

Selah!

The **BOOK**
of
PSALMS

IN THE RICHEST TRANSLATIONS



Editor **STEVE**
GALLAGHER

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BBE: *Bible in Basic English* (BBE), by Professor S.H. Hooke. New Testament written in 1941 and Old Testament written in 1949. Public domain. (Cited 124 times.)

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DeW: *Praise-Songs of Israel: A Rendering of the Book of Psalms* (DeW). Copyright © 1886 by John DeWitt. Published by Kessinger Publishing LLC, Whitefish, MT. (Cited in 24 verses.)

Sprl: *A Translation of the Old Testament Scriptures From the Original Hebrew* (Sprl), by Helen Spurrell. Copyright © 1987, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI. (Cited in 15 verses.)

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Ber: *The Modern Language Bible: The New Berkeley Version in Modern English* (Ber). Revised Edition Copyright © 2005, by Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA. (Cited in 9 verses.)

NKJV: *New King James Version* (NKJV). Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc., Nashville, TN. (Cited in 7 verses.)

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ABPS: *The Bible: An American Translation* (ABPS), by J. M. Powis Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed. Copyright © 1935 by University of Chicago (American Baptist Publication Society). (Cited in 2 verses.)

ESV: *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version* (ESV). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL. (Cited in 1 verse.)

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a powerful medium created by God to enable human beings to formulate and communicate thoughts. Our words have the power to encourage or discourage; crush a spirit or bring needed comfort; offer wisdom or spout folly; or even foster a godly or contaminating atmosphere. When you get right down to it, words have the capacity to powerfully affect others—either positively or negatively.

Consider then the amount of raw power there is in the Word of God! According to David, “The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.” (Psalm 12:6, NASB) Although the Bible is the perfect expression of God’s purposes, desires and laws, there remains the divinely ordained dilemma of properly ascertaining what is truly meant in various passages.

Even if every believer was fluent in ancient Greek and Hebrew, it would still be a challenge to comprehend what the various biblical authors intended in their statements. Interpreting what someone wrote who lived at least two thousand years ago in a different culture is tricky business. How much more so when those words have to be translated from different languages!

There are those who vigorously argue that their favorite version of the Bible has perfectly communicated God’s thoughts as conveyed in Scripture. However, the truth of the matter is that no single version has the corner on biblical accuracy. Ancient Hebrew is an especially difficult language to translate because the terms used can be construed in a variety of ways. Take Psalm

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10:5a, for instance. Consider how this phrase is expressed in the following translations:

- His ways prosper at all times...(NASB)
- His ways are always grievous...(KJV)
- His ways are defiled...(Latin Vulgate)
- His ways are firm...(DeW)
- There is success in everything they do...(NLB)

Which version is correct? The reason for the various interpretations is the ambiguity of the Hebrew term *chul*, which literally means “to twist, whirl, pervert, grieve or even writhe in pain.” I’m sure you can see how difficult it is for Bible translators to interpret what David meant by his statement. Such challenges are found throughout the Bible.

The truth of the matter is that the Lord never intended Scripture to be laid out in a precise linear, chronological or clear-cut way. No! The mystery and obscurity found in the Bible is one of the characteristics that elevate it far above the realm of man’s finite reasoning. God ordained Scripture in such a way that no human could ever exhaust the truth and wisdom contained in it. The Lord purposed for it to be like a vast field containing hidden deposits of pure truth which can only be discovered and extracted through great effort and with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said as much when He said, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.” (Matthew 13:52, NASB)

Every sincere believer is on a spiritual quest for Truth. I began my biblical journey with the King James Bible and then, while in Bible school, switched to the New American Standard Bible (NASB). My mentor praised its accuracy as a (near) literal translation. I faithfully utilized the NASB for many years to come.

Whether it was mere happenstance or divine guidance, I do

not know, but a couple of years ago I decided to try something completely new in my Bible study time: I began reading Scripture with ten different versions—mostly paraphrases and more obscure translations. To my delight I discovered that they often breathed new life and fresh insight into the passages I read.

I studied nearly the entire New Testament this way, carefully comparing what was expressed by these various paraphrases with the NASB. What I found was that some of them did (what I considered to be) an excellent job of communicating what the Bible author seemed to mean in the passage. Most of the time the wording of those paraphrases exactly matched the explanations offered by the most respected commentators.*

Moreover, I discovered that adding various paraphrases to my Bible reading provided a fresh perspective of the passage I was reading. What I typically found when reading the NASB was that it usually did, in fact, offer a fairly accurate (if perhaps mundane) representation of what was expressed in the original language. However, utilizing different versions provided two important benefits.

