

1:14 2Ch 20:3;
Jl 2:12, Jl 2:15,
Jl 2:16; Jon 3:8

1:17 Is 17:10,
Is 17:11;
Mal 2:3

1:19 Ps 50:15;
Jer 9:10; Am 7:4

2:3 Gn 2:8;
Is 51:3;
Eze 28:13,
Eze 31:9,
Eze 36:35

because the grain offering and the drink offering
have gone from the temple of your God.

- ¹⁴Demand a fast,
request a special assembly.
Gather the elders and all the land's people
to the temple of the LORD your God,
and cry out to the LORD.

Time of suffering

- ¹⁵What a terrible day!
The day of the LORD is near; it comes like chaos from the Almighty.^d
¹⁶Isn't the food cut off right before our eyes?
Aren't joy and gladness also gone from our God's house?
¹⁷The grain shrivels under the shovels;^e
the barns are empty.
The granaries are in ruin because the grain has dried up.
¹⁸How the animals groan!
Herds of cattle are in distress because there is no pasture for them;
even the flocks of sheep pant.

The prophet's prayer

- ¹⁹To you, LORD, I cry,
for fire has completely destroyed the pastures of the wilderness;
and flames have burned all the trees of the field.
²⁰Even the field's wild animals cry to you because the streams have dried up;
the fire has completely destroyed the meadows of the wilderness.

Announcement of alarm and peril

- 2** Blow the horn in Zion;
give a shout on my holy mountain!
Let all the people of the land tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming.
It is near—
^{2a}a day of darkness and no light,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread out upon the mountains,
a great and powerful army^f comes,
unlike any that has ever come before them,
or will come after them in centuries ahead.
³In front of them a fire consumes;
and behind them a flame burns.
Land ahead of them is like Eden's garden,
but they leave behind them a barren wasteland;
nothing escapes them.
⁴They resemble horses,
and like warhorses they charge,
⁵like the rumbling of chariots.

^dHeb *Shaddai* ^eHeb uncertain ^fOr *a great and strong people*

have the grain and drink offerings from the fields, so they should cry out to the Lord. This follows up the thought expressed in Joel 1:9.

1:15 *day of the LORD*: Chaos is coming to the land, and it is the Lord's work. The "day" is a decisive moment or time.

1:17-18 *grain . . . animals*: The lack of grain affects animals as well as people. Sheep and goats graze on the stubble in grainfields after harvest. Now they will have less to eat.

1:19-20 *fire*: The destruction by fire may refer to wildfires that can break out when fields are stripped of their crops.

It could be a metaphor and refer to what the locusts eat (see Joel 2:3-5).

2:1-11 These verses describe in detail the locust destruction coming on the day of the Lord. They use various images to show the effects of the locust.

2:1 *horn*: A horn signals a public alarm. Here it alerts the nation to the coming of the day of the Lord (see Hos 5:8).

2:2 *clouds and thick darkness*: main features of the day of the Lord. Amos 5:18-20 describes judgment to come on the day of the Lord in similar language.

2:3 *Eden's garden*: the fruitful land of Judah. But destruction

- They leap on the mountaintops—
like the crackling of a fire's flame,
devouring the stubble;
like a powerful army ready for battle.
- ⁶In their presence, peoples shake with fear;
all faces turn red with worry.
- ⁷Like warriors they charge;
like soldiers they climb the wall.
Each keeps to their own path;
they didn't change their course.
- ⁸They don't crowd each other;
each keeps to their own path.
Even if they fall among the weapons,
they won't stop.
- ⁹They rush upon the city; they run upon the walls.
They climb into the houses; they enter through the windows like thieves.
- ¹⁰The earth quakes before them;
the heavens shake.
The sun and the moon are darkened;
the stars have stopped shining,
- ¹¹because the LORD utters his voice at the head of his army.
How numerous are his troops!
Mighty are those who obey his word.
The day of the LORD is great;
it stirs up great fear—who can endure it?

Change your hearts

- ¹²Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your hearts,
with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow;
- ¹³tear your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is merciful and compassionate, very patient, full of faithful love,
and ready to forgive.
- ¹⁴Who knows whether he will have a change of heart
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God?
- ¹⁵Blow the horn in Zion;
demand a fast;
request a special assembly.

