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## Psalm 61

(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 61.

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### Topics.

- Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
- Let me take refuge under your wings.
- You O God have heard my vows and given me the faithfuls heritage.
- You have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.
- Prolong the life of the king; may he be enthroned forever.
- I sing praise to your name as I perform my vows day after day.

**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.

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### INTRODUCTION

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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.

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### BOOK TWO (PSALM 42-72)

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### PSALM 61:1-2

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To the Choirmaster: with Stringed Instruments. Of David.

#### **Lead me to the Rock that is Higher than I.**

- **Psalm 61:1-2:** Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; <sup>2</sup>from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

David does not assume God is listening to his prayer, he does not take for granted that he is worthy of any of God's blessing, but begins most of his prayers by asking God to be gracious, merciful and forgiving toward him rather than supposing the LORD is going to be listening. Obviously the LORD does hear everything whether we ask Him to listen or not, but in this way David is showing the LORD courtesy and respect. The words, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I," (v3) immediately take the mind of New Testament Christians to the following conversation Jesus had with Peter. Jesus said to Peter, "Who do you say that I am," and Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and Jesus answered him saying:

- Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:15-18).

The following Old Testament verses (there are many more) show that David considered God his rock and fortress the horn of his salvation and his stronghold and redeemer.

- The LORD is my (David's) rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Psalm 18:2).
- The LORD lives, and blessed be my (David's) rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation. (Psalm 18:46).
- He only is my (David's) rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. (Psalm 62:2)

The following New Testament verses (there are many more) show that Jesus is the rock the Saviour and redeemer of all who believe.

- Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" (Matt. 21:42).
- This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. (Acts 4:11).
- As it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." (Romans 9:33).
- All drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. (1 Cor. 10:4).
- For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Ephes. 2:20).
- For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." <sup>7</sup>So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," (1 Peter 2:6-7).

The following Old Testament verses (there are many others) show that the faithful of the Old Testament by faith foresaw the coming of the Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ the rock and Saviour of the world:

- The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. (Psalm 118:22).
- Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation whoever believes will not be in haste." (Isaiah 28:16).
- From him shall come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler all of them together. (Zech. 10:4).

These verses are simply amazing and so exciting because they prove that the New Testament Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ did not begin with the Virgin Mary's birth of Jesus, but began before the foundations of the world were set in place in the eternal mind of God who gave the vision of his eternal plan of salvation to the faithful prophets of the Old Testament who spoke of it by the inspiration of His Spirit.

**The Old Testament faithful were saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ:** though Christ did not appear during the Old Testament age, the faithful were still saved by faith in him, because they by faith looked:

- Toward the promised seed of the woman spoken of in (Gen. 3:15).
- Toward the promised seed of Abraham. (Gen. 26:4) (Gal. 3:16).
- Toward the prophet Moses said was to come like him. (Deuteronomy 18:15) (Acts 3:22) (Acts 7:37).

- Toward the Holy One to come (whose body God will not let see corruption in death) (Psalm 16:9-11).
- Toward the promised seed of David. (Psalm 89:4) (Psalm 132:11) (Jer. 23:5) (Matthew 1:1).
- Toward the Messiah the Christ all the Old Testament prophets and the Scriptures speak of such as (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53). The Lord Jesus himself said, "I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book (Heb. 10:7) (the scroll of the book refers to the Scriptures).

Added to this even 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 an invisible spiritual 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.

**Who is the Saviour and Redeemer God or Jesus?** Because the Bible talks of the invisible immortal Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life as the rock and fortress the horn of salvation and redeemer and speak of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ in the same language some believe that Jesus the Son must also be God the Father, but this is not only a gross misunderstanding of Scripture, but also clouds and confuses the beautiful and amazing message and love story between a Father and a Son for their children revealed through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Since every Christian knows the Lord Jesus Christ is their Saviour some religious teachers have mistakenly used the following words of Paul and of Peter:

- The appearing of the glory of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).
- The righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:1).

