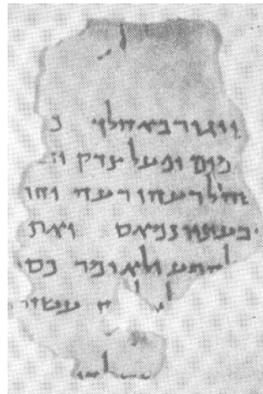


Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School
Placerita Baptist Church
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Fragment of Psalm 15
From Nahal Hever
100 B.C.-A.D. 70

Psalm 15 — The Godly Person

1.0 Introducing Psalm 15

- 1.1 Is Psalm 15 intended to be instruction in godliness that can be measured by the Law (Torah)?
- 1.2 Is Psalm 15 an entrance liturgy designed to be employed by the priests to insure that only worthy worshippers entered the grounds of either the Tabernacle or the Temple?
- 1.3 Is Psalm 15 intended to replicate the Ten Commandments in ten characteristics of a godly person?
- 1.4 Is Psalm 15 a wisdom psalm highlighting the Law and obedience?
- 1.5 Is Psalm 15 the Old Testament's equivalent of the Epistle of James in the New Testament?

2.0 Reading Psalm 15 (NASU)

15:1 A Psalm of David.

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

15:2 He who **walks** with integrity,
and **works** righteousness,
And **speaks** truth in his heart.

15:3 He does **not** slander with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor takes up a reproach against his friend.

15:4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,
But who honors those who fear the LORD;
He swears to his own hurt and does not change;

15:5 He does **not** put out his money at interest,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

He who does these things will never be shaken.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 15

3.1 Outline

- I. The Question (v. 1)
- II. The Answer (vv. 2-5b)
 - A. Integrity (2)
 - B. Relationships (3-4b)
 - C. Selflessness (4c-5b)
- III. The Promise (v. 5c)



3.2 Notes

- **v. 1 Rhetorical Questions**
 - Rhetorical questions are employed for dramatic effect.
 - Rhetorical questions create interest and grab the audience's attention.
 - Rhetorical questions are often used in the Hebrew Bible to open a poem or the stanza of a poem.

- **v. 1 Compare the Questions**
 - "Abide" is a Hebrew word referring to sojourning or spending the night some place — temporary residence. "Dwell" is a Hebrew word referring to settling down — permanent residence.



- “Tent,” like “abide,” refers to a temporary dwelling. “Hill,” like “dwell,” refers to a permanent dwelling place.
- Such language seems to direct the reader’s attention to the Tabernacle and the Temple (or, the more permanent abode of God Himself in Heaven).
- See Isaiah 33:14-16.
- See John 4:20-24.



- v. 2 “walks ... works ... speaks”
 - These three verbs are participles that refer to characteristic or habitual actions. That raises the question of the purpose of this description:
 - ✓ Does such an emphasis on characteristic action mean that the Scripture teaches “sinless perfection”?
 - ✓ Does such an emphasis mean that the Scripture teaches salvation by works?
 - ✓ Is this description of the characteristic actions of the godly refer only to the final sanctification a believer experiences upon arrival in Heaven?
 - Psalm 15 is about sanctification, not salvation.
 - See James 2:14-17.

*The faith that works does not save,
But the faith that saves works.*

- v. 2 “in his heart”
 - The reader expects “with his lips” immediately following “speaks truth.” However, “in his heart” was written by the psalmist.
 - See James 3:14.
 - Mark 7:20-23.
- v. 3 “not ... nor ... nor”
 - In the Hebrew of verse 3 the negatives are used permanent, objective negation, rather than temporary, subjective negation.
 - As with the participles in verse 2, the verbs of verse 3 refer to tried qualities and habitual actions.
 - The purpose of the description of godly characteristics that are negative as well as positive is due to the ultimate aim: full (not partial) sanctification. It aims at consistent behavior rather than intermittent behavior.

