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Psalm 51

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Bible
at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 51.

Topics.

- God, according to your steadfast love blot out my transgressions.
- Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin
- Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight
- I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- Purge me with hyssop, and wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
- Cast me not away and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- God deliver me from bloodguiltiness; I will sing of your righteousness.
- The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart.
- Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem;

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

BOOK TWO (PSALM 42-72)

PSALM 51:1

To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the Prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

- **Psalm 51:1:** Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Most are aware of David's affair with Bathsheba the wife of Uriah, but he added to this sin an even greater sin. Bathsheba fell pregnant to David so David had Joab the captain of his army to put Uriah in the front line of battle and then withdraw the army so that Joab would be left standing alone and killed. (2 Sam. 12:7-9). This entire Psalm is David's prayer of repentance before God over these two horrendous sins.

Have mercy on me O God: the word mercy comes from the Hebrew word (chanan) and means to stoop in kindness to an inferior for the purpose of bestowing favour upon them. It carries the idea of showing pity and compassion upon those unworthy and underserving of it. The picture of David in this Psalm is of him completely crushed, humbled and broken pleading with the Almighty Holy God of heaven to reach down and cover him with mercy he is not worthy of.

According to your steadfast love: means according to God's great mercy and compassion in contrast to the judgment deserving of David's crimes, which under the law was the death penalty for adultery and for his plot to have Bathsheba's husband killed in battle.

Blot out my transgressions (v1) does not mean cause me to forget my sin though God forgives we do not forget. David is asking God to blot his sin out of His mind and remember it no more.

PSALM 51:2

- **Psalm 51:2:** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

The prophet Nathan had assured David that upon his first profession of repentance his sin was pardoned:

- The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. (2 Sam. 12:13).

But though David was forgiven he did not escape punishment, Nathan also said:

- Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die. (2 Sam. 12:14).
- The sword (war) shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. (2 Sam. 12:10-11).

This is a most painful and sorrowful judgment, but here is something even more amazing throughout this entire prayer of David there is not one word in this Psalm that implies David is praying to escape the punishment due to him his sole focus is to be made right with God. In contrast to this the desires of religious hypocrites are solely focused towards being delivered from the punishment or loss that they may suffer as a result of their secret and hidden sin being found out. David's greatest passion and desire was God's favour, God's forgiveness and the cleansing of his sins, and not the prevention of the external judgment. This does not mean David did not care about Bathsheba's child, quite the contrary David fasted and earnestly prayed that God would save the new born baby and of course would have desired peace for his household, but the focus of this prayer is about being forgiven and accepted into God's steadfast love. The following verses show that Nathans prophetic words to David, that Bathsheba's child would die and that a neighbour shall lie with his wives in the sight of this sun (2 Sam. 12:10-11) did come to pass:

- The LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick. ¹⁶David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. ¹⁷And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. ¹⁸On the seventh day the child died. (2 Sam. 12:15-18).
- Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened." ²²So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. (2 Sam. 16:21-22).

This shines a brilliant light upon the truth that though God may forgive consequences may still follow. David was fully aware he had made himself exceeding loathsome before God and that his sin was like a deep stain in a garment that is not easily removed. God had forgiven him, but he continues to pray and beg God's pardon, perhaps for the following three reasons:

1. Though Nathan had told him that the LORD had put away his sin (2 Sam. 12:13) he himself still had to humble himself and express his deep emotional sorrow, grief and repentance before God.
2. He felt so unworthy of it he could not forgive himself until he had poured out his heart before God.
3. He was deeply aware that others were going to suffer for his sin and unfaithfulness and earnestly desired God would withdraw His judgment.

The words, "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity," show David does not want to be partially cleansed, but completely washed, he knew ceremonial and legal cleansing was insufficient he needed some other and better means of cleansing him, which of course was God's forgiveness and pardon of it. When God pardons sin, he cleanses us from it, so that we become acceptable to him and have His blessing to come before him without guilt or shame. Wash me thoroughly carries the idea that David longs to have the whole debt of his sins blotted out from the sole of his foot to the top of his head and not just part of the stain, it implies washing to the extreme so that every stain would be cleansed so that he would be thoroughly washed from all his sins and the stain completely removed.