Mourning Customs The Israelites, following customs from the ancient world, employed ritual forms to display their sorrow over pain and suffering, death, their return to the Lord concerning sin, or their horror at blasphemy. These ritual acts included fasting, tearing clothes, wearing rough goat hair garments, sprinkling dirt or ashes upon their heads, shaving or pulling out hair and beards, and chanting laments. For examples, see Job 1:20; Esther 4:1-3; Jonah 3:1-9; 2 Samuel 1:2; Ezra 9:3.

2:5 Is 5:24;
Na 1:10, Na 3:2;
Rev 9:9

2:10 Is 13:10;
Eze 32:7;
Jl 2:31, Jl 3:15;
Mt 24:29

2:11 Jl 2:25,
Jl 2:31, Jl 3:16;
Mal 3:2;
Rev 6:17

2:12 Dt 4:30;
Isa 7:3;
Is 22:12;
Hos 12:6; Jl 1:14

2:13 Ex 34:6;
Ps 34:18,
Ps 51:17;
Is 57:15; Jon 4:2

2:14 Jl 1:9,
Jl 1:13;
Am 5:15;
Jon 3:9;
Hg 2:19

2:15 Nm 10:3;
Jl 1:14, Jl 2:1

will come to it. According to Joel 3:21, Judah will again be like a garden.

2:11 *the LORD utters his voice*: The Lord is at the head of the invading army and speaks for it. See Joel 3:16 for a similar claim.

2:12-17 In light of the difficult circumstances, the prophet calls the people to return to the Lord in a special assembly. The priests should lead them in fasting and public worship at the temple, where all can seek a renewed relationship with the Lord.

2:12 *now... return*: There is still time to return. Sorrow and weeping come with the call. The heart represents the intentions, desires, and expectations of a person. Note the calls in Deuteronomy 6:5 and 10:12 for Israelites to love and serve the Lord with "with all your heart." Jesus understands this to be the first and greatest commandment (Matt 22:37-38).

2:13 *tear your hearts*: In the ancient world people would tear their clothing to show that they were sorry and wanted a change of circumstances. King Josiah

tore his clothing after hearing the contents of a scroll found during temple repairs. He then led the people in a ceremony to return to the Lord (2 Kgs 22:8-23:3). Joel knows that people will show signs of sorrow such as weeping and fasting at the temple. He urges them to make sincere and lasting changes and not simply outward signs. *merciful and compassionate*: The Lord is ready to forgive. The prophet reminds the people of this core belief. When the Israelites failed in the wilderness and made a gold calf, judgment came upon them (Exod 32-34). Nevertheless, the Lord offered them mercy and forgiveness (Exod 34:6-7). Jonah 4:2 describes the Lord's mercy in similar terms.

2:14 Forgiveness is God's free choice. Even at this late date God may still give a blessing to the distraught people, based on their heartfelt response to God.

2:15-17 Everyone should participate in the special assembly. The altar for sacrifice is in the courtyard in front of the door to the temple. The priests stand between the altar and the temple when leading worship. See Joel 2:1.

2:16 Ps 19:5;

Jl 1:14

2:17 Ps 79:10,

Ps 115:2;

Eze 8:16

2:21 Ps 126:3;

Is 54:4;

Zep 3:16,

Zep 3:17

2:22 Ps 65:12;

Jl 1:18;

Zec 8:12

2:23 Lv 26:4;

Ps 149:2;

Hab 3:18;

Zec 10:1,

Zec 10:7

2:25 Jl 1:4;

Am 4:9

2:26 Is 62:9

16 Gather the people;

prepare a holy meeting; assemble the elders;

gather the children, even nursing infants.

Let the groom leave his room and the bride her chamber.

17 Between the porch and the altar let the priests, the LORD's ministers, weep.

Let them say, "Have mercy, LORD, on your people,

and don't make your inheritance a disgrace,

an example of failure among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples, "Where is their God?"

Words of compassion and promise

18 Then the LORD became passionate about this land,^g and had pity on his people.

19 The LORD responded to the people:

See, I am sending you the corn, new wine, and fresh oil,

and you will be fully satisfied by it;

and I will no longer make you a disgrace among the nations.

