

PSALLO

Psalm 5:1–12

You have before you a new metrical translation and tune for Psalm 5. The title of the Psalm is one of the more obscure, due to the word *נְהִילוֹת* (*nehiloth*) which is not used anywhere else in the Old Testament. It is variously held to refer to armies, heritages, or more likely, to the more musically oriented “flutes.”¹ We have discussed in prior issues the other term, *לְמַנְצֵחַ* (*lamnatseach*) as “To the Chief Musician” or “To the Choirmaster,” and that this identifies the certain public use of the Psalm in the worship of God as it comes from the hand of the King-Prophet, David. We might render the title as “To the Chief Musician, upon the flutes, a Psalm of David.” Many of these musical notations in the Psalter titles are difficult in application, referring perhaps to instruments themselves, or to particular types of tunes used known to the culture and history of the Hebrew Church.

In translation, we have endeavored to keep alive words used in translations that have stood the test of time in the Church, from the Scottish Metrical Psalter and the Authorized Version of the Bible, while also introducing a new metrical version and tune. There are some places in this version where the translation has expanded upon those time-tested words when warranted by the original. For example, in verse six (verse seven in the Hebrew) the first word of the line is *אָבַד* (*avad*) which speaks to the ideas both of destruction and perdition—to be destroyed, and to be lost, and so in the version before you both ideas are included. As always, we have tried to place in italics words implied in the original that smooth out the meter in order to be sung.

The time of writing is somewhat difficult to determine. The internal clues point perhaps to a period of David’s life during which he seems to have free access to “the house” of God. Obviously this would be before the building of the Temple by his son Solomon, and yet after the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem.² Others have seen this Psalm as written in a time of consternation and affliction for the king, owing to the statement in verse seven of anticipatory hope that, while not yet enjoying the presence of the Lord, the king possesses a firm confidence that the Lord will bring that blessing to pass.³

The Psalm itself begins as a morning prayer, perhaps to accompany a morning sacrifice, as a Psalm of meditation,

dedication, petition, imprecation, and anticipation. At the beginning of the day, the great King comes before the Lord, as if to dedicate the day, and himself at the beginning of it. He comes as one confident of a hearing, and singular in his approach. He presents himself before the Lord in his words, in his meditations—his inward sighs, and in his crying out. When he declares “for I to thee will pray,” this carries the force that he has no other refuge or foundation but the LORD God. He comes in the morning, and this time of day is repeated to show his urgency, and his diligence in the use of prayer, which is a common understanding when “morning” enters the discussion in Scripture (cf. Gen. 21:4; 22:3). This confidence of being heard is also manifested in expectation. The Psalmist expresses it by “looking up,” or, as the Scottish Metrical Version expresses it, “an answer will expect.” The original is *צַפָּה* (*tsaphah*). This word is common among the prophets, who employed it when they would set themselves upon their watch to see what the Lord would say, how He would return their petition unto them (cf. Isa. 21:6; Micah 7:7; Hab. 2:1). So in this first portion the Psalmist dedicates himself in diligent

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1. “Some understand it to mean *flutes* or wind-instruments in general, as *Neginoth*, in the title of the fourth psalm, means stringed instruments. The sense would then be: (to be sung) to (an accompaniment of) flutes or wind-instruments. But as the Hebrew word is nowhere else used in this sense, and the preposition here employed is not the one prefixed to names of instruments, and flutes are nowhere mentioned as a part of the temple music, others make *Nehiloth* the name of a tune, or of another song to the melody of which this was to be adapted: (to be sung) to (the air of) *Nehiloth*. Others follow the ancient version in making it refer, not to the musical performance, but the subject of the psalm: (as) to inheritances, lots, or destinies, viz. those of the righteous and the wicked. This is favoured by the circumstance, that most of the other enigmatical inscriptions of the psalms may be more probably explained as having reference to their theme or subject than in any other manner.” Joseph Addison Alexander, *The Psalms Translated and Explained* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot; James Thin, 1864), 27.

2. So Keil and Delitzsch. Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 5 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 71.

3. “David being grievously oppressed by the cruelty of his enemies, and apprehending still more mischief, earnestly beseeches God for help. And the more easily to obtain what he asks, after having, by the earnestness of his prayers, manifested the greatness of his grief, he first brings forward the intolerable malice of his enemies, showing how inconsistent it would be with the character of God, were they to be left unpunished. He next speaks of his own faith and patience, and even comfort; having no doubt whatever of a happy issue. Finally, he concludes, that when he shall be delivered, the benefits resulting from his deliverance would not be limited to himself, but would extend to all the godly.” John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, in *Calvin’s Commentaries*, 45 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844-1856; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983) 4.51.

The Fourth Commandment: Annulled or Sustained? Continued from Page 224.

Jesus meant none other than spiritual rest for those who come to trust Him and His redemptive work. This rest is symbolized in the Fourth Commandment Christian Sabbath.