First, having read particular verses in the NASB version many times over the years had caused the words to lose their sense of luster to me. The statements no longer grabbed my attention; beckoned a deeper look; provoked the level of interest they deserve. When I read them in different paraphrases, fresh life seemed to be breathed into them for me simply by reading the statements with different wording.

Secondly, the literal method of translation employed by the NASB scholars tended to bring about a somewhat bland rendition of what was being expressed. The paraphrase authors, on the other hand, were able to employ rich language to convey what they believed the biblical author was saying.

* I must insert a word of warning here: to use a paraphrase requires an honest heart and a diligent comparison with a more literal translation. Not only are some of the paraphrase versions particularly untrustworthy, but those who rummage through various paraphrases until they find one that says what they want it to say are not being honest with themselves or those they wish to teach.

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What a contrast there is between a richly worded sentence and one that simply offers the bare facts in bland form!

Thus it was that I spent a solid year studying the book of Psalms through numerous translations. As I soaked in this marvelous compilation of ancient prayers through various translations, I found myself uncovering new treasures at a startling rate. It's no wonder I had a difficult time withdrawing from my study time—the thought that I would very likely discover yet another nugget of truth in the next verse kept me diligently searching.

One of the things that stood out to me through this study was that no single version always “hit a homerun.” In one verse, the Living Bible would express something powerfully. Yet, in the very next verse, its rendition was rather weak but the Knox Bible would richly express the statement.

It was this minor revelation that motivated me to create “my own” version of Psalms—offering each verse in the version that presented it most effectively.[†] Sometimes I found that two or even three Bibles stated a sentence powerfully—so I included the additional versions as well.

It was never my intention to contrive a new book to sell. I did this study for the sheer personal enjoyment of it. However, I was so excited about what it did for me that I found I wanted everyone to partake in the blessing of it.

Thus, you have in your hand *Selah! The Book of Psalms in the Richest Translations*—a compilation of the nearly 2,500 verses found in the Psalter in the best versions available for each verse. It is my hope and prayer that the fruit of my efforts will bless you as I have been blessed in compiling it.

[†] Attempting to decide which Bible provides the most accurate reading of a particular biblical statement is often nothing more than guesswork by the most skilled scholar. For that reason, I suggest that as you read *Selah!* you keep your literal translation handy for comparison's sake.



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PSALM 1

1:1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow evil men's advice, who do not hang around with sinners, scoffing at the things of God. (TLB)

** Blessed is he who does not walk in the state of mind which the ungodly cherish, much less that he should associate with the vicious life of sinners, or even delight in the company of those who scoff at religion. (K & D)¹*

1:2 But they delight in doing everything God wants them to, and day and night are always meditating on his laws and thinking about ways to follow him more closely. (TLB)

** But whose greatest pleasure is in the law of the Lord so that day and night he recites this law to himself. (Har)*

** ... on His law (the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God) he habitually meditates (ponders and studies) by day and by night. (Amp)*

1:3 They are like trees along a river bank bearing luscious fruit each season without fail. Their leaves shall never wither, and all they do shall prosper. (TLB)

1:4 It is nothing like this with the wicked, nothing like this! (JB)
No, they are like chaff swept away by the wind. (Mof)

** Not so the wicked (those disobedient and living without God are not so). But they are like the chaff (worthless, dead, without substance) which the wind drives away. (Amp)*

1:5 They are not safe on Judgment Day; (TLB) the evil-doers will have no place among the upright. (BBE)

1:6 For the Lord watches over all the plans and paths of godly

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men, but the paths of the godless lead to doom. (TLB)
* *For the Lord knows and is fully acquainted with the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly (those living outside God's will) shall perish (end in ruin and come to nought).* (Amp)

PSALM 2

- 2:1 Why are the nations so violently moved? (BBE) Why this impotent muttering of pagans? (JB)
* *Why do the nations rebel? Why are the countries devising plots that will fail?* (NET)
- 2:2 The kings of the earth form a united front; the rulers collaborate against the Lord and his anointed king. (NET)
* *Kings on earth rising in revolt, princes plotting against Yahweh and his Anointed.* (JB)
- 2:3 “Let us free ourselves from their rule,” they say; “let us throw off their control.” (GNB)
* *“Let us tear off their chains and free ourselves from their restraints.”* (HCSB)
- 2:4 He who sits in the heavens laughs. (NASB) At first he’s amused at their presumption. (The Message)
- 2:5 And at last, in his displeasure, he will speak out; (Knox) terrifying them with his fierce fury. (NLT)
- 2:6 For the Lord declares, “I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem, on my holy mountain.” (NLT)
- 2:7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD.” (NASB) Jehovah said unto me, “Thou art my son.” (ASV)
- 2:8 “Ask of me what you will: I will give you nations as your inheritance, (NEB) the very ends of the world for thy domain.” (Knox)
- 2:9 “You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.” (NIV)
- 2:10 Now listen to this warning, you kings; (GNB) you rulers

