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The
Songs

31

PSALMS - The SONGS

Thirty-one

The LORD is My Refuge from Slander

READ AND OBSERVE

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every reference to the LORD, including pronouns and synonyms, with a red triangle.

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every reference to the psalmist, the righteous, or the faithful, including all pronouns and synonyms (i.e. those who take refuge in You), with a blue capital "R".

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every reference to enemies or adversaries, along with all pronouns and synonyms (i.e. the proud doer), with an orange capital "W".

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every reference to lying lips, tongues, slander, etc. with an orange set of quotation marks.

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every reference to lovingkindness with a yellow box filled in with light red.

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every reference to trust with a blue capital "T".

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every reference to shame or ashamed with a brown circle.

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every reference to the goodness of the LORD with a green box.

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every contrast with a pink diagonal line.

Read through **Psalm 31** and mark every comparison with a pink equal sign.

Read through **Psalm 31** and divide the passage into the following segments. Mark and title these segments in your text using brackets in the margin.

1. You are my Rock and Refuge
2. I trust in You—You have seen my affliction
3. I am in distress because of iniquity and adversaries
4. I trust in You—my times are in Your hands
5. Your goodness to Your own
6. Love the Lord all you His godly ones!

READ AND ANSWER

Psalm 31:1-5

According to the title, was this a private or public song?

Who would sing it publicly?



Point of Depth

The rituals of the tabernacle included a choir singing songs of praise and hymns of thanksgiving to God.

For in the days of David and Asaph, in ancient times, there were leaders of the singers, songs of praise and hymns of thanksgiving to God.
Nehemiah 12:46

The singers, which were to raise sounds of joy, were appointed from the Levites.

Then David spoke to the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their relatives the singers, with instruments of music, harps, lyres, loud-sounding cymbals, to raise sounds of joy.
1 Chronicles 15:16

After the temple was built they lived in its chambers free from other service because they were engaged in their work day and night. This was not entertainment—this was service unto the LORD God.

Now these are the singers, heads of fathers' households of the Levites, who lived in the chambers of the temple free from other service;

for they were engaged in their work day and night.
1 Chronicles 9:33

*Now the overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani,
the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Mica,
from the sons of Asaph,
who were the singers for the service of the house of God.*
Nehemiah 11:22

They were trained with skill before they entered into their profession.

*Their number who were trained in singing to the LORD,
with their relatives, all who were skillful, was 288.*
1 Chronicles 25:7

The singers were to Glorify the LORD with one voice through praise.

*...and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun,
and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen,
with cymbals, harps and lyres, standing east of the altar,
and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets in unison
when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard
with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD,
and when they lifted up their voice
accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music,
and when they praised the LORD saying,
“He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting,”
then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud.*
2 Chronicles 5:12-13

Who wrote this song?

To Whom is this **Psalm** sung?

From the very first line we can see the theme of **Psalm 31**. What subject is introduced?

Just by reading the first five verses, can you tell whether or not David's refuge was just a "warm fuzzy place out of the storm"?

Why did David need refuge?



The Hebrew word for “refuge” is *chacah* and is a primitive root that means to flee for protection.

What does David ask of the LORD?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

What could shame David? (Hint: What if his God did not deliver him?)

What reason did David give the LORD for delivering him?

If the LORD inclined His ear to David, what would He most certainly do?

From what did David need to be rescued?

What sort of rescue was David asking for?

What word picture does David paint concerning what he wanted the LORD to be for him?

What is synonymous with a rock of strength?

How could a stronghold benefit David in his current situation?

Who would be the stronghold?

Why did David ask these things from the LORD?

What did David say was true of the LORD?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Even as David asked the Lord to be a rock of strength and a stronghold to him, how did he already view the LORD?

1.

2.

Why did David believe the LORD would lead him and guide him?

How would saving David affect the Name of the LORD?

What did David believe the LORD would do for him?

Who is they?

Why did David believe the LORD would do this for him?

What commitment did David make to the LORD?

Does that phrase sound familiar?

Who else said it?

When?

What does that mean we should be on the lookout for regarding this **Psalm**?