PSALM 51:3

- **Psalm 51:3:** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Our sins maybe forgiven by God and by those we sinned against, but they are not forgotten by ourselves and especially by those who were injured by them. Though God has forgiven David and deeply loves him and though we who know God's love, mercy and grace all have a warm affection for David his sin is still remembered even today thousands of years later.

PSALM 51:4

Against You, Only, have I Sinned.

- **Psalm 51:4:** Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

David's words, "against you only have I sinned," does not mean that David didn't feel guilt or as though he had not sinned against the nation of Israel of which he was king, against, the covenant of God, against Uriah and his wife and family and against every other individual affected by his gross sin. God had been faithful to David and to the covenant while David had been selfishly unfaithful. People looked up to David as a faithful king and man of God and by his lustful actions he not only destroyed his good reputation amongst the people, but destroyed it in his own eyes and even worse destroyed the honour of God and brought shame to His Holy name and character and to his nation. The words, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned," are not to be taken to mean that David had not sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah, and many others; but to be taken with the understanding that he was saying, "Though I have sinned against my own conscience, and against others, yet nothing is more grievous to me than that I have sinned against my LORD and done this evil in His sight and brought shame to His name before all the faithful who worship Him and before all the nations who look to Israel as God's people."

That you would be justified and blameless in your judgement: (v4) with these words David is saying, "Whatever judgment comes upon me it is the fruit of my sin and will not blemish God's righteousness, but rather His justice will be glorified in the eyes of all for I should not escape punishment due my crimes." Many years ago, I heard a testimony that

helps explain what David is saying, a man had been found guilty of murder, he spent some months in prison waiting to be put to death. During this time, he became a Christian. His lawyer upon finding this out, said, "Great we can use that to help set you free from the death penalty." The man replied, "No, I will not use the good name of my Saviour as an excuse to escape what justice says is due to me, I am guilty and others have suffered, because of my evil. He was executed sometime later. As he was led to the death chamber he said to his Christian counsellor, "My redeemer will be with me." Justice is one of the great pillars of God's throne and this newly born again man refused to use his testimony as an excuse to deny the innocent and hurting victims and the man he had murdered the justice they rightly deserved and in this way God's name was vindicated, because justice was not denied. This is basically what David is saying, justice cannot be denied or cheated God's Holiness must be vindicated. God's forgiveness saves to eternal life, but it is not to be used as a tool to escape consequences. David's sin was a sin, as all other sins are his crime against Uriah and his family involved breaking human laws; it was a gross offence against the well-being of society; many others were either injured by it, or scandalized at it; it was a heinousness act of his character and the most severe violations of the law of God.

I have done this evil in your sight: (v4) means God's eye was fixed on David God saw what David had done; and David knew it, but blinded himself to it and shut God out of His life to enter into the evil he did. This is not only a deception of the mind, but also foolishness since none of us can hide anything from God, His eternal eyes see all, but we can deceive our minds into thinking God is distant and far away, especially when the flesh rises up to gratify its cravings. The truth that the presence of a child will restrain people from many acts of sin which they would otherwise commit if alone shines a brilliant spotlight on the reality that for David to sin in such a horrendous manner he had to be seeing himself alone and separated from God. This reality should teach us all that the greatest protection against secret transgression is to always be aware that God is forever present by His Spirit and His love and His eyes see everything, but even more than this is to not only be aware of how much we hurt, offend and dishonour Him by such sinful behaviour, but also be aware that our sinful behaviour turns lost souls against God and not toward him. The ramifications of the sins of those who confess to believe in God far out way the sins of the lost for the following two reasons:

1. They directly hurt, offend and dishonour the invisible immortal Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life.
2. They turn the lost against God and the Lord Jesus Christ and not toward them.

If the presence of a little child protects us from sinning how much more should the presence of God restrain us from doing anything that would offend Him or bring shame to His Holy name? Following are two truths that are revealed by the reality that a child's presence will keep us from sin that we might otherwise commit should they not be with us:

1. We do not believe God is with us in every moment of our life.
2. We have shut God out of our life in that moment.

This is also foolishness because no matter how much darkness we may allow our mind, hearts and life to enter into it is never dark enough that God eyes do not see our sin. Not only is God omniscient He dwells within our conscience, our mind and our heart by His Spirit so there is no escape from Him except to deliberately and consciously reject Him from our lives altogether. God will never forsake those who come to Him in honest repentance there is no darkness that He cannot forgive and invade with His light when there is honest repentance such is the mercy and love of God, but there will be consequences. Forgiveness is not a delete key to justice nor does forgiveness mean that we will be set free from the consequences that would naturally follow our wrongful actions.