- of the earth, submit to correction! (NET)
2:11 Serve the Lord in fear! Repent in terror! (NET)
2:12 Submit to God's royal son, or he will become angry, and you will be destroyed in the midst of all your activities—for his anger flares up in an instant. But what joy for all who take refuge in him! (NLT)

PSALM 3

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

- 3:1 Yahweh, more and more are turning against me, more and more rebelling against me. (JB)
3:2 Everywhere voices taunting me, "His God cannot save him now." (Knox)
3:3 Yet, Lord, thou art my champion, (Knox) the one who holds my head high. (NLT)
3:4 I have but to cry out to the Lord and (Knox) His answers thunder from the holy mountain. (The Message)
3:5 Now I can lie down and go to sleep and then awake, for Yahweh has hold of me. (JB)
3:6 I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side. (NIV)
3:7 Arise, O Jehovah! Help me, O my God! (DeW) Deal my enemies a decisive blow! (Har)
3:8 Victory comes from the LORD—may he bless his people. (GNB)

PSALM 4

For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.

- 4:1 O God, my champion, answer my appeal. (Mof) Though I am hemmed in, you will lead me into a wide, open place.

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- Have mercy on me and respond to my prayer! (NET)
- 4:2 Great ones of the world, will your hearts always be hardened?
Will you never cease setting your heart on shadows, following
a lie? (Knox)
* *How long will you...set your heart on trifles and run after
lies?* (NEB)
- 4:3 Know this, Yahweh works wonders for those he loves,
Yahweh hears me when I call to him. (JB)
* *Look how the Eternal marks me out for favor!* (Mof)
- 4:4 Tremble: give up sinning, spend your night in quiet meditation.
(JB)
- 4:5 Offer sacrifices in the right spirit, and trust the Lord. (NLT)
- 4:6 There are many who pray: "Give us more blessings, O
LORD. Look on us with kindness!" (GNB)
* *There are many that cry out for a sight of better times...* (Knox)
- 4:7 But the joy that you have given me is more than they will
ever have with all their grain and wine. (GNB)
- 4:8 I will lie down and sleep peacefully (NET), for You, Lord,
alone afford me a secure existence. (Har)

PSALM 5

For the choir director; for flute accompaniment. A Psalm of David.

- 5:1 O Lord, hear me as I pray; (NLT) give thought to my heart-
searchings. (BBE)
* *LORD, listen to my plea, let me not sigh in vain.* (Knox)
- 5:2 My King and God, give ear to my appeal, (Mof) for I will
never pray to anyone but you. (TLB)
- 5:3 Early in the morning I lay my petition before thee and await
thy pleasure. (Knox)
* *...in the morning I will present my case to you and then wait
expectantly for an answer.* (NET)
- 5:4 No evil thing claims your divine assent. (Knox) Therefore

- he who is wicked cannot dwell near thee. (NETS)
- 5:5 Therefore proud sinners will not survive your searching gaze, for how you hate their evil deeds. (TLB)
* *Arrogant people cannot stand in your presence...* (NET)
* *Boasters collapse under your scrutiny...* (JB)
- 5:6 You destroy all liars and despise violent, deceitful people. (GNB)
- 5:7 But as for me, I will come into your house, in the full measure of your mercy; (BBE) I will worship at your Temple with deepest awe. (NLT)
- 5:8 LORD, I have so many enemies! Lead me to do your will; make your way plain for me to follow. (GNB)
* *Lord, lead me as you promised me you would... Tell me clearly what to do, which way to turn.* (TLB)
- 5:9 For they cannot speak one truthful word. Their hearts are filled to the brim with wickedness. Their suggestions are full of the stench of sin and death. Their tongues are filled with flatteries to gain their wicked ends. (TLB)
* *... Their words are flattering and smooth, but full of deadly deceit.* (GNB)
- 5:10 Pronounce them guilty, God, make their intrigues their own downfall! Hound them for their countless crimes, since they have rebelled against you. (JB)
* *... Banish them for their repeated transgressions.* (Har)
- 5:11 But make everyone rejoice who puts his trust in you. Keep them shouting for joy because you are defending them. Fill all who love you with your happiness. (TLB)
- 5:12 It is you who bless the virtuous man, Yahweh; your favor is like a shield covering him. (JB)

