, the Lord sent a plague, David interceded, and then dedicated this location. The Psalm contains several allusions to this episode.

**I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.**--A summary of the Psalm is that the Lord has delivered David from a difficult situation. The reference to his foes may recall one of the three options that Gad offered David, being pursued three months by his adversaries.

**2 O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. 3 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.**--David had offered himself as a substitute for the people, but the Lord spared him:

1Ch 21:16 And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders *of Israel*, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. 17 And David said unto God, *Is it not I that* commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but *as for* these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.

**4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.**--Given this background, it is certainly appropriate that he invite the saints to join him in thanksgiving, a mark of the second half of the pyramid.

**5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.**--The plague that the Lord sent after the numbering of the people, though intense, was brief. It was originally appointed for three days, but: (chart)

2Sa 24:15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men.

“The time appointed” is עַת מוֹעֵד, which can be understood as “the time of the sacred meeting,” the evening sacrifice. In this case, through the Lord’s mercy and David’s intercession, the plague would have been limited to less than a day.

**6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.**--David confesses his proud self-confidence, which helps us understand what lies behind the judgment.

Recall Nebuchadnezzar. When he proudly contemplated his kingdom, God smote him:

Dan 4:29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. 30 The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

## Psalms 26-32

The last chapters in 2 Samuel are organized chiastically, rather than chronologically.<sup>15</sup> In the more chronological record in 1 Chronicles, chapters 19-20 record military victories against the Syrians, the Ammonites, and the Philistines. Then, in 1 Chronicles 21, David numbers the people. His census is like Nebuchadnezzar's walk around his palace, surveying the greatness of Babylon. His confidence is based in his power and his achievements, not in the Lord.

This is the third time the Psalms record the statement of confidence, "I shall not be moved." The first was by the wicked, denying that God can intervene:

Psa 10:4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God*: God is not in all his thoughts. 6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for *I shall never be in adversity*.

The second is the only right basis, the protection of the Lord that goes along with our complete preoccupation with him:<sup>16</sup>

Psa 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

This Psalm, and the numbering of the people, warn us that just because we do not deny the Lord as in Psalm 10, we are not necessarily trusting in the Lord as in Psalm 16. We may be resting on a false confidence in our own prosperity, without recognizing it as a gift from the Lord.

**7 LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.**--Now he acknowledges that when he was strong, that was the Lord's gift, and ceased the moment God's favor was withdrawn.

**8 I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. 9 What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? 10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy **יְהוָה** upon me:**<sup>17</sup> **LORD, be thou my helper.**--This is an amplification of the summary in v. 2, which in turn recalls David's prayer as he saw the angel approach Jerusalem.

**11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;**--In 1 Chr 21:16. David and the elders of Israel had donned sackcloth to intercede for the Lord's mercy at the approach of the angel of death.

**12 To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.**-- "My glory" is a metaphor for "my soul," as the most prominent part of the person. Compare

Psa 7:5 Let the enemy persecute **my soul**, and take *it*; yea, let him tread down **my life** upon the earth, and lay **mine honour כבודי** in the dust.

**To the chief Musician**—This is the only one of the Royal Dwellingplace Psalms that is assigned to the chief musician, which would be particularly appropriate given the occasion of its composition.

<sup>15</sup> See Bergen's commentary on Samuel.

<sup>16</sup> Compare Psa 62:5, which makes the same point, though with לֹא rather than בִּלְאִי as in the other three

<sup>17</sup> Compare 4:1 and 27:7 for similar petitions to "hear" based on an appeal to God's "mercy."

## Psalms 26-32

### Psalm 31

This Psalm, like 26-28, is a lament. Most laments declare confidence in God. This one moves between petition and confidence (marked by verbs of trust) three times (Figure 5, chart). After the summary, v. 1, petition in 2-4 moves to confidence in 5-8, and unfolds into a chiasm in 9-18. The last section, 19-24, moves from singular to plural as David shares his experience with the people.