Following is two simple examples of this truth:

1. A man robs a bank, God's forgiveness is available to him, but he will still have to spend time in jail.
2. A young single teenage Christian girl becomes pregnant, God forgiveness is available, but it will not terminate the pregnancy though repentant and forgiven she is still going to have to deal with the consequences of having a baby at such a young age and on her own.

That you might be justified when you speak: (v4) means that the character of God might be vindicated (seen to be just, pure and holy in judgment) in all that He says in the law which He has revealed and in the judgment which He appoints upon David. David being under the law understood that should God forgive without punishment God's Holy name would not be vindicated since all who were aware of what David had done and the surrounding nations would see that Israel's God allows His people to do as they please right or wrong without any fear of judgment or punishment. Though God is a God of love and mercy He is also a God of justice.

PSALM 51:5

I was Brought Forth in Iniquity; in Sin My Mother Conceived Me.

- **Psalm 51:5:** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

It is unlikely this statement means that David's mother was a great sinner or that she gave birth to David out of marriage since it can be applied to every man, woman born. We are all born forth in iniquity and in sin. Everyone one of us live within a fallen corrupted body of flesh full of various sinful aberrations and dysfunctions (i.e., selfishness, jealousy, greed, lustful thoughts, envy, anger, pride and such like things) that we have inherited from our earthly father Adam. Added to this our world is full of sin, it is like a cancerous virus running rampant throughout every nation upon the earth. Every individual and every nation is infected with it and there is no medical cure or antibiotic to prevent its serpent like nature from spreading and bringing to ruin everyone who feeds from it.

5

PSALM 51:6

- **Psalm 51:6:** Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

These words of David shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that we can study and read God's word and memorise multitudes of Scriptures so that we are able to teach the Bible from cover to cover, and can stand with hands raised amongst the congregation of the faithful worshipping God with songs of praise, but if what we are doing outwardly is not in tune with what is dwelling in the heart it all counts for nothing before God. If we outwardly appear to be righteous and do all the outward religious acts, but inwardly there is no love and passion for God, no heart of thankfulness and gratitude for our salvation and no honesty and integrity then outward works no matter how righteous they may appear bring no delight to the heart of God. A perfect example of this was the religious leaders of Jesus generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) they knew the Scriptures far more than most and they strictly adhered to all their religious ceremonial rites and holy days. On the outside they appeared to be the most holy men of the nation, but on the inside, they were full of pride and hypocrisy and lacked love and compassion for the people and rather than Christ commending them they are the only people he strongly condemns.

- **Psalm 51:7:** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Hyssop was used in sprinkling the blood of the Passover lamb on the door posts of the Israelites in Egypt so that the destroying angel might pass over them.

- Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. (Exodus 12:22).

Hyssop was used in the cleansing of the leper:

- The priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed two live clean birds and cedarwood and scarlet yarn and hyssop. (Lev. 14:4).

Hyssop was used in the purification of one that was unclean by the touch of a dead body:

- The priest shall take cedarwood and hyssop and scarlet yarn, and throw them into the fire burning the heifer. (Num. 19:6)

By framing his prayer in the language of hyssop David shines a spotlight on the fact that he not only saw himself as a guilty creature and as unclean as a leper and the corpse of a dead body, but also saw himself as being deserving of being excluded from the community of the faithful and the house of God and in danger of the destroying angel of death. David's prayer that God would purge his conscience with hyssop is not to be taken literally since hyssop has no power in itself to cleanse anyone, but in the sense that it signifies the cleansing blood of the Passover lamb and by extension the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ's blood flows back to the foundation of the earth: some may think that Christ blood cleanses only those who are saved after Christ's death and resurrection, but this is not so. Though Old Testament Israel offered animal sacrifices to God they were not saved by them, they were a type and shadow of Christ the Lamb of God without blemish the Saviour to come and it is his blood that cleanses them. This is because the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and the same Redeemer. In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