- **v. 3** “does not slander”
 - The Hebrew word is related to the words for “leg” and “spy.”
 - “Slander” refers to someone walking around seeking tidbits of gossip to pass on to someone else. Such people behave as spies or conspirators trafficking in information that tears someone else down.
 - See James 1:26-27; 3:1-12.



- **v. 3** “neighbor ... friend”
 - The word “neighbor” refers to one’s fellow human being.
 - See Leviticus 19:18.
 - See Luke 10:30-37.
 - “Friend” is a word referring to one’s closest relationships — especially those of one’s own family.
 - See Leviticus 21:2.
 - See 1 Timothy 5:4, 8.

- **v. 4** “In whose eyes a reprobate is despised”
 - “Reprobate” refers to one who has been rejected by God. A reprobate is a particularly vile person.
 - What was wrong with Samuel’s attitude when God rejected Saul (1 Samuel 16:1)?



- **v. 5** “money ... interest ... bribe”
 - According to biblical teaching, God’s people are to put people before money (cf. Matthew 19:23-26) and God before money (cf. Matthew 6:24; Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5).
 - See 1 Timothy 6:10.

- **v. 5** Promise
 - As in verse 3, the negative employed is permanent and objective. In addition, it is emphatic by means of the addition of “forever.” That’s why the translation says “never” (= “not” + “forever”). It is similar to saying “Never ever ...”
 - Verse 5 is the answer to the questions asked in verse 1.
 - See Psalm 112:6-7.
 - See Proverbs 12:3.
 - See 2 Peter 1:10

4.0 Singing Psalm 15

Lord, Who May Dwell in Your Sanctuary?

Chorus:

*Lord, who may dwell in Your Sanctuary, in Your Holy Hill?
Lord, who may dwell in Your Sanctuary, in Your Holy Hill?*

'Tis those whose walk is blameless;
Who do what is right.
'Tis those who speak truth from their heart,
For Lord, they do Your will.

Chorus:

'Tis those who do no wrong unto their fellow man
By tongue, by act, or by any means,
For Lord, they do Your will.

Chorus:

'Tis those who fear the Lord,
Who despise the vile man.
Who deep their oath even when it hurts,
For Lord, they do Your will.

Chorus:

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Who Shall Ascend Thy Heav'nly Place?

- 1 Who shall ascend Thy heav'nly place,
Great God, and dwell before Thy face?
The man that minds religion now,
And humbly walks with God below.
- 2 Whose hands are pure, whose heart is clean,
Whose lips still speak the thing they mean;
No slanders dwell upon his tongue;
He hates to do his neighbor wrong.
- 3 Scarce will he trust an ill report,
Nor vents it to his neighbor's hurt:
Sinners of state he can despise,
But saints are honored in his eyes.
- 4 Firm to his word he ever stood,
And always makes his promise good;
Nor dares to change the thing he swears,
Whatever pain or loss he bears.
- 5 He never deals in bribing gold,
And mourns that justice should be sold;

While others gripe and grind the poor,
Sweet charity attends his door.

6 He loves his enemies, and prays
For those that curse him to his face
And doth to all men still the same
That he would hope or wish from them.

7 Yet, when his holiest works are done,
His soul depends on grace alone:
This is the man Thy face shall see,
And dwell for ever, Lord, with Thee.

— Isaac Watts, *The Psalms of David*, 1719

5.0 Praying Psalm 15

- Lord, hear my prayer before your heavenly throne. [v. 1]
- Help me to be honest in all I do. [v.2]
- Keep me from lying—even to myself. [v. 2]
- Give me sincere love for others. [v. 3]
- Help me control my mouth. [vv. 3-4]
- Remove greed and materialism from my heart. [v. 5]



6.0 Applying Psalm 15

- Worship should not be overly casual.
- The heart is important.
- Relationships are important.
- How we handle our money is important.
- None of us can accomplish these things in our own wisdom or power.