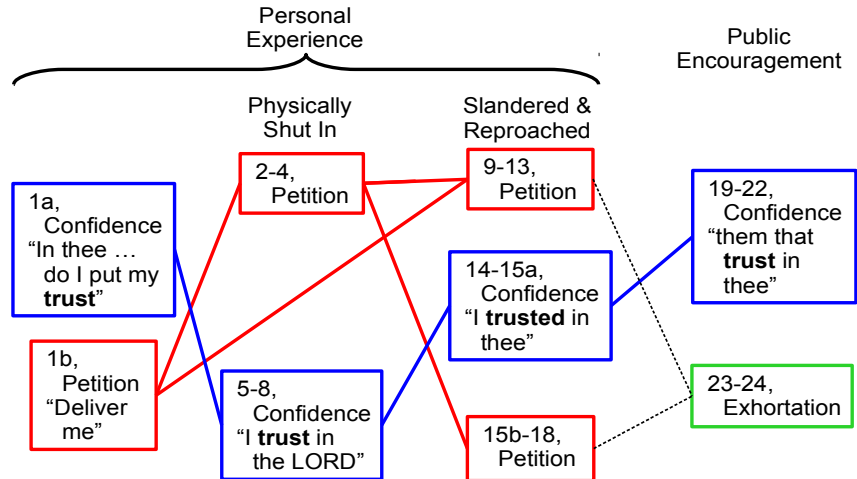


Figure 5: Structure of Psalm 31

Here he asks, not for the Lord to deliver, but for the people to join him in praise to God.

In enumerating the attributes of God that lead him to care for his people, this Psalm recalls Psalm 25. Note its emphasis on things that belong to God:

- his attributes, “thy righteousness” (1), “thy name’s sake” (3), “thy mercy חסד” (v. 7,16, 21), “thy goodness” (19),
- and anthropomorphisms: “thine ear” (2), “thine hand” (5, 15), “thy face” (16, 20), “thine eyes” (22).

In adversity, David focuses on the Lord. He is doing what he summarizes earlier,

Psa 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Most commentators who date the Psalm put it early in David life (see note), but the reference to his iniquity (v. 10) suggests that it belongs to the later troubles, under Absalom.

**A Psalm מזמור of David.**--Again, a Psalm intended for accompaniment.

### 1, Summary

**In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust** **הסה**; **let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.**--This verse introduces the two main themes of confidence and petition.

Each confidence section (Figure 5), expresses trust in the Lord. Here and in v. 19, the word is “take refuge,” while in vv. 6, 14 it is the more general term for trust, describing confident hope.

The motive is God’s righteousness—not as judge, for David has sinned (v. 10), but his righteousness to protect those who, like David, place themselves under his care. (See note.) Compare vv. 6-7: because he worships the Lord alone, God must keep covenant with him.

### 2-8, First Cycle

David is physically trapped by his adversaries, “shut up” (v. 8) as in a net (v. 4).



## Psalms 26-32

### 2-4, Petition

**2 Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.**--Here is the “house” or dwellingplace. Now the focus is not on the temple or tabernacle, but on God himself as a house of refuge for the needy.

“Thine ear” anticipates “thine eyes,” v. 22. David is confident that the Lord knows his problems.

**3 For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.**--The appeal to God’s name recalls Joshua’s prayer after the defeat at Ai (chart):

Jos 7:9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear *of it*, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto **thy great name?**

God’s motive in delivering us is not just compassion, but care for his reputation. God has promised him a dynasty.<sup>18</sup> If God abandons him, what becomes of this promise?

**4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.**--The specific threat is being trapped, as Absalom’s forces seek to close in on David. Recall their strategy, to trap him in a city:

2Sa 17:13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there.

### 5-8, Confidence

The answer to this threat of physical constraint is his trust in the Lord.

**5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.**--Our Lord quotes the first half of this verse on the cross:

Luk 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, **into thy hands I commend my spirit:** and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

There is a difference. David knows that the Lord has redeemed him, but our Lord is doing the redeeming.

God’s ear (v. 2) makes him aware of David’s need. Now his hand acts on David’s behalf. “Thine ear” assures us that God knows of our problems; “thine hand,” that he is powerful to act.