And Peter wrote:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual invisible river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ. The faithful of the Old Testament were saved by their faith that the blood of their sin sacrifices (shadows of Christ) covered their sin and by their faith in the promised seed of the woman spoken of in (Genesis 3:15), in the prophet Moses said was to come like him, in God's

promise to Abraham that from his seed a deliver would come and by their faith in the promised seed of David the Messiah and Saviour. The faithful of the New Testament are saved by their faith in looking back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and by looking forward to the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. This shines a glorious spotlight on the truth that whether a man or woman is of the Old or New Testament we are all saved by the same cleansing power, the same cleansing blood and the same Deliverer, King and Saviour. This is because God in his eternal mind planned and purposed before time began that His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of all mankind for all eternity. Truly, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22). David is praying, "O LORD, cleanse me, a most leprous and polluted creature, by your forgiveness and grace and by the virtue of the blood of Christ, which is signified and foreshadowed by the sacrifices of our nation. David well knew that his sins were far too great to be cleansed by any legal purifications and ceremony, and therefore prays that God would himself not only forgive him, remove his guilt restore him, but also cleanse him as though he had been purified from a leprosy, by the water of cleansing, sprinkled on him by a branch of hyssop and made whiter than new fallen snow.

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow: (v7) the whole structure of the Psalm implies that David was seeking an internal change, and that he did not depend on any outward ordinance or ceremonial rite and shows that he did not need human priests or outward ceremonial sprinklings and purifications since if he did it is certain he would have gone to a priest in the Temple of God especially since his Palace was not too far away. David having been confronted by Nathan saw more than ever what an unclean heart he had, and with great grief laments over it; but he sees it is not in his own power to heal it, and therefore begs God to create in him a clean heart and that God's comfort and joy would be restored to him. From Genesis to Revelation the faithful are called to do all they can to live a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But all of us live within a corrupted fallen body of flesh that we have inherited from our earthly father Adam. Because of this we all have various sinful aberrations and dysfunction dwelling within our mind and heart (i.e., jealousy, anger, lustful thoughts, greed, selfishness, pride and such like things) so it is right and proper to pray that God would create within us a clean heart (i.e., a heart of honesty and integrity, mercy and love, and a mind that thinks upon good and pure things in contrast to lusting on another man's wife as David did). When we give ourselves to deliberate sin and give God second place in our life we should not expect God to fill our hearts with His love, comfort and joy.

Whiter than snow: the contrast is between black and white. David was grubby, dirty and black like coal covered with the corruption of sin because of his horrendous transgressions against Uriah and his family and against God, fully aware of this he earnestly prays in deep grief and sorrow that God would wash him so thoroughly he would be whiter than snow. This prayer shows that God can wash and cleanse and make as white as snow even those who have succumbed to the darkest of sins

PSALM 51:8

- **Psalm 51:8:** Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

The bones that you have broken is not to be understood literally, but figuratively, David feels so crushed, ashamed and grieved that he has offended God in such a wicked way that he feels such deep sorrow and pain in his emotions that it feels as though his whole body is broken. When those who believe in God live in deliberate and wilful sin, God's joy, and gladness vacate the home they once had in the believers' heart and mind.

It is only through honest repentance which involves turning away from wickedness and where possible making things right that the Spirit, love and joy of God will return on the wings of a dove and take up their home in the heart of the repentant believer.

PSALM 51:9

- **Psalm 51:9:** Hide your face from my (David's) sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Blot out all my iniquities does not mean cause me to forget them, but don't continually look upon them or keep them in your mind. David is asking God not to keep his sin forever in his presence, but cast it far away beyond heavens reach so that it cannot be found. He does not want the horror of his sin to be forever before God. Hezekiah king of Judah prayed a similar prayer. He was suffering a terminal illness, but God gave him an extra fifteen years to live. Overall, he was a good king, but seems to have sinned in that he gave Baladan the king of Babylon far too much information and showed him all the treasures of his kingdom boasting of his great wealth for which Isaiah confronted him. (2 Kings 20:12-19). Others feel his sin may also have included arrogance in assuming his righteousness. But whatever his sin was his following prayer shows that he was aware of it:

- Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back. (Isaiah 38:17).