20 I will remove the northern army far from you

and drive it into a dried-up and desolate land,

its front into the eastern sea,

and its rear into the western sea.

Its stench will rise up;

its stink will come to the surface.

The LORD is about to do great things!

21 Don't fear, fertile land;

rejoice and be glad, for the LORD is about to do great things!

22 Don't be afraid, animals of the field,

for the meadows of the wilderness will turn green;

the tree will bear its fruit; the fig tree and grapevine will give their full yield.

23 Children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in the LORD your God,

because he will give you the early rain as a sign of righteousness;

he will pour down abundant rain for you,

the early and the late rain, as before.^h

24 The threshing floors will be full of grain;

the vats will overflow with new wine and fresh oil.

25 I will repay you for the years that the cutting locust, the swarming locust,

the hopping locust,

and the devouring locust have eaten—

my great army, which I sent against you.

26 You will eat abundantly and be satisfied,

and you will praise the name of the LORD your God,

who has done wonders for you;

and my people will never again be put to shame.

^gOr then the LORD became jealous for his land ^hOr at the first

2:17 *inheritance*: Israel is God's family (Exod 4:22; Hos 11:1). As such, they're also God's inheritance (Deut 32:8-9).

2:18-27 *Forgiveness and restoration* will come. The locust plague will go away, the land will be fertile again, and God will bless the people.

2:19 *disgrace*: In Joel 2:17 the people cried out concerning their disgrace among the nations. The Lord will remove it from them and bring back the lost crops (Joel 1:9-13).

2:20 *northern army*: The locust army (see Joel 2:2, 23) will die.

2:21-22 *fertile land . . . animals of the field*: On the Lord's behalf, the prophet speaks to the land and to the wild animals that inhabit it (see Joel 1:20). The land will be fruitful and support all who live on it.

2:23 *Children of Zion*: the people of Judah. Zion is another

name for Jerusalem. In the ancient world, cities and land were widely spoken of as female persons. Other biblical writers speak of Jerusalem or Zion as a mother with children (Isa 49:21-22; 50:4; Ps 87:5-6; Gal 4:26-27).

2:26-27 *shame*: or "disgrace" (Joel 2:17, 19). It is the people's condition when they fail the Lord. Here the Lord promises to remove their shame. *midst of Israel*: The temple in Jerusalem was the Lord's house, representing the divine presence in the midst of Israel. People went up to Jerusalem to worship and to meet the Lord. In Joel 2:27, Joel promises that the people will again know that the Lord is in their midst (see Zeph 3:17). This is an important theme in the prophetic books. After judgment the land of Israel will be restored, and the people will know that the Lord is with them.

- ¹⁵The one who is high and lifted up,
 who lives forever, whose name is holy, says:
 I live on high, in holiness,
 and also with the crushed^k and the lowly,
 reviving the spirit of the lowly,
 reviving the heart of those who have been crushed.¹
- ¹⁶I won't always accuse,
 nor will I be enraged forever.
 It is my own doing that their spirit is exhausted—
 I gave them breath!
- ¹⁷I was enraged about their illegal profits;
 I struck them; in rage I withdrew from them.
 Yet they went on wandering wherever they wanted.
- ¹⁸I have seen their ways, but I will heal them.
 I will guide them, and reward them with comfort.
 And for those who mourn,
- ¹⁹I will create reason for praise:^m
 utter prosperity to those far and near,
 and I will heal them, says the LORD.
- ²⁰But the wicked are like the churning sea that can't keep still.
 They churn up from their waters muck and mud.
- ²¹There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.