To support the mistaken theory that that Jesus is God, sadly this stems from ancient religious teaching, tradition and a lack of understanding Bible language and the eternal and unique relationship of perfect love and perfect unity between the heavenly Father and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. The one true immortal, invisible, eternal God Almighty the God of all creation is the Saviour of us all for the following two reasons:

1. He is the source of all life.
2. In His eternal mind before time began planned and purposed that salvation to eternal life would be in his Son.

This means the following two things:

1. Jesus is the eternal fulfilment of God's foreordained plan of salvation for all mankind.
2. Without Christ God's eternal plan of Salvation for mankind would be left bankrupt and no-one could be saved to eternal life.

Putting both of these truths together it becomes clear that both the immortal invisible eternal God Almighty the one true God and the Lord Jesus Christ are both the Saviour, but in a different manner. God is the Saviour in that He is the source of all life and planned and purposed the eternal way of salvation, but Christ is our Saviour in that he is the fulfilment of God's eternal plan. Without God there would be no salvation, but God's eternal plan without Christ would be left bankrupt thus the reason the Bible in various contexts can refer to God the Father or the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour.

**Words of comfort and encouragement:** since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states:

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim:

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

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And that say:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## PSALM 61:3-4

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### Let me Take Refuge under Your Wings.

- **Psalm 61:3-4:** for you (O God) have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.  
<sup>4</sup>Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!  
*Selah*

Here is David's great faith while in the midst of hardships, troubles and sorrows he takes refuge in the shadow of God's wings. The picture here is of a baby eagle gathering under the wings of the King of birds and of the parent eagle protecting the helpless little chick from every type of predator that seeks to devour it. In the book of Deuteronomy, it is written:

- The LORD found him (Israel) in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. <sup>11</sup>Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions (Deut. 32:11).

These verses picture the LORD as an eagle caring for his young and building nests of warmth and spreading out his wings over them to shelter and protect them from harm and when they do fall catching them and lifting them up to be with him and his family. The nest being built can be seen to symbolise God's love, grace and mercy, His wings can be seen as His Spirit and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and He lifts us up by His forgiveness. Notice God encircled His people and cared for them as the apple of His eye, meaning His greatest love. The faithful who belong to His global family will make up His treasured possession in the Lord's Kingdom.

The prophet Isaiah wrote:

- They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (Isa. 40:31).

This can be applied to a particular trial, sorrow or grief that we are patiently praying will pass, but its ultimate fulfilment will be when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory to gather those who are his to himself. Those who endure to this glorious day will be raised to immortality and eternal life where happiness is everlasting and suffering, sorrow and grief is swallowed up in joy and laughter and weariness and strife is replaced with endless vitality and peace.

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## PSALM 61:5

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### **O God You Heard My Vows and Gave Me the Faithfuls Heritage.**

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- **Psalm 61:5:** For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

It was common for the faithful of the Old Testament to make vows toward the LORD when prayer was made for help and deliverance from hardship and troubles as expressed in the following song:

- I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will perform my vows to you, <sup>14</sup>that which my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble. <sup>15</sup>I will offer to you burnt offerings of fattened animals, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats. *Selah* (Psalm 66:13-15).

Here the vow was to perform what God's statutes required Israel to do. I was not a vow promising to do something new, but a vow to be faithful to God and to His statutes and what He required of the people.

David's vow to the LORD most likely embraced the following:

- To be forever faithful and fervent in prayer and obedience.
- To devote himself to God's service and the sacred services of the Sanctuary.
- To daily praise Him and testify of His good name.

These vows are simply promised to do what we should be doing anyway which is endeavouring to live in such a manner that our lives honour God and bring a good testimony to his name. Such vows are usually made after a believer has slipped into some gross sin as David did with Bathsheba and return to the LORD in honest repentance or when God has delivered a believer from some great hardship or trouble and there is great rejoicing and in that overwhelming joy promises are made to remain

faithful. Should anyone be tempted to make such promises to God it should always be remembered that God hears all our vows and keeps account of them and even though they are made with good intentions it is a serious offense and sin to break a promise, especially one made to God. God values integrity and our word, and therefore hates broken promises since it shows a lack of integrity on our part and a lack of commitment to our word. James the brother of Jesus considered broken promises such a serious offense that he wrote:

- Above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation. (James 5:12).