Hezekiah's words, "You have cast all my sins behind your back," is exactly what David means in his prayer, "Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Obviously, God being eternal has an eternal mind so he never forgets, but He can choose to put it behind him meaning He chooses not to keep a thing ever before Him, but cast it out of His sight and mind.

PSALM 51:10

- **Psalm 51:10:** Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

We may not be committing sins all the time, but we are always a sinner, because sin dwells within our human nature like a cancerous virus that destroys even the healthiest of bodies. This is why no man or woman can be saved by their own self-efforts and why David asks God to create in him a clean heart.

PSALM 51:11

- **Psalm 51:11:** Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

David being very aware that the love and joy of God he had previously known had departed from him prays that God would restore to him the joy of his salvation that he once rejoiced in. Those who shut God out of their conscience so they are able to sin should never expect to be filled with the joy of the LORD. David no doubt had a moment of joy with Bathsheba, but lustful and worldly joy is fleeting and passes, until another worldly excitement comes our way. In contrast to this those who faithfully walk with God experience His comfort, love and joy dwelling within no matter what the circumstances.

PSALM 51:12

- **Psalm 51:12:** Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit (with your free spirit in KJV).

Sometime prior to this Psalm David prayed, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you," (Psalm 16:2) the love of God was so rich in David's heart and mind that for him God was his life. David's faith in God was not something he managed to fit into his daily routine, duties and responsibilities, God was his life prior to his affair with Bathsheba. His relationship with God could have been likened to a married couple who are deeply in love with each other, it matters not where the husband is or what he is doing or how far away from his wife he is, she is always with him by love. Her presence never leaves his mind and his heart. It would be right and truthful to say that she dwells within him by love (this principle of course also applies to the husbands' wife). Prior to David's sin against Uriah's family this is the kind of relationship David had with God; the greatest thing he sought after was the "Steadfast Love of the LORD" God's love was not only the spiritual strength of his heart and mind, but also his greatest treasure and his greatest joy. This shines a brilliant light upon the truth that it is possible for even the most faithful to slip away from God under the right circumstances. David now reflecting upon how far he has fallen from God earnestly prays that God would restore to him the joy of his salvation that he once had.

Uphold me with willing spirit: (with your free spirit in KJV) carries the idea that David's heart and mind would be:

- Willing to deny all future behaviour that is unworthy of God's Holy name.
- Kept in a state which would be always willing to deny the flesh and live in the Spirit.
- Filled with a better spirit that would enable him to freely and cheerfully live in a manner that would forever honour God.
- Always willing and ready to obey all the commands of God and to serve Him faithfully.

It is a proper and right for all believers to pray that they would be kept in a state of mind in which they would always be willing to do all that God requires of them, and to deny all that is unworthy of His Holy name and contrary to His love, mercy and grace.

PSALM 51:13

- **Psalm 51:13:** Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

This does not mean that David will not teach salvation unless the LORD forgives him, but that he cannot teach salvation until he is forgiven. No one can testify of God's good character if God has withdrawn His Holy Spirit and His great love and His joy and grace. The words, "Then sinners will return to you" (v13) carries the idea that when sinners (especially those who knew of David's gross sin) saw that God had forgiven David they would understand that though honest repentance they also could be forgiven of their sins.

PSALM 51:14-15

- **Psalm 51:14-15:** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. ¹⁵O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Deliver me from bloodguiltiness no doubt refers to all the men David had killed in war, but mostly to his evil plan to have Joab the Captain of his army send Uriah (Bathsheba's husband) to the front line and then

withdraw his army so that Uriah would be left standing on his own to be killed by the enemy. (The full story can be found in (2 Sam. 11:14-27). All sin committed against another person is not only a transgression of the law and against the lawgiver, but also begins with the neglect or contempt of God's commandment, as David's sin did, and being committed against God, who had granted David so many favours his guilt was as a surgeon's knife cutting his conscience and heart which brought him to deep sorrow and humble repentance pleading for the God he loved, but had so grossly sinned against to forgive him his horrendous sin. It is interesting to notice even though David had suffered and done much for the LORD for the cause of God's Kingdom he does not try to defend himself, but instead flees to God for mercy and forgiveness and depends upon Him alone for freedom from his guilt and for his peace and joy to be restored.