57:15 Dt 33:27;
 Ps 34:18,
 Ps 51:17;
 Is 66:2; Lk 1:49

57:16 Ps 103:9

57:17 Is 56:11;
 Jer 6:13

57:18 Jer 3:22;
 Hos 14:4

57:19 Ac 2:39;
 Eph 2:17;
 Heb 13:15

57:20 Job 18:5;
 Jud 1:13

57:21 Is 48:22

58:1 Mi 3:8

58:2 Is 1:11,
 Is 29:13, Is 48:1;
 Ti 1:16

58:3 Ps 69:10;
 Jer 14:12;
 Zec 7:5;
 Mal 3:14

58:4 Dt 1:12;
 1Ki 21:9;
 Prv 17:19,
 Prv 26:21;
 Is 59:2

Fasting from injustice

- 58** Shout loudly; don't hold back;
 raise your voice like a trumpet!
 Announce to my people their crime,
 to the house of Jacob their sins.
- ²They seek me day after day, desiring knowledge of my ways
 like a nation that acted righteously, that didn't abandon their God.
 They ask me for righteous judgments, wanting to be close to God.
- ³"Why do we fast and you don't see;
 why afflict ourselves and you don't notice?"
 Yet on your fast day you do whatever you want,
 and oppress all your workers.
- ⁴You quarrel and brawl, and then you fast;
 you hit each other violently with your fists.
 You shouldn't fast as you are doing today
 if you want to make your voice heard on high.

^kOr *contrite* ^lOr *contrite* ^mHeb uncertain

57:15 *The one who is high and lifted up:* For the same language about God, see Isaiah 6:1; 33:10. For God's opposition to the proud, see Isaiah 2:12-17. For a similar treatment of God's exaltation yet tenderness toward the lowly, see Isaiah 66:1-2.

57:16 *I won't always accuse:* Compare with Psalm 103:9.

57:18 *I will heal them:* Compare with Lamentations 2:13; Jeremiah 3:22; 30:17; 33:6; Hosea 14:4.

57:19 *utter prosperity:* The words in Hebrew are *shalom, shalom*. This verse is quoted in reference to Jesus in Ephesians 2:17.

57:21 *There is no peace:* Compare with Isaiah 48:22. In contrast to the peace God gives to those who are mourning, the wicked who churn up trouble will find no peace.

58:1-14 A lesson on insincere and sincere worship: Devout rituals are meaningless when accompanied by self-serving practices. But fasting from injustice and actively pursuing the interests of those who are socially

defenseless—the hungry, oppressed, naked, and homeless—benefits the whole society.

58:1-2 *Shout loudly; don't hold back:* The prophet is instructed to correct those expecting God to hear their prayers. For similar language, see Micah 3:8. The chapter's structure reflects not condemnation but ethical instruction.

58:3 *Why do we fast and you don't see:* Fasting often expressed mourning, petition, or a change of heart and mind, and carried hope for divine response (Judg 20:26; 1 Sam 7:6; 2 Sam 12:16-23; Ezra 8:21-23; Neh 1:4; 9:1-2; Esth 4:3, 16; Pss 35:13; 109:24; Jer 14:12; Dan 9:3; Joel 1:14; 2:12-17; Jon 3:5). The question suggests divine neglect: We are doing right; why does God fail to respond? The difficulties of life in the early decades of post-exilic Jerusalem may have led to such frustration—see, for instance, Haggai 1:6-11; 2:16-19; Zechariah 8:10. But the fact that people continue to act unjustly even on fast days suggests that

58:5 1Ki 21:27;
Zec 7:5

58:6 Neh 5:10

58:7 Job 31:19;

Is 16:4;

Eze 18:7;

Mt 25:35;

Mt 25:36

58:8 Job 11:17;

Is 52:12;

Is 58:10

58:9 Ps 12:2,

Ps 50:15;

Prv 6:13;

Is 30:19;

Is 65:24

58:10 Dt 15:7;

Job 11:17;

Prv 11:25;

Prv 28:27;

Is 58:8

58:11 Ps 48:14,

Ps 107:9;

Is 57:18;

Jer 31:12

58:12 Is 49:8,

Is 61:4

58:13 Ex 20:8;

Is 56:2;

Jer 17:21

58:14 Dt 32:13;

Job 22:26;

Is 1:20

59:1 Nm 11:23;

Josh 4:24;

Is 50:2, Is 58:9;