***And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said,
"Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT."
Having said this, He breathed His last.
Luke 23:46***

**While it seems that most of the Psalms are either prophetic, or even Messianic,
we must not read anything *into* them.
We must let Scripture interpret Scripture at all times.
We must observe the text carefully and let the Word speak for itself!**



**David was in a situation of suffering.
David prayed to the LORD and then committed his spirit into His hand.**

**Jesus was in a situation of suffering.
Jesus prayed to God and then committed His Spirit into His hand.**

**Whenever I am in a situation of suffering
I most certainly can pray to God and then commit my spirit into His hand.**

***Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God
shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.***
1 Peter 4:19

What does David say the LORD has done for him?

What does David call the LORD?

Why does David call Him the God of truth? (Hint: Don't just answer with generic reasoning. Take your answer from the **Psalm**.)

Psalm 31:6-8

Who does David hate?

“But” is the first word of the next line. Who is contrasted to vain idols?

Who is contrasted to those who regard vain idols?

What is David going to rejoice and be glad in?

Why can David rejoice and be glad in the LORD's lovingkindness? What did the LORD do for David?

1.

2.

3.

4.

What was influential in what the LORD did for David?

What did the LORD see and do something about?

What did the LORD know and care about?

What did the LORD not allow to happen?

What did the LORD cause to happen?



**The Hebrew word for “given” is *sagar*
and means to shut.
It has the idea of an enclosure.**

**The word for “broad place” is *merchav*
and means enlargement.
It has the idea of an open space or a place of freedom.**

**Do you see the contrast between what David’s enemies wanted to do to him
and what David’s LORD did for him?**

From what you have seen so far, what were the troubles of David’s soul? What affliction was he in?

Psalm 31:9-13

What does David ask of the LORD?

Why?

What has wasted away?

1.

2.

3.

Why have his eye, soul, and body wasted away?

How is David's life spent?

How are his years spent?

What has failed?

Why has David's strength failed?

The word for "body" in **verse 10** means bones or substance. Why has he wasted away?

Why is David's life filled with grief, sorrow, and sighing? (Hint: Take your answer from the immediate context.)

What has David become?

Why?

Are David's iniquity and David's adversaries completely different subjects? Or are they related somehow? (Hint: This **Psalm** is amazingly similar to **Psalm 30** in this respect.)

To whom has David become a reproach?

To whom has David become an object of dread?

What do those who see him in the street do?

To what does he compare himself?

1.

2.

In what way is he similar to a dead man?

How is he similar to a broken vessel?

"For" is a connecting word. Why is David like a broken vessel?

Just in case you are not sure how David is similar to a broken vessel—what happens to a broken vessel? What does David say his adversaries intend to do with him?

What is all around David?

What causes the terror for David? (What are many doing?)

What were David's adversaries doing?

- 1.
- 2.

What were many plotting together to do to David?

Psalm 31:14-18

Once again, David starts his thought with "but". And once again, in the light of his situation, he makes his decision clear. What is it?

What declaration does he make?



Think through the implications of declaring that the LORD is your God...

**And then, with David's devotion,
decide whether you will make the same declaration...**

**If you resolve with David that the LORD is your God,
why not make your declaration now...**

Where does David know his destiny and the length of his days lie?

What does David ask of the LORD?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Who does David need to be delivered from?

1.

2.

What does David want when he asks the LORD to shine His face upon him?



***Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
“Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying,***

‘Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel.

You shall say to them:

The LORD bless you, and keep you;

The LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you;

The LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.’

***So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel,
and I then will bless them.”***

Numbers 6:22–27

How does David refer to himself?

What does David believe would be influential in the LORD'S decision to save him?

David doesn't want to be put to shame. Notice the word "for" in the same sentence. Hmm... There it is again. What is the connection between the fact that it is the LORD Whom David is calling upon to save him and whether or not he will be made to be ashamed?

Why would David be put to shame if His God did not deliver him from the hand of his enemies and those who were persecuting him? (Just to make sure you see this... Put the emphasis on "You" when you read it. Like this: "**Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I call upon You...**")

What does David ask the LORD to do to the wicked?

1.

2.

What is Sheol?



The Hebrew word for "Sheol" is *sh'owl* and refers to Hades or the world of the dead.