PSALM 51:16-17

- **Psalm 51:16-17:** For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

God desires truth in the heart (in contrast to pretence and hypocrisy), where there is truth God will give wisdom, pardon and forgiveness and those who sincerely endeavour to live a lifestyle that honours God can rightfully expect His favour and His grace will cover the sinful aberrations and dysfunctions dwelling within their corrupted and fallen nature. The state of David's mind illustrated in this prayer is that which occurs in every case of true repentance in that the sorrow and grief does not only stem from the fact sin:

- Is a violation of human law.
- Brings hurt, sorrow and loss to another man or woman.
- Brings shame and disgrace upon the guilty and their family.
- Ends in punishment from a parent, a teacher, civil ruler or court of law.
- May result in a loss of reward in the world to come.

10

Though all these are the end result of sin the primary hurt and grief of the heart is because the violation is not only an offence against God's pure and holy character and His law, but also done in His sight. Unless there is this deep feeling of sorrow toward God there can be no true repentance or hope of pardon and forgiveness, for God forgives offences only when we see them as being committed against Him. Those who deny God may seek the forgiveness of a man or woman they may have offended as we all should, but if God is not involved then there is no forgiveness flowing from heaven. The attitude of David expressed in this prayer is, "Though I have sinned against my own body and conscience and against others; yet nothing is more grievous and terrible to me, than to consider that I have sinned against God, because it offends and injures the glorious and most Holy God and because I set Him at a distance while I used all sorts of wickedness to conceal my sins from those around me. Deceiving myself that I would be free of punishment I went on boldly in sin, casting off all reverence to the Holy and Omniscient Majesty and all fear of His judgments I sinned against Him who had been so faithful to me.

PSALM 51:18

- **Psalm 51:18:** Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Because of the words, "Build up the walls of Jerusalem," some tend to think this Psalm or at least this portion of it was composed at a later period than the time of David, and that it must have been written in the time of

the Israel's seventy years in Babylonian captivity, when Jerusalem was in ruins, but this is simply speculation and reading into the Psalm more than is actually there. Following are three theories that explain what is implied in David's words, "Build up the walls of Jerusalem."

1. The public works and walls of Jerusalem which David had begun to build for the protection of the city were not yet completed at the time of David's affair with Bathsheba. There is nothing in the history which forbids this idea and the language is fitting for David to end his prayer with especially if he thought the people of his Kingdom would suffer because of his gross sin.
2. It is figurative language asking God to favour and bless His people as if the city was to be protected by walls, and be made safe from an attack of the enemy.
3. It embraces the idea that the buildings, the homes, the streets and the temple would be protected by the walls of the city when they are perfectly completed.
4. Prophetically speaking the walls of Jerusalem speak of the church of God, which is a spiritual house, built up of lively stones, (true believers) on the foundation of the prophets and apostles with the Lord Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone.

Whichever of these it may mean the idea is that David at the end of his prayer turns his focus toward Zion, to the city of God, to the people of the Lord and prays that his own highly scandalized behaviour and the shame, dishonour and injury he has brought upon God's Kingdom might not hinder God's favour and blessing upon the people of Zion and the faithful in the world.

Zion: the word Zion primarily refers to the faithful of the Jewish nation, but by extension embraces the faithful amongst all the nations of the world who are saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The words "Do good to Zion in your good pleasure," means do good to all the faithful in your good time, which in a general sense means at the acceptable time (i.e., when a sinners heart is repentant and the heart of the saved is right before God), but it can also refer to the following three periods of time:

1. To David's era.
2. To the era of the New Testament.
3. To the coming Kingdom age when Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

PSALM 51:19

- **Psalm 51:19:** then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

When all is right before God in the Kingdom of God then he will delight in sacrifices and offerings. It mattered not to God how many sacrifices David offered to God while he was in the midst of his affair and evil plot concerning the death of her husband Uriah none of them would have brought any joy to the heart of God. Without integrity and truth (in contrast to hypocrisy) dwelling on the inside offering mean nothing to God. Today we do not offer sacrifices, but the same principal applies, it matters not how well we teach Sunday school, sing in a choir, minister to the church or how much money we put in the offering bowl none of it counts for anything if we are living a lifestyle that is indifferent to how it affects God's honour and takes no thought to how our behaviour and speech reflects upon the good character and name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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