Is 65:24

- 5** Is this the kind of fast I choose,
a day of self-affliction,
of bending one's head like a reed
and of lying down in mourning clothing and ashes?
Is this what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?
- 6** Isn't this the fast I choose:
releasing wicked restraints, untying the ropes of a yoke,
setting free the mistreated, and breaking every yoke?
- 7** Isn't it sharing your bread with the hungry
and bringing the homeless poor into your house,
covering the naked when you see them,
and not hiding from your own family?
- 8** Then your light will break out like the dawn,
and you will be healed quickly.
Your own righteousness will walk before you,
and the LORD's glory will be your rear guard.
- 9** Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
you will cry for help, and God will say, "I'm here."
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the finger-pointing, the wicked speech;
- 10** if you open your heart to the hungry,
and provide abundantly for those who are afflicted,
your light will shine in the darkness,
and your gloom will be like the noon.
- 11** The LORD will guide you continually
and provide for you, even in parched places.
He will rescue your bones.
You will be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water that won't run dry.
- 12** They will rebuild ancient ruins on your account;
the foundations of generations past you will restore.
You will be called Mender of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Livable Streets.
- 13** If you stop trampling the Sabbath,
stop doing whatever you want on my holy day,
and consider the Sabbath a delight,
sacred to the LORD, honored,
and honor it instead of doing things your way,
seeking what you want and doing business as usual,
- 14** then you will take delight in the LORD.
I will let you ride on the heights of the earth;
I will sustain you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob.
The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Alienation from God

59 Look! The LORD does not lack the power to save,
nor are his ears too dull to hear,

religious devotion isn't causing worshippers to think about their treatment of others.

58:5-7 Displays of piety that simply draw attention to the practice of fasting produce nothing (see likewise Zech 7:5-10). As in earlier prophets' criticisms of religious practices, it isn't the fast itself that's in question but the spirit in which it's carried out (see Amos 5:21-25; Isa 1:12-27; Mic 6:6-8). The acceptable fast means refraining from taking economic advantage of others, and instead offering

assistance necessary for health and dignity. Complaints mentioned in Nehemiah 5:1-8 suggest the economic desperation of some Judeans during Persian rule.

58:8-12 Generosity toward others results in healing, communion with God, guidance, renewal, and restoration.

58:13-14 Self-serving piety is called *trampling the Sabbath*. Those who honor Sabbaths and holy days do what pleases God on those days.

59:1-8 The hardships the community faces, and the gulf

50:17 1Ki 14:9;
Neh 9:26;
Prv 5:12

50:18 Ro 1:32;
1Ti 5:22

50:19 Ps 10:7;
Ps 36:3, Ps 52:2

50:20 Jer 9:4;
Mt 10:21

50:21 Ecc 8:11;
Is 57:11

50:22 Job 8:13;
Ps 7:2, Ps 9:17;
Is 17:10; Mi 5:8

50:23 Ps 50:14,
Ps 91:16

51:1 2Sa 12:1,
2Sa 24:10;
Ac 3:19

51:2 Ps 51:7;
Ac 22:16;
Heb 9:14;
1Jn 1:7, 1Jn 1:9

51:3 Ps 32:5;
Prv 28:13;
Is 59:12

51:4 Gn 20:6,
Gn 39:9;
2Sa 12:13;
Lk 15:21; Ro 3:4

51:5 Job 14:4,
Job 15:14;
Ps 58:3; Eph 2:3

51:6 Job 38:36;
Prv 2:6; Ecc 2:26

17You hate discipline, and you toss my words behind your back.

18You make friends with thieves whenever you see one;
you spend your time with adulterers.

19You set your mouth free to do evil,
then harness your tongue to tell lies.

20You sit around, talking about your own siblings;
you find fault with the children of your very own mother.

21You've done these things and I've kept quiet.

You thought I was just like you!

But now I'm punishing you;

I'm laying it all out, right in front of your face.

22So consider this carefully, all you who forget God,
or I'll rip you to pieces with no one to deliver you:

23The one who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving is the one who honors me.

And it is to the one who charts the correct path
that I will show divine salvation."

Psalm 51

For the music leader. A psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him just after he had been with Bathsheba.

1 Have mercy on me, God, according to your faithful love!

Wipe away my wrongdoings according to your great compassion!

2 Wash me completely clean of my guilt;

purify me from my sin!

3 Because I know my wrongdoings,
my sin is always right in front of me.

4 I've sinned against you—you alone.

I've committed evil in your sight.

That's why you are justified when you render your verdict,
completely correct when you issue your judgment.

5 Yes, I was born in guilt, in sin,
from the moment my mother conceived me.

6 And yes, you want truth in the most hidden places;
you teach me wisdom in the most secret space.*

*Heb uncertain

misunderstanding and abuse of the sacrificial system, "my people" (Ps 50:7) have become *the wicked* (50:16). Verse 16 assumes an audience that knows God's *laws* and is in covenant relationship with God. Insofar as worship and ethics can be separated, verses 7-15 focus on worship, and verses 16-22 focus on ethics.