What is the contrast between David and those who will be put to shame?

Why will the wicked be put to shame? (Hint: **Verse 6.**)

What condition does David expect the wicked to be in Sheol?



The Hebrew word for "silent" is *damam* and is a primitive root that means to be dumb, to stop, or to perish.

It has the idea of being astonished.

What condition does David want the wicked to be in right away?

What metaphor does he use for the wicked?

What verses (so far in **Psalm 31**) have told us David's enemies were lying against him? List the verse and the phrase which shows their treachery.

1.

2.

3.

What are the "lying lips" speaking?

1.

2.

3.

Against whom are the "lying lips" speaking?

Who is the righteous?

Although David is obviously the one who is righteous in this **Psalm**, who else do the wicked speak against?

Why do the wicked speak against the righteous?

Why do the wicked speak arrogantly?

Why do the wicked speak with pride?

Why do the wicked speak with contempt?

Against whom do the wicked have contempt?

Why do the wicked have contempt against righteous?

Psalm 31:19-22

What rhetorical question does he ask?

What glory and praise does David give to the LORD?

What does the LORD have stored up for those who fear Him?

When will those who fear the LORD receive this great goodness that the Lord has stored up?

What has the LORD wrought for those who take refuge in Him?



The Hebrew word for “stored up” is *pa'al* and is a primitive root that means to do or make.

The Hebrew word for “wrought” is *tsaphan* and is a primitive root that means to hide by covering over. It has the idea of hoarding or reserving or protecting.

When will those who take refuge in the LORD receive this great goodness that the LORD has wrought for them?

Before whom will the LORD manifest His great goodness that He has wrought for those who take refuge in Him?

Who hides who?

Where does the LORD hide those who fear Him and take refuge in Him?

Where is the secret place of His presence?

Why are those who belong to the LORD safe in the secret place of His presence?

What does the LORD hide His Own *from*?

Who is conspiring against whom?

Where does the LORD keep those who fear Him, and take refuge in Him?

What is the LORD sheltering His Own *from*?

What is the strife of tongues? (Hint: **Psalm 31** lays it out clearly. Read through the entire **Psalm** once more to recall whose tongues are doing what to whom.)



***One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek:
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 meditate in His temple.
For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle;
In the secret place of His tent He will hide me;
He will lift me up on a rock.
And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me,***

***And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.
Psalms 27:4-6***

David, as an act of adoration, blesses the LORD. Why?

The LORD's lovingkindness is made marvelous to David. How or where?



**What, or where, is the besieged city
in which the LORD made His lovingkindness marvelous to David?**

**The Hebrew word for “besieged city” is *matsuwr*
and refers to hemming something in.**

**It can have the idea of a siege from the *outside*—
i.e. an enemy shutting the inhabitants of a city inside
as they build their siege works for their own entrance.**

**But it can also have the idea of a siege from the *inside*—
i.e. shutting the enemies out through fortification of the city
in order to protect it against the attacks of the enemy.**

Is David referring to a literal besieged city, such as Ziggag?

**Or is he continuing the picture of the very shelter where God's Own are kept?
Is David referring to the wonderful secret place in the presence of God?**

**We have no way of knowing for absolute sure from the text,
but if it is referring to God's Own presence as fortification or protection,
i.e. the LORD, Himself, being the fortified city,
then Isaiah gives us a wonderful cross-reference.**

***But there the majestic One, the LORD,
will be for us a place of rivers and wide canals
on which no boat with oars will go,
and on which no mighty ship will pass
Isaiah 33:21***

**Either way, David's point is clear—
The LORD, Himself,**

marvelously protects David from His enemies because of His lovingkindness!

What is David alarmed about? (Hint: Keep the context of the entire **Psalm** in view.)

What did David say in his alarm?

What is the meaning of “I am cut off from before Your eyes”?

What was David’s fear in his alarm? What was he afraid of—his enemies or the idea that his God had turned His back on him?

Despite David’s fear, what did he do?

Despite David’s fear, what did the LORD do?

How did David *know* the LORD had heard the voice of his supplications when he cried to Him for help?

Psalm 31:23-24

Who does David address?

What does David tell the LORD’s godly ones to do?