In some way David had the assurance that, his vows and prayers had been heard and God would answer his supplications. God would restore him to his home and to the privilege of uniting with others. In what way he had this assurance we are not informed, but his statement harmonises with what is often found in his Psalms which is that his troubled mind became calm as he looked upon the blessing as already granted and entertained no thoughts of doubt that what he had asked would not come to pass since it was within God's will for his life. The mind of the faithful often feels this same assurance and undoubting persuasion that the prayer which they have offered has been heard and that God will be merciful and the blessing which has been sought will be granted.

Because we might have a strong passion to hear a certain answer there is the danger of illusion to think God has spoken when in actual fact He has not since we are not inspired as David being a prophet was and we may be solely fixed upon hearing only what we want to hear and there are many voices in the mind that are only too willing to agree with us. Nevertheless no one can prove that God may not impart such a gracious assurance to the inner most being and no one can show that it is wrong for a believer to allow peace to flow into their heart and mind in the confident hope that the blessing which they had sought will be theirs.

**You have given me the heritage of those who fear your name** (v5) refers to the land of Israel which was given for an inheritance to the seed of Abraham and which was never more fully in Israel's possession than in the times of David and to all who fear the LORD and to all the faithful who come by faith to the promised seed of David the Messiah and Christ the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ since they are the inheritance of God. The fear of the LORD has the following two aspects:

- 1 An eternal aspect: wisdom teaches that mankind is separated from God because of sin and without God a person has no hope of eternal life and will be judged accordingly. The fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because it motivates a person to seek God and eternal life.
- 2 An aspect for the present moment: the fear of the LORD in the present moment motivates mankind to obey God's Ten Commandments which are all designed to protect the innocent from harm, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally and spiritually. The fear of the LORD in this context is also wisdom because if everyone feared the LORD humanity would live in harmony with each other. Sadly, there is very little fear of the LORD in the world today and so we see rampant rebellion, crime and wars in most countries.

**The fear of God and Christians:** those in Christ look to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and understand and experience Christ's great love and God's grace in their hearts and minds and no longer act from fear, but from love in the same way that a man in love with a woman does not do things to please her from fear, but from the love dwelling in his heart. Likewise, it is with the faithful who belong to the Lords global family.



## **Prolong the Life of the King; may He be Enthroned Forever.**

- **Psalm 61:6-7:** Prolong the life of the king; may his years endure to all generations! <sup>7</sup>May he be enthroned forever before God; appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!

David faced death on his sickbed, in battle and from the threats and evil plots of those around him seeking to destroy his kingdom and take his life. Death came near to David many times, but God preserved his beloved and David, considering his many hardships, troubles and dangers enjoyed a long and prosperous reign. The words, "May the king be enthroned forever before God," firstly apply to David who desired to live as king before God from generation to generation, meaning as long as he lives, but since the Lord Jesus Christ is the lineal descendant of David, and the representative of his royal race contained within his prayer is an echo of the promised King to come the Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ who is enthroned forever before God. In the book of Luke, the angel Gabriel when speaking to Mary said:

- Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:31-33).

David's personal claim to sit enthroned forever is but a foreshadowing of the revealed eternal privilege of all faithful believers who belong to the global Kingdom of Christ.

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### **PSALM 61:8**

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#### **I Sing Praise to Your Name as I Perform My Vows Day after Day.**

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- **Psalm 61:8:** So will I ever sing praises to your name, as I perform my vows day after day.

David's prayer in verse one, "Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer," is guaranteed to come to pass because of his experience in verse five, "You, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name." God cannot lie (Titus 1:2) and therefore cannot break a promise so God's answer to David's prayer is certain to be fulfilled. David began his prayer with a request and finishes it with an expression of praise by a song. In all our relationships to the Lord there should be a parallel between our requests and our thanksgivings. We should not be fast to ask and slow to praise.

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*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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