50:18 The references here are to the Ten Commandments (see Exod 20:14-16).

50:21-23 Although divine punishment is mentioned (50:21) and described (50:22), verse 23 shows that God's real purpose is to set things right and have the people live as God intends.

50:23 *sacrifice of thanksgiving*: See Psalm 50:14. It isn't clear whether the psalmist meant to say that animal sacrifices were neither necessary nor legitimate. Clearly, however, they aren't sufficient. God wills thankfulness expressed in obedience, as the prophets often proclaim (see Isa 1:10-20; 58:1-14; Jer 7:1-15; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21-24.) *divine salvation*: This means life as God intends it (see Ps 13:5).

51:1-19 Like other prayers for help, Psalm 51 includes complaint (51:3-5), petition (51:1-2, 6-12, 14a, 15a), and expressions of trust and praise (51:14b, 15b-17). Because the complaint involves the psalmist's own sin, Psalm 51 is the fourth of the church's Penitential Psalms (see Ps 6).

The title invites the reading of Psalm 51 in conversation with 2 Samuel 11:1-12:14 (see Ps 3), the story of David and Bathsheba, in which David broke at least half of the Ten Commandments. In this way, the story makes an appropriate context for hearing Psalm 51, even if the psalm didn't originate in this historical context.

51:1 The opening petitions invite more attention to God's character than to the psalmist's sin. *Have mercy*: See Psalm 4:1. *faithful love*: See Psalm 5:7. *compassion*: See Psalm 25:6. All three of these basic qualities of God occur in God's self-revelation to Moses in Exodus 34:6, which comes at the conclusion of the gold calf incident that involved grievous sin on Israel's part. The firm belief about God's merciful character is apparently what enables the psalmist to confess sin so honestly and openly.

51:2-4 Similar to Psalm 32:1-5, Israel's basic words for sin occur here: *guilt* (51:2; see Ps 51:5), *sin[ned]* (51:2-4; see Ps 51:5), *wrongdoings* (51:3), and *evil* (51:4). The word translated *wrongdoings* suggests purposeful rebellion.

51:5 This verse has often been interpreted to mean that sexuality transmits "original sin," but it is better understood as a poetic expression of the widespread and unavoidable sin in the human situation.

- 7 Purify me with hyssop and I will be clean;
wash me and I will be whiter than snow.
- 8 Let me hear joy and celebration again;
let the bones you crushed rejoice once more.
- 9 Hide your face from my sins;
wipe away all my guilty deeds!
- 10 Create a clean heart for me, God;
put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!
- 11 Please don't throw me out of your presence;
please don't take your holy spirit away from me.
- 12 Return the joy of your salvation to me
and sustain me with a willing spirit.
- 13 Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways,
and sinners will come back to you.
- 14 Deliver me from violence, God, God of my salvation,
so that my tongue can sing of your righteousness.
- 15 Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
- 16 You don't want sacrifices.
If I gave an entirely burned offering, you wouldn't be pleased.
- 17 A broken spirit is my sacrifice, God.^a
You won't despise a heart, God, that is broken and crushed.
- 18 Do good things for Zion by your favor.
Rebuild Jerusalem's walls.
- 19 Then you will again want sacrifices of righteousness—
entirely burned offerings and complete offerings.
Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

51:7 Ex 12:22;
Nm 19:18;
Ps 51:2; Is 1:18;
Heb 9:19

51:8 Is 35:10

51:9 Ps 51:1;
Jer 16:17

51:10 Eze 11:19;
Eze 18:31,
Eze 36:26;
Mt 5:8; Ac 15:9

51:11 2Ki 13:23;
Is 63:10;
Eph 4:30

51:12 Ps 85:6

51:13 Ps 37:38;
Is 2:3; Lk 22:32;
Ac 9:21

51:14 2Sa 12:9;
Ps 35:28,
Ps 71:15

51:15 Ex 4:15;
Ps 35:28, Ps 63:3,
Ps 119:164,
Ps 119:175

51:16 1Sa 15:22;
Ps 40:6

51:17 Ps 34:18

51:18 Ps 69:35,
Ps 102:16,
Ps 122:6,
Ps 147:2

51:19 Dt 33:19;
Ps 4:5, Ps 66:13,
Ps 66:15; Mal 3:3

52:1 1Sa 21:7,
1Sa 22:9; Ps 10:3,
Ps 94:4

Psalm 52

For the music leader. A maskil^c of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, "David has gone to Ahimelech's house."