**6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust יהוה in the LORD.**--As in the other confidence sections, the key is his trust in the Lord. “Lying vanities” is a reference to false gods. David affirms that he worships the Lord alone, and so he is confident that God will defend him. Jonah found comfort in this verse, and quotes it from the belly of the fish:

Jon 2:8 They that observe **lying vanities** forsake their own mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. Salvation *is* of the LORD.

**7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy יהוה:**--This “mercy” is God’s covenant faithfulness. Because David worships the Lord alone (v. 6), he claims God’s faithfulness to protect him.

**for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;**--Here we have the action of God’s ears, being aware of his trouble.

<sup>18</sup> Assuming that the opposition in view is by Absalom, so 2 Samuel 7 has already happened.

## Psalms 26-32

**8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.**--And here we have his hand in action. Corresponding to the nature of the threat in v. 4, the deliverance consists in being set free.

### 9-18, Second Cycle

The attack becomes verbal. He is reproached (v. 11), slandered (v. 13), abused by lies (v. 18).

### 9-13, Petition

**9 Have mercy** **הֲנֵן** **upon me, O LORD,**--This mercy is of a powerful person toward a lowly one.

**for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. 10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.**--We will see a similar expression about his bones in Ps 32:3. His flight from Absalom reminded him of his guilt in the matter of Bathsheba.

**11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. 12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. 13 For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side** **מִגֹּר מִסְבִּיב**--Now the attack takes the form of reproach and slander. Everybody speaks ill of him and rejects him, perhaps because of his sin with Bathsheba.

Jeremiah picks up this expression word for word:

Jer 20:10 For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side.

Jeremiah repeats the last phrase four other times, describing the terror that surrounded Jerusalem in the time of Nebuchadnezzar's siege: Jer. 6:25; 20:3; 46:5; 49:29. In his day, as in David's, people love to worry. They are preoccupied with their troubles, not with the Lord.

**while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.**--This emphasis on planned opposition to him fits much better with the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam 16:20-17:14) than with the mad, spontaneous raging of Saul.<sup>19</sup>

### 14-15a, Confidence

**14 But I trusted** **בָּתְּךָ** **in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. 15 My times are in thy hand:**--Again, the confidence section refers to trusting the Lord, using the more general word from v. 6. David's response to this universal rejection is to draw close to the Lord. In fact, one reason that the Lord allows rejection in our lives is to force us back to him.

### 15b-18, Petition

Now David returns to his petition.

**deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. 16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' [mercy's] חַסְדֵּךְ sake.**--In v. 9 he called on God's condescending grace; now he returns, as in v. 7, to God's covenant love.

<sup>19</sup> **יָעַץ** and **עָצָה** appear 16x in 2 Samuel, all in ch. 15-17 in connection with the rebellion of Absalom, but not at all in 1 Samuel and its description of the reign of Saul. The verbs for "counsel" in 31:13 do not occur in Samuel.

## Psalms 26-32

**17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee:**--As in v. 1, it would be unrighteous for God to abandon one who has placed his trust in the Lord.

**let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. 18 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.**--In an imprecation, David recalls once more the verbal abuse that is the focus of this second petition, and asks that God would deal justly with his adversaries.

### 19-24, Third Cycle

Note shift to plural in the next verses: “them,” David now shares his experience with others.

### 19-22, Confidence

**19 Oh how great is thy goodness טוֹב, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust אִסָּת in thee before the sons of men!**--The final section of confidence is again marked with “trust,” returning to the word for taking refuge in v. 1.

**20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret [place] of thy presence [face] from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.**--Again, we have references to a secure dwelling place, again, as in v. 2, the Lord himself is this refuge. “The strife of tongues” recalls the opposition that he faced in vv. 9-18.

**21 Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness חַסֵּד in a strong city.**--The “strong city” (see note) is probably Mahanaim, where he took refuge from Absalom, and received the news that the rebellion had been put down.

**22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.**--He confesses a moment of weakness, thinking that God did not attend to his need, but in spite of his lapse, the Lord heard his cry.

