

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

Preface

The first volume of *Psalms* is mainly from the pen of David. The volume I would call the “Genesis” of the psalms-the basic theme of sin death and judgment being overtaken by the mercy and salvation of God. There are many references to the LORD looking down on the human race in this book of praise. The LORD looked down on the earth before the judgment of the flood in **Genesis 6** and spared the righteous but judged the wicked. This theme is found widely in the writing of David. David depicts the same righteousness and patience in God and the same wickedness and violence in man and looks for another intervention of Almighty God.

The wonder is that God never does things as we think He should. His great mercies which David pleads so often lead to the development of a story of redemption and salvation that within a thousand years would bring the most awesome intervention believable. God incarnate in the person of Great David’s greater Son would come not to judge but to save and to proclaim good news to all the nations.

But there’s more! David in time was shown the “Shepherd of Israel” of whom Jacob spoke in **Genesis 49** –he was shown something of Christ’s passion though all his searching and waiting on God could not make it as clear to him as it now is to us. Psalms 20-23 are a little trilogy reflecting some of the truths of which I speak.

You will find much to encourage you in this first book of Psalms. I have translated and made comments with the original Hebrew always in the foreground. The Jews after all possess the most spiritual language in the world and it is my prayer that as you deal with the refined silver of what

scripture says it will greatly enrich your heart as it has warmed my own.

This and the other 5 volumes of praise have detained me for fully four years –though work on *Psalms* was a Sunday task pursued devotionally.

I wish to add two comments. One is by **Martin Luther** who said “Whether I possess the full and proper *legitimam* (Luther’s Latin) understanding of the psalms or not... what follows but that we should help one another...he must be a man of most shameless hardihood who would venture to give it out that he understands a single book of scripture in all its parts-nay, who would venture to assume that one psalm has ever been perfectly understood by any one?”

The second comment is found in J.J Perowne’s masterly volume on *Psalms* which gives **Goethe’s** two maxims for translation. “The one requires that the author of a foreign nation be brought to us in such a manner that we may regard him as our own; the other, on the contrary, demands of us that we transport ourselves over to him, and adopt his situation, his mode of speaking, and his peculiarities.”

I have pursued my work on biblical text with evangelical scholars, preachers and devotional readers in mind. The work is not in the precise sense academic but represents my stress on the “prophetic” witness of all scripture and the verbal inspiration of the original scriptures.

As an aside may I comment on the controversial matter of the “imprecatory psalms” that there are special contexts displayed-one of which is the divine decree of judgment-“long-decreed doom” and there is the principle on which King David operated that he handed over the case of the wicked to the one “who executes vengeance”. This did not compromise his kingly right to defend his people nor do prejudice to his

position as vice-regent under the sovereign El-Shaddai in the only Theocracy on earth. He daily sought the oracle of God and it little behoves us to prefer so called enlightenment verdicts to the revealed will of God in judgment. Prophecy is the one spiritual ministry that must not yield to injustice. Just as preachers must declare that the unrepentant are bound for hell so the biblical prophet whose role was often international was obliged by the Holy Spirit to declare how God will deal with nations.

To those who use this CD I would say-spend some time with the “Shepherd trilogy (Psalms 22-24) Feed your soul on the psalms as Mary the blessed mother of our LORD so often did.

In the footsteps of the Good Shepherd,

Bob Coffey L'shuvkha Marya
To the glory of the Lord
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