- 1 Hey, powerful person!
Why do you brag about evil?
God's faithful love lasts all day long.

^aCorrection ^cPerhaps *instruction*; it also appears in Pss 42, 44–45, 52–55, 74, 78, 88–89, 142; cf 47:7; the root is used in Ps 32:8.

51:7 Purify... *hyssop*: See Leviticus 14:49, 52; Numbers 19:18, where hyssop is used in cleansing rituals.

51:10-12 Create... *God*: God has the ability to create and re-create, activities associated elsewhere with God's spirit (see Gen 1:2). The threefold repetition of *spirit* suggests that new life is possible for the forgiven sinner. *holy spirit*: Isaiah 63:10-11 is the only other occurrence of this formulation in the OT. It seems here to designate the living and life-giving presence of God.

51:13-15 The forgiven sinner becomes a grateful witness to God's merciful character (see Ps 32:8-11). Every organ of speech is involved: *tongue* (51:14), *lips* (51:15), and *mouth* (51:15). *Deliver me from violence*: In the Psalms, those who pray are often victims of violence, often precisely because they are attempting to represent God's ways (see Ps 4:2-5; see sidebar, "The Enemies" at Ps 3). *my salvation*: See Psalm 13:5. *your righteousness*: See Psalm 5:8. In this context, God uses forgiveness to set things right.

51:16-17 Humble thankfulness and obedient praise are what God desires, as the previous psalm has also suggested (see Ps 50:14, 23; see also Ps 40:6; Rom 12:1-2).

51:18-19 These verses were possibly added to the psalm by someone who wanted to suggest that Psalm 51:16-17 (and perhaps 50:23) shouldn't be understood as a prohibition of sacrificial offerings when made in the proper spirit.

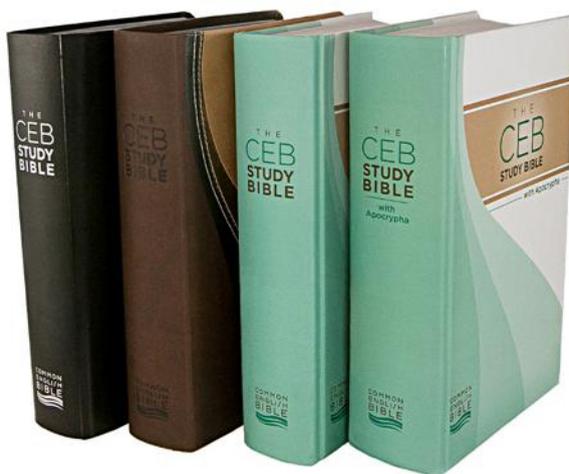
52:1-9 Like Psalm 49, Psalm 52 addresses other people, until the concluding verse 9. So it has a teaching tone; and like Psalm 49, the lesson involves the temptation to trust wealth (52:7). The title suggests that Psalm 52 be read in light of 1 Samuel 21–22, in which case the *powerful person* (52:1) would be Doeg, whose message to Saul is quoted in the title (see 1 Sam 22:9; see Ps 3). After the words to the "powerful person" (52:1-5), the focus shifts to the *righteous* (52:6), who are quoted in 52:7. Verse 8 is the speaker's profession of faith, which continues in verse 9 in promises directed to God.

52:1 *powerful person!*: The person addressed here and then characterized in Psalm 52:2-4 sounds very much like the typical enemy, whose behavior is always deceitful, violent, and destructive (see sidebar, "The Enemies" at Ps 3). *evil*: The word occurs again in Psalm 52:3, and verses 2-4 describe "evil" in detail. *faithful love*: Psalm 52:1 already suggests that God's faithful love will prevail over



This excerpt is from the CEB Study Bible.

Find out more at CEBStudyBible.com.



© 2013 Common English Bible