When the early Christians partook of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week they were remembering Christ's atoning work of redemption as well as His resurrection. The Supper is to be observed until Christ returns to complete the whole process of redemption when Christians will enter into the new heavens and the new earth. This will usher in the eternal Sabbath rest. This will be the Sabbath of all sabbaths. God's people will finally rest in the glory of their Redeemer. Then there will be the complete fulfillment of the Lord's words, "and you shall find rest unto your souls."⁴

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prayer, opening his inner most trouble and sighing to God in confident expectation of a hearing, and of an answer.

The next portion (v.4–6) moves to David's identification of his cause with God, and reveals by implication the subject of his prayer and groaning in the former section. David pleads God's own moral excellence, His disapproval of all evil, His hatred and despising of wicked men, and their final judgment at His hands. This portion is introduced with the consequential adverb *כי* (*chi*), indicating that the Psalmist places the unspoken request of the former section upon the foundation of the Lord's moral excellence and hatred of evil. A good inference would be that David's groanings are for deliverance from and vindication before his enemies, and he pleads God's own holiness in justification of this request. In this we see the foundation for all imprecation in the Psalter—it is the moral excellence of God Himself, and His vindication of His own holiness.

In the next section (v.7–8), David affirms the Lord's Covenant mercies and faithfulness as the foundation of his communion with God and confidence in His deliverance and mercy. However, this is especially seen in the public worship, as the Psalmist bows down, or worships before the presence of the Lord in His Holy Temple. He craves the Lord's guidance in righteousness, that in the face of his enemies he might remain steadfast in the way of the Lord. Here the Church militant may take instruction from the warrior-king, in watchfulness and straightness of duty because the enemies of our souls ever lie in wait to snare and catch those who wander from the paths of righteousness, and positively, who are beaten back as we follow the advance of our Great King, the Lord Jesus Christ, straying not from His paths of righteousness.

Verses 9–10 reinforce the reasoning placed before the Lord

previously, in the destruction of the Psalmist's enemies, for they have rebelled against the Lord. We have not here a plea for personal vengeance; but as with all the imprecatory portions of the Psalter, we have a plea for the Lord to vindicate His own holiness, and His own people, who seek as the objects of His mercies to follow Him. Note of the enemies: They are wicked to their core, in the inner most part. It is from this stock and store that they issue forth their lies, flatteries, and other enticements to the grave. This same doctrine is echoed one millennia later, by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 15.19–20). Because of this "soul murder," the Psalmist prays for their casting out, and their destruction. We ought to learn a valuable lesson from David here—the wicked among us do not seek the status quo, they rather seek to advance their wicked designs to the harm of the people of God, either wittingly or unwittingly. In advancing the cause of lies and rebellion against God, they spread harm and spiritual destruction wherever they go. It is right that the King, who is tasked with the protection of his subjects, to pray for their casting out and destruction. Truly, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Great King and Head of His Church, follows this same strategy.⁴

David brings this Psalm to a close with a request for the covenant people—identified as those who put their trust in God, those that love His Name, those who follow after righteousness—that the Lord would grant them great rejoicing. And this is in contrast to the temptation to fear and trembling in the face of their enemies, because of the Lord's covenant faithfulness in defending them. Surely the Lord is a shield, a protection to all those that love His Name. As we sing this Psalm, let us by the Lord's good grace upon us, partake of that same Davidic Spirit: calling upon the Name of the Lord for protection and vindication as we stand in a dark day, that we will not be moved from the path of righteousness. Let us pray that the Lord would vindicate His holiness and righteousness in the face of a world gone mad with sin, and that He would compass His people as a shield as they seek His face, and love His name. Let us rise diligently and early, to dedicate ourselves once again to the exercises of private and public worship, bowing before and consecrating ourselves to the Lord afresh, renewed in the knowledge of His steadfast covenant mercies. May the Lord bless our praise as we seek to glorify Him.

Todd L. RUDELL ■

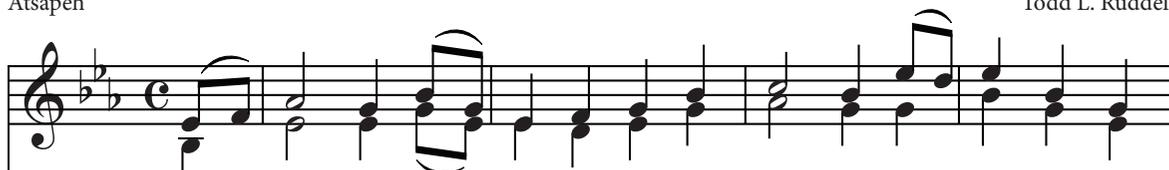
4. See Psalm 101.1-8, and hear the righteous commitment of the Messianic King to purge His kingdom from all that defiles.