PSALM 6

*For the choir director; with stringed instruments, upon an eight-string lyre.
A Psalm of David.*

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- 6:1 No, Lord! Don't punish me in the heat of your anger. (TLB)
6:2 I am worn out, O LORD; have pity on me! Give me strength;
I am completely exhausted. (GNB)
6:3 I am greatly distraught. Why do You linger so, Lord? Change
Your attitude and rescue me, Lord. (Har)
**My spirits are altogether broken; Lord, will you never be
content?* (Knox)
6:4 Return, O Yahweh, deliver my soul. Save me for the sake
of thy lovingkindness. (Rhm)
6:5 For if I die I cannot give you glory by praising you before
my friends. (TLB)
6:6 I am worn out from sobbing. All night I flood my bed with
weeping, drenching it with my tears. (NLT)
6:7 My eyes grow weak with sorrow; (NIV) I have grown old with
enemies all round me. (JB)
6:8 Depart from me all you that traffic in iniquity, the Lord has
heard my cry of distress. (Knox)
6:9 Yahweh has heard my petition, Yahweh will accept my prayer.
(JB)
6:10 My enemies will know the bitter shame of defeat; in sudden
confusion they will be driven away. (GNB)

PSALM 7

*A Shiggaion of David, which he sang to the LORD
concerning Cush, a Benjamite.*

- 7:1 Yahweh my God, I take shelter in you; from all who hound
me, save me, rescue me. (JB)
7:2 Or he will tear my soul like a lion, dragging me away, while
there is none to deliver. (NASB)
7:3 O Lord my God, if I too have been at fault, if these hands
are stained with guilt; (Knox)
7:4 if I have been a false friend, and not rather spared even

- those that wronged me. (Knox)
- 7:5 then indeed let some enemy overtake me with his relentless pursuit, trample me to earth, and level my pride with the dust! (Knox)
- 7:6 Rise! Yahweh! In thine anger, lift thyself up! (Rhm) Wake up for my sake and execute the judgment you have decreed for them! (NET)
- 7:7 Summon all nations before thee, be seated on thy lofty throne. (Mof)
- 7:8 O Lord, thou who dost pass sentence on the nations. O Lord, judge me as my righteousness deserves, for I am clearly innocent. (NEB)
- 7:9 End all wickedness, O Lord, and bless all who truly worship God; for you, the righteous God, look deep within the hearts of men and examine all their motives and their thoughts. (TLB)
- * *Surely you will put an end to the wrong-doing of the wicked, and prosper the innocent; no thought or desire of ours can escape the scrutiny of your divine justice.* (Knox)
- 7:10 My help cometh of God, who preserveth them that are true of heart. (PBV)
- 7:11 God judges ever true; day by day his indignation mounts up. (Knox)
- 7:12 If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. (NASB)
- 7:13 He takes up his deadly weapons and aims his burning arrows. (GNB)
- * *He putteth his arrows in action against those who are ready for burning.* (Horsley)²
- 7:14 He who is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment. (NIV)
- * *The wicked man conceives an evil plot, labors with its dark details, and brings to birth his treachery and lies.* (TLB)
- 7:15 He dug a pit, hollowed it out, only to fall into his own trap! (JB)

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7:16 He becomes the victim of his own destructive plans and the violence he intended for others falls on his own head.

(NET)

7:17 I give thanks to Yahweh for his righteousness, I sing praise to the name of the Most High. (JB)

** I will ever thank the Lord for his just retribution, singing praises to the name of the Lord, the most High.* (Knox)

PSALM 8

For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of David.

8:1 O Lord our God, the majesty and glory of your name fills all the earth and overflows the heavens. (TLB)

** O Lord, our Lord, how magnificent is your reputation throughout the earth! You reveal your majesty in the heavens above!* (NET)

8:2 You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you.

(NLT)

8:3 When I contemplate Your handiwork in the skies, the moon and the stars which You have set in position. (Har)

8:4 Of what importance is the human race, that you should notice them? Of what importance is mankind, that you should pay attention to them? (NET)

8:5 Yet you made them inferior only to yourself; you crowned them with glory and honor. (GNB)

8:6 You gave him authority over Your creation, making everything subservient to him. (Har)

8:7 All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field. (NASB)

8:8 The birds in the sky, the fish in the sea and everything that moves through the currents of the seas. (NET)

8:9 O Jehovah, our Lord, the majesty and glory of your name fills the earth. (TLB)