### 23-24, Exhortation

**23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. 24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.**--As in all the Psalms of this second section, he exhorts the saints to join with him in praising the Lord. With v. 24, compare 27:14, but here plural.

## Psalm 32

This Psalm, with Psalm 51, concerns David’s sin with Bathsheba (Figure 6, chart). It rejoices in the forgiveness that Nathan proclaims, and so comes after 2 Sam 12:13.

*A Psalm of David, Maschil.*--*Maschil* comes from the verb “to instruct,” which appears in v. 8.

The Psalm has two parts, each structured chiastically (Figure 7, chart). In the first, David recalls his own forgiveness. In the second, he exhorts others from his example. The first chiasm moves from statements about God to prayer to God, while the second moves in the opposite direction.

## Psalms 26-32

### 1-5, David's Experience of the joy of forgiveness

**Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity,**--The Psalm begins by repeating the first word of the Psalter, "Blessed" (אַשְׁרֵי). This is the first use of that word, since 1:1 and 2:12 (chart):

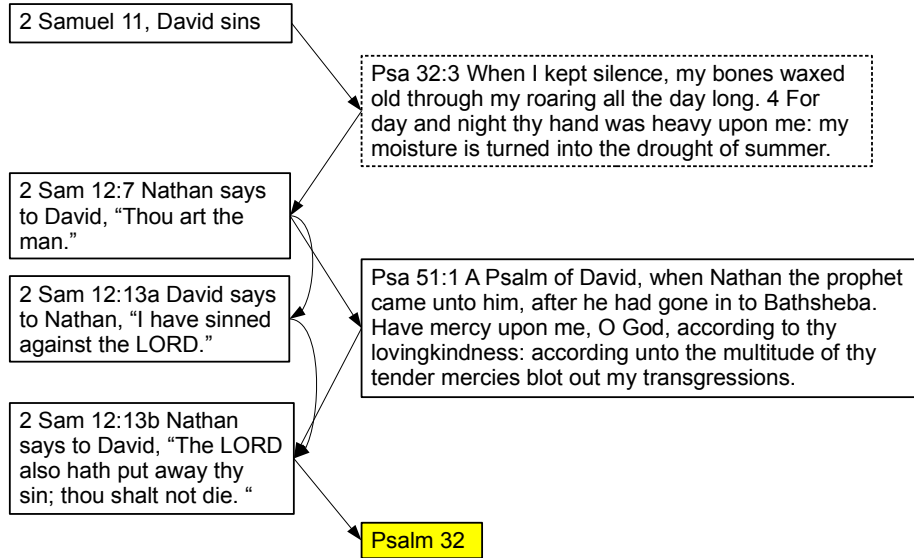


Figure 6: Context of Psalm 32

Psa 1:1 **Blessed** is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Psa 2:12 **Blessed** are all they that put their trust in him.

There, David declared the happiness of the one who keeps God's law and takes refuge in him. Here, he describes someone who has sinned, and whom the Lord has forgiven. How can a God who demands the holiness of Psalm 1 and the submission described in Psalm 2 bring blessing on those who have rebelled against him?

**and in whose spirit there is no guile.**--Guile means deception or evasiveness. The secret is in the sinner's willingness not to try to deceive God (and his fellows) about his sin.

**3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. 4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.**

**Selah.**--David remembers the period between his sin and the arrival of Nathan in 2 Sam 12:1.

When we sin against the Lord, we may try to hide our sin, fearing discovery. But if we are the Lord's, he will make us miserable in our silence.

**5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD;**--David recalls his decision to abandon guile. When Nathan confronted him, he confessed his sin, and Psalm 51 records his confession.