Psalm 5:1-12

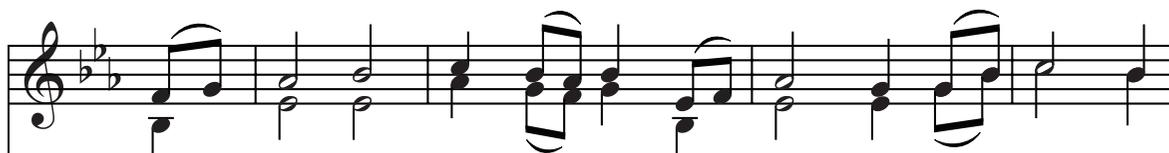
To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth,
A Psalm of David

Atsapeh

Todd L. Ruddell

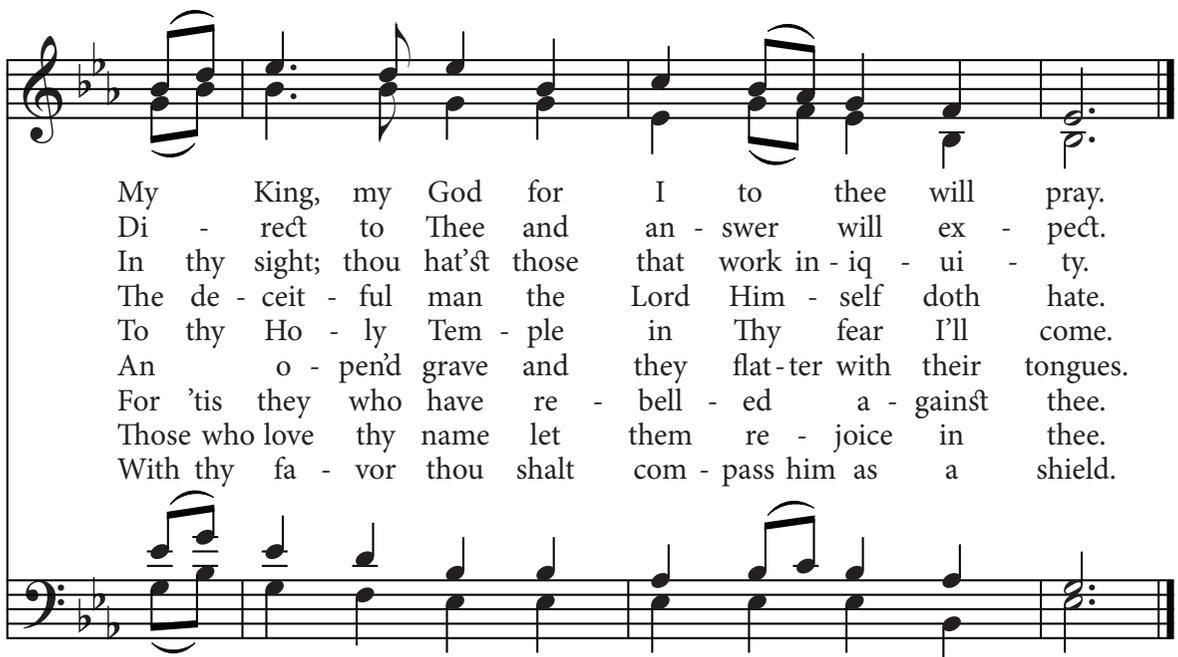


¹ Give ear to my words O Lord think on my med - i - ta - tion deep
³ In the ear - ly hours of the day the sound of my voice O Lord
⁴ For thou art not a God who doth take pleas - ure in wick - ed - ness
⁶ Thou shalt ren - der de - struc - tion and per - di - tion un - to those men
⁷ But as it per - tains to me in - to thy dwell - ing I shall come
⁸ Lead me Lord in thy right - eous - ness thy way straight be - fore me make
¹⁰ O God do rec - om - pense them in their coun - sels down - fall - en be
¹¹ But to all those that put their trust in thee God them let re - joice
¹² For thou yea e'en thou O Lord pro - vide wilt - thou bless - ed - ness



² Heark - en Thou un - to the voice of my help - less cry - ing
 In the morn - ing thou shalt hear and I will *my sup - pli - ca - tion*
 E - vil shall not dwell with thee. ⁵ Nor shall ev - er stand the fool - ish
 Whose mouth speak ly - ing words *the vi - 'lent*, the blood - y
 For thy cov - 'nant mer - cies great I will *rev - 'rent - ly* wor - ship
⁹ In their mouth there is no truth wick - ed - heart - ed; their throat is
 O God do cast them out in their man - y trans - gres - sions
 Let them ev - er shout for joy for thou dost them shel - ter
 Up - on the man that doth live be - fore thee in up - right - ness





My King, my God for I to thee will pray.
Di - rect to Thee and an - swer will ex - pect.
In thy sight; thou hat'st those that work in - iq - ui - ty.
The de - ceit - ful man the Lord Him - self doth hate.
To thy Ho - ly Tem - ple in Thy fear I'll come.
An o - pen'd grave and they flat - ter with their tongues.
For 'tis they who have re - bell - ed a - gainst thee.
Those who love thy name let them re - joice in thee.
With thy fa - vor thou shalt com - pass him as a shield.