

## **Psalm 31**

From the Torah readings on Judah and Tamar, this would seem to reflect the cry of Tamar - as the Rabbis interpret it - for justice to be done for her.

**Psalm 31:1** - "In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness."

The Targum has, "in thy Word"; i.e. the essential Logos, or Word of God.

Tamar's shame in being denied a husband by Judah is balanced against Judah's confession, in spite of his shame, that she was right. Slander and shame infuse this story, and without Tamar's disguise and Judah's repentance, it could have marked the end of the Messianic lineage.

For David, the shame could be many things - his fall from court favor and pursuit by Saul, or the embarrassment of a betrayal and open rebellion by his own son Absalom, or even the court gossip about his tryst with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah.

**Psalm 31:5** - "Into your hand I commit my spirit: you have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth."

The last words of Christ on the Cross. He was also beset by shame and apparent failure, surrounded by enemies, and persecuted:

**Luke 23:46** - "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

This is not just a saying for the end of life. We commend our spirit into his care now, during life, in times of either trouble or bounty. For David, his life hung in the balance and he was surrounded by enemies.

This would be just another way of "reckoning yourself dead," as Paul put it:

**Romans 6:6** - "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

**Psalm 31:10** - "For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones are consumed."

This could be Judah's lament upon seeing himself as God sees him - at that moment of recognition of the token of pledge in Genesis 38:25, and also having his sin against Joseph brought again before mind.

**Psalm 31:12** - "I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel."

For “like a broken vessel” Rashi has “like a lost utensil which is in the process of becoming lost.” The Targum as “like a broken vessel of the potter.”

**Psalm 31:18** - “O Lord, let me not be shamed because I called out to You; let the wicked be shamed, let them be silenced to the grave.”

Slander and Shame again are brought to mind.

**Psalm 31:23** - “O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.”

Rashi says: “with measure for measure and with exactitude, like an arrow on a bowstring.” i.e. the proud get what they deserve.

**Psalm 31:24** - “Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.”

There is reciprocity in faith, in which our believing in God’s faithfulness bounces back to us as renewed strength and courage, becoming again stronger belief.

**1 Corinthians 3:18** - “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”