**and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.**

**Selah.**--As a result, David experienced the blessedness of vv. 1-2.

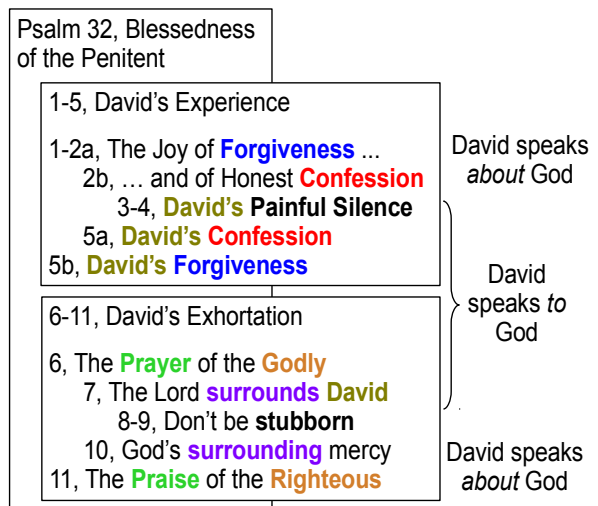


Figure 7: Structure of Psalm 32

## Psalms 26-32

### 6-11, David's Exhortation to others

As part of his confession in Psalm 51, David asked for God's forgiveness, and made a promise:

Psa 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit. 13 *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

In these six verses, he fulfills this promise. He begins by speaking to God.

**6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.**--Because of David's experience,<sup>20</sup> he encourages every "one that is godly" to come to God. It is clear that by "godly" (הַסִּיד, Strong 2623) he does not mean "sinless." The word is related to הָסֵד Strong 2617, and refers to those with whom God has made a covenant. It's important to remember that though men may violate the terms of God's covenant, the covenant persists:

Lev 26:14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; 15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, *but* that ye **break my covenant**: 16 I also will do this unto you; ... [all manner of terrible things are described.] ... 44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, **neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them:** for I *am* the LORD their God. 45 But **I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors**, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD.

David is not describing the process by which a pagan submits to the rule of the Lord. He is focused on the problem of one of God's saints who falls into sin. However far we fall, we can always call on God's covenant faithfulness, and know that he will restore us.

**7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.**--David tried to hide his sin from men, but by confessing it, he obtains much better protection. Men might despise him for his wickedness; this may be the source of the slander and reproach in 31:9-18. But the Lord will protect him.

**8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. 9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.**--In view of his experience, and in fulfillment of his promise in 51:12, David urges his hearers to deal promptly with their sin. The "bit and bridle" are the chastisements which God brings on his children who do not heed him, to get their attention. His hearers should cast themselves upon the Lord.

**10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth בָּטָח in the LORD, mercy הַסֵּד shall compass him about.**--Now we return to the theme of the Lord's encompassing care. This time, the wall of protection is not just for David, as in v. 7, but for anyone who trusts in the Lord.

**11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.**--Thus may the sinful saint who prays to God, become one of the company of the righteous who join in praising the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> על-יזאת probably indicates cause, not the content of the prayer; see notes.



# Psalms 26-32

## Notes

### **Sit, Walk, Stand**

This trio of characteristic verses from Psalm 1 recurs in high concentration in Psalm 26. Figure 8 shows a density plot. The first major peak is Psalm 1; the next largest are 26 and 33. The lower peaks are at 9-10 and 38-39.

