

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

The Psalms is a collection and represents the final stage in a process that spanned centuries. Completed probably in the third century B.C., it has often been called the prayer book of the "second" (Zerubbabel's and Herod's) temple and was used in the synagogues as well. But it is more than a treasury of prayers and hymns for liturgical and private use on chosen occasions. Both the scope of its subject matter and the arrangement of the whole collection strongly suggest that this collection was viewed by its final editors as a book of instruction in the faith and in godly living — thus a guide for the life of faith in accordance with the Law, the Prophets. (Biblica.com)

REFUGE:: Notice the repetition of this word. It forms the central image of the psalm. מַחֲשֵׁהּ pronounced /machseh/ meaning: hope, place of refuge, shelter, trust from the Hebrew root *chacah*; a shelter (literally or figuratively) -- hope, (place of) refuge, shelter, trust.

The Lord of hosts | **THE GOD OF JACOB** | LORD :: In Hebrew poetry it's common to use different names for God, evoking the different stories and histories of the people.

The Acts of the Apostles is thought to be part 2 of 2 of the Gospel of Luke. It tells the story of the emergence of the church. Today we read from the end of chapter 2 the birth-day of the Church, Pentecost. Peter has given a sermon to a huge diverse crowd and many people respond, hungry to know Jesus more and follow his Way.

Repent:: μετανοέω pronounced /metanoéō/ :: to change one's mind or purpose, to repent, re-orient one's life. It comes from 3326 /metá, "changed after being with" and 3539 /noiéō, "think") – properly, "think differently after," "after a change of mind"; to repent (literally, "think differently afterwards").

BAPTIZED:: βαπτίζω pronounced /baptizó/ :: to dip, sink, submerge, wash, cleanse, whelm, drown. specifically in ceremonial dipping; hence, baptize, to immerse (literally, "dip under").

PROMISE :: ἐπαγγελία pronounced /epaggelia/ :: a summons, a promise which literally "announces what is fitting" (apt, appropriate). [In the NT (and throughout antiquity), 1860 (epaggelía) is a legal term that refers to an officially sanctioned promise. "Almost every NT use of the word promise (epaggelia) points back to the OT"]

Psalm 46

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹ God is our REFUGE and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
² Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,
³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
⁴ There is a river whose streams
make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
⁵ God is in the midst of the city;
it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
⁶ The nations are in an uproar; the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice; the earth melts.
⁷ The Lord of hosts is with us;
THE GOD OF JACOB is our REFUGE.
⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations;
I am exalted in the earth."
¹¹ The Lord of hosts is with us;
THE GOD OF JACOB is our REFUGE.

Acts 2:37-42

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

³⁷ Now when the [crowd] heard the [preaching of Peter and invitation to faith in Jesus], they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" ³⁸ Peter said to them, "Repent and be BAPTIZED every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the PROMISE is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." ⁴⁰ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were BAPTIZED, and that day about three thousand

persons were added. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Romans 6:1-11
NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

¹ What then are we to say? Should we continue in *sin* in order that grace may increase? ² By no means! How can we who died to *sin* go on living in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who were BAPTIZED into Christ Jesus were BAPTIZED into his death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with him by BAPTISM into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of *sin* might be destroyed, so we might no longer be enslaved to *sin*. ⁷ For whoever has died is freed from *sin*. ⁸ But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to *sin* once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to *sin* and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- The psalmist talks about the city of God as a refuge, a place where you can be still and know that God is God. How do you identify with that?
- The Acts of the Apostles lists baptism as the natural response to hunger to know Jesus, the entrance into the church. How is baptism related to repentance change of mind or change of life direction? How is it a promise?
- Paul talks about baptism as a death, a submerging or drowning in the death of Jesus (along with him) and a raising to resurrected and new life. What does that mean to you? How have you experienced such new life? How do you long to?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – *or to us, as a church* – to act, speak, be, or change, through this word of scripture?

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

the Epistle to the Romans is a pastoral letter to the ancient Church in Rome in which the apostle Paul explains theological ideas about faith in Jesus. The epistle was probably transcribed by Paul's amanuensis Tertius and is dated AD late 55 to early 57. We read from chapter 6 about baptism and new life, which follows the development in chapters 3 through 5 around sin and death and how Jesus delivers us from such bondage to the liberty of new life.
the kind of death.

sin:: ἁμαρτία pronounced /hamartia/ :: a sin, failure - properly: "missing the mark" hence: (a) guilt, sin, (b) a fault, failure (in an ethical sense), sinful deed.

hamartia (a feminine noun derived from 1 /A "not" and 3313 /méros, "a part, share of") – properly, no-share ("no part of"); loss (forfeiture) because not hitting the target; sin (missing the mark). It is the brand of sin that emphasizes its self-originated (self-empowered) nature – i.e. it is not originated or empowered by God

BAPTISM 101 -

We know specifics about BAPTISM from a Christian manual compiled before 300 AD commonly called The Didache (Greek meaning "Teaching"). It was used by the early church to help each community know how to be church. It has four parts. The second explains how to perform rituals such as baptism, fasting, and Communion.

The Didache – Part 2 - Baptism

This is how you should baptize:

Having recited all these things, [the first half of the Teaching, "The Way of Life and the Way of Death"] baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in running water. If you do not have running water, then baptize in still water. The water should be cold, but if you do not have cold water, then use warm. If you have neither, then just pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Both the one who is baptized and the one who baptizes should fast beforehand, along with any others who are able, the one that is baptized being told to fast for a day or two.