Why is David telling the LORD’s godly ones to love Him?



The Hebrew word for “love” is *ahav* and means to have affection for.

**Does this mean we are to simply have a warm fuzzy feeling for the LORD?
Is it saying we are to have a fondness for Him?
Does it mean tenderness, warmth, or endearment?**

Or is it a whole lot more than that?

Is David referring to a friendship or a Master-servant relationship?

What does it really mean to love the LORD?

Context is always the best way to understand the meaning of a word. I pulled some of the plethora of Scripture cross-references using this phrase in order to show you the true meaning of “loving the LORD”.

Read them all thoughtfully... and discover truth in His Word...

***You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your might.
Deuteronomy 6:5***

***Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God,
who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness
to a thousandth generation with those who love Him
and keep His commandments.
Deuteronomy 7:9***

***Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you,
but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him,
and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul
and to keep the LORD's commandments and His statutes
which I am commanding you today for your good?
Deuteronomy 10:12-13***

***You shall therefore love the LORD your God,
and always keep His charge, His statutes,
His ordinances, and His commandments.
Deuteronomy 11:1***

***It shall come about,
if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today,
to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul...
Deuteronomy 11:13***

***For if you are careful to keep all this commandment
which I am commanding you to do,
to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him...
Deuteronomy 11:22***

You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams;

***for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God
with all your heart and with all your soul.
You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him;
and you shall keep His commandments,
listen to His voice, serve Him and cling to Him.
Deuteronomy 13:3-4***

***If you carefully observe all this commandment which I command you today,
to love the LORD your God, and to walk in His ways always—
then you shall add three more cities for yourself, besides these three.
Deuteronomy 19:9***

***Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart
and the heart of your descendants,
to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,
so that you may live.
Deuteronomy 30:6***

***See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity;
in that I command you today to love the LORD your God,
to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments
and His statutes and His judgments,
that you may live and multiply,
and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land
where you are entering to possess it.
Deuteronomy 30:15-16***

***I call heaven and earth to witness against you today,
that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse.
So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,
by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him;
for this is your life and the length of your days,
that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers,
to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.
Deuteronomy 30:19-20***

***Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law
which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you,
to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways
and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him
and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.
Joshua 22:5***

***So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the LORD your God.
For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations,
these which remain among you, and intermarry with them,***

**so that you associate with them and they with you,
know with certainty that the LORD your God
will not continue to drive these nations out from before you;
but they will be a snare and a trap to you,
and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes,
until you perish from off this good land
which the LORD your God has given you.
Joshua 23:11-13**

**Now Solomon loved the LORD,
walking in the statutes of his father David,
except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.
1 Kings 3:3**

**I said, "I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God,
who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness
for those who love Him and keep His commandments..."
Nehemiah 1:5**

**The LORD keeps all who love Him,
But all the wicked He will destroy.
Psalms 145:20**

**I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said,
"Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God,
who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness
for those who love Him and keep His commandments..."
Daniel 9:4**

**AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART,
AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL,
AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND,
AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.
Mark 12:30**

**He said to him the third time,
"Simon, son of John, do you love Me?"
Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"
And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."
Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep."
John 21:17**

**If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed.
Maranatha.
1 Corinthians 16:22**

***May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God
and into the steadfastness of Christ.
2 Thessalonians 3:5***

***Keep yourselves in the love of God,
waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.
Jude 1:21***

Now that you have read all the cross-references which show what it really means to love the LORD, does David's next line make sense?

What is the connection between those who love the LORD and those who are faithful?

What does the LORD do for the faithful?

From what, or who, does the LORD preserve the faithful? (Keep the context of **Psalm 31** in mind.)

What does the LORD do to the proud doer?

Not only does the LORD recompense the proud doer, but He does it fully. What is the proud doer being recompensed for? (Keep the context of **Psalm 31** in mind.)

What exhortation does David give to those who hope in the LORD?

- 1.
- 2.

What does it mean to "hope" in the LORD?



**The Hebrew word for "hope" is *yachal*
and is a primitive root that means to wait, to be patient, to hope.**

What are those who hope in the LORD patiently waiting for? (Keep the context of **Psalm 31** in mind.)