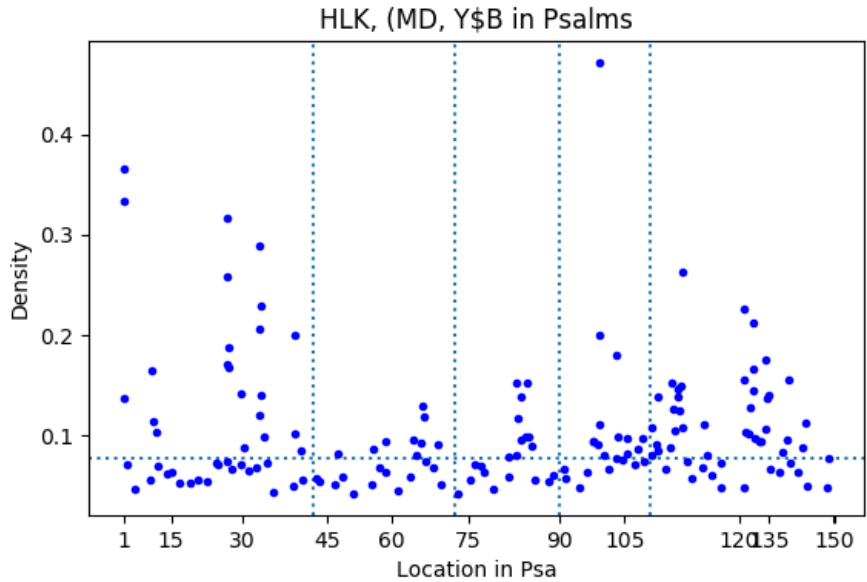


Figure 8: Instances of הלך, עמד, ישב in Psalms

### **חנני, Have Mercy on Me**

This petition peaks in 3-14 and again in 26-32 (Figure 9). This is remarkable, a skewing of the chiasitic symmetry outlined in Figure 2.

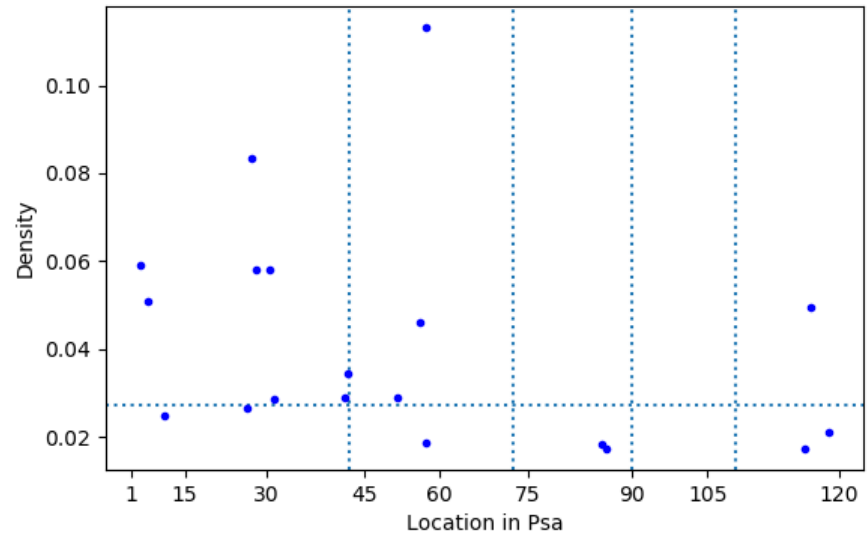


Figure 9: חנני "Deliver Me" in the Psalms

### **Power in a Thunderstorm**

Thermonuclear weapons have energy yields measured in kilotons of TNT. A kiloton is about 4E12 joules

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear\\_weapon\\_yield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapon_yield));

a large thunderstorm

generates on the order of 2E15 joules (<https://www.quora.com/How-does-the-energy-of-a-thunderstorm-compare-with-a-nuclear-bomb>), or about 50 kilotons. Modern nuclear weapons are in the range of megatons, or 10<sup>18</sup> joules, about a thousand thunderstorms, which is about how many happen each hour throughout the world ([http://www.weathercast.co.uk/weather-news/news/ch/483667390721dfb66546888daa9498f4/article/the\\_frequency\\_of\\_thunderstorms.html](http://www.weathercast.co.uk/weather-news/news/ch/483667390721dfb66546888daa9498f4/article/the_frequency_of_thunderstorms.html)).

### **Setting of Psalm 31**

Setting: Maclaren associates this Psalm with 1 Sam 27:1-6. After David has been betrayed by the men of Keilah and Zipf, and rejected by Nabal, he flees to Achish of Gath, who gives him the

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city of Ziklag, the עִיַת מְצוֹר “strong city” of v. 21, a welcome change from the caves and rocks where he has been taking refuge. Delitzsch endorses this association.

Alternatively, מְצוֹר can mean “siege,” and one might understand the expression in v. 21 of a besieged city (though the usage elsewhere is always “strong city,” 2 Chr. 8:5; Ps. 60:11 (ET 9); Mic. 7:12 ). On this basis, Scott suggests that the reference is to Keilah:

1Sa 23:8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to **besiege** צוֹר David and his men.

ESV and NET both translate “besieged city,” and HALOT places the reference under the entry defining מְצוֹר as “distress, siege” (though recommending an emendation).

Both of these events are early in his life, before he took the throne, and not a period that we think of as characterized by “iniquity,” v. 10. Delitzsch supports this early period by noting David’s reference to haste הָפֵז (v. 22, compare 1 Sam 23:26).

But Gill notes that

“strong city” could also refer to “the city of Jerusalem, which was fortified both by nature and art, whither he was brought and placed as king, and enjoyed rest from all his enemies round about him.

I prefer a reference to Mahanaim, a city with a wall and double gates (2 Sam 18:24), where David took refuge during Absalom’s rebellion. This would be consistent with other indications of a later date:

- the verbal nature of the opposition, reflecting Absalom’s deliberate opposition rather than Saul’s mad impulsiveness;
- his consciousness of his iniquity, v. 10, after his sin with Bathsheba.

### **31:1 “In thy righteousness”**

Luther appears to have understood the term of the imputed righteousness of Christ. In discussing the phrase in 4:1, “O God of my righteousness,” he compares our verse, and says, “Ps. 31:1, ‘Deliver me in thy righteousness’ not in mine.”<sup>21</sup> And in fact, at the same time David rests his petition on God’s righteousness, he confesses his own iniquity, v. 10.

But Calvin summarizes the options well:

David desires to be *delivered in the righteousness of God*, because God displays his righteousness in performing his promise to his servants. It is too much refinement of reasoning to assert that David here betakes himself to the righteousness which God freely bestows on his people, because his own righteousness by works was of no avail. Still more out of place is the opinion of those who think that God preserves the saints according to his righteousness; that is to say, because having acted so meritoriously, justice requires that they should obtain their reward. It is easy to see from the frequent use of the term in The Psalms, that God’s righteousness means his faithfulness, in the exercise of which he defends all his people who commit themselves to his guardianship and protection. David, therefore,

21 Lenker, *Luther’s Commentary on the First Twenty-Two Psalms*, Vol. 1. Sunbury, PA: Lutherans in All Lands, 1903, p. 151.

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confirms his hope from the consideration of the nature of God, who cannot deny himself, and who always continues like himself.<sup>22</sup>

So there are three options:

- Imputed righteousness, Luther's position, which Calvin thinks is "too much refinement."
- Judicial righteousness, because David is righteous, but this is contrary to v. 10.
- There remains God's righteousness to protect those who trust in him.

### על-זאת 32:6

There are two possible interpretations.

Delitzsch takes the expression as denoting the object or content of the prayer:

For this mercy, which is provided for every sinner who repents and confesses his sin, let then, every חסיד, who longs for חסד, turn in prayer to Jahve ...

But Hengstenberg objects:

After the example of the Vulgate (*pro hac*), many expositors give, "for this thing," viz. "for the forgiveness of sin." But התפלל never occurs with על of the object. The object of the prayer, viz. the forgiveness of sin, is not specified, because the context renders it apparent.

HALOT indicates that usually the object of התפלל is governed with בעד, and in Jb 42:8 Neh 1:6 2C 30:18 על indicates "on behalf of." It does cite על as indicating the object of prayer (a by-form of אָל) in 2 Chr 32:20, actually another instance of על זאת, but AV takes this as causal as well:

2Ch 32:18 Then they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech unto the people of Jerusalem that *were* on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city. 19 And they spake against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, *which were* the work of the hands of man. 20 And **for this cause** Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, **prayed** and cried to heaven.

Other uses of על זאת: HALOT cites 2 Chr 16:10 as a causal use, and many other instances admit this construction as well.

In view of the established use of בעד to indicate content, and the ambiguity of 2 Chr 32:20, I'll go with Hengstenberg.

22 Calvin, J., & Anderson, J. (2010). [Commentary on the Book of Psalms](#) (Vol. 1, p. 499). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.