READ AND REASON

I asked you earlier if you thought David's iniquity and his adversaries were completely different subjects or if they were related somehow. Now that you have finished observing **Psalm 31**, what have you seen?

David wasn't perfect, but isn't it wonderful that even in the midst of such terrible attacks from his enemies, he realizes (and acknowledges) his own part in the problem? He knows his own iniquity is the beginning of all his trials. Yes, his enemies are responsible for their evil deeds, but David knows the secret to his protection—it is obedience to His Covenant keeping God.

His enemies would not have the great access to him if God were keeping them away from him. He knows the Sovereignty of God—he knows that if his enemies are running loose all around him it is because his God has allowed it. And he recognizes that his own sin could be the reason His LORD has allowed them such free reign.

We have to remember that David was in a different Covenant with God than Christians are today. In the Old Covenant obedience was the path that led to certain blessing, prosperity, and life. Disobedience was the route that always brought cursing, adversity, and death. God was faithful to keep His Covenant with Israel and David knew it. If he disobeyed, he knew what God would send—and it wasn't blessing! He had evidently disobeyed (although we are not told what his iniquity was) and he rightly reckoned that the flurry of lies and attacks against him were connected to his sin.

By the way, in the New Covenant, God does not allow disobedience either—instead of cursing, adversity, and death He sends discipline to bring us back to His path of righteousness. **Hebrews 12:5-13**

The New Covenant is often called the covenant of Grace (contrasted with the Old Covenant being called the covenant of the Law). Grace is never to be seen as the excuse to do whatever we want to do because it is not—rather, it is the supernatural ability to do all that God wants us to do.

Am I saying that if David were perfect, his life would have been perfectly pleasurable—no problems at all? No, I am not. But I am saying that David's iniquity played a role in the freedom his enemies had to assail him.

Let's switch subjects and talk about those enemies and their behavior just a bit. If you made a list from **Psalm 31** of information about what his enemies were doing it would look something like this:

David needed refuge from them (verse 1)
He would be ashamed if they succeeded (verse 1, 17)
David needed to be delivered from them (verse 1)
David needed to be rescued from them (verse 2)
David needed to be saved from them (verse 2, 16)
They were strong—David needed the strength of the LORD to escape from them (verse 2, 4)
They had laid a net to trap David (verse 4)
They laid the net secretly (verse 4)
They loved and followed false gods (verse 6)
They wanted to trap and ensnare David under their power (verse 8)
They hated David and were hostile to him (verse 8)
They were adversaries which caused distress (verse 11)
They caused David to be reproached and disgraced, even to those who knew him (verse 11)
They slandered David (verse 13)
There was a group of them (verse 13)
They sat down together to plot against David (verse 13)
They schemed to kill David (verse 13)
They persecuted David (verse 15)
They lied about David (verse 18)
They spoke arrogantly about David (verse 18)
They were prideful (verse 18)
They were full of contempt for David, they despised him (verse 18)
They conspired to trap David (verse 20)
They caused disputes with their lies (verse 20)

This list compiles information to see a clearer picture of what the situation was regarding David and his enemies. What can we see from the list?
We can know that this was not just random attacks made with no apparent planning by different individuals—this was an organized group who despised David and what he stood for. They were arrogant, prideful wicked men.

The purpose of their plot was ultimately to kill David. David was their prey and they were the hunters. They used treachery (betrayal with deceit) to execute their plan. They hoped to trap him by lying to others about him—others, even those who knew David, believed the subterfuge so meticulously laid down against him and fell in line with their strategy.

This was a strong powerful plot devised and executed by strong powerful people. They were against David and against David's God—they loved and revered their own false gods. But David's God was the only true God and He had more than enough power to deliver David from their scheme...

And He did...

Segment by Segment

**Try titling these segments yourself.
Ask God to help you.**

Verses 1-5

Verses 6-8

Verses 9-13

Verses 14-18

Verses 19-22

Verses 23-24

Purpose of Psalm 31

**Try to identify the purpose of Psalm 31.
The purpose simply states “why the Psalmist wrote the Psalm”.**

Theme of Psalm 31

**Try giving Psalm 31 a title by identifying its theme.
The theme simply states “what the Psalm is about”.**
