

## Psalm 51

The Passover was a massive display of God's mercy upon Israel. Psalm 51 is similarly a moving, heartfelt cry for that mercy.

This psalm contrasts Israel's complaints to Moses Exodus 14:11-12 with David's confession of sin.

"When Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba." (See **2 Samuel 12**)

**Psalm 51:1** - "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

**Psalm 51:2** - "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."

At Baptism - Israel was separated from the Egyptians at the Red Sea. We are separated from our sinful 'Old man' Adam at the cross.

**1 Corinthians 6:11** - "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

**Psalm 51:3** - "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."

Continually before me, whenever I look at myself.

**Psalm 51:4** - "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

Rashi - "Against You alone have I sinned": Therefore, it is in Your power to forgive [me]. Even in my sin against Uriah, I sinned against You, for You warned against the matter.

"In order that You be justified in Your conduct": like במנהגך, in Your conduct. I had the strength to overpower my evil inclination, but, so that they should not say, "The servant overpowered his master," for I said to You (Psalm 26:2), "Test me, O Lord, and try me," and You tested me and I was not found perfect, in order that You should be justified and not I (Sanh. 107a).

Another explanation: "in order that You be justified in Your conduct": If You forgive me, You will be justified in Your judgment against all the wicked who do not repent, so that they will not be able to say, "If we had repented, it would not have availed us."

**Psalm 51:5** - "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

**Psalm 51:6** - "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part

thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

Rashi - in the hidden places: Heb. בטחות. These are the reins, which are smooth. Menachem (p. 97), however, associated it with (Gen. 21: 16): "as it were a bowshot (כמטחוי קשת)"; and so (Job 38: 36): "Who placed wisdom in the inward parts (בטחות)." And their interpretation is an expression of drawing, for just as a bow is drawn, so is their yearning for knowledge.

**Psalm 51:7** - "Purge (purify) me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Hyssop was what they used to apply the blood on the doorposts at Passover. Rashi also reminds us that hyssop was used to sprinkle waters of purification from the ashes of the Red Heifer on those who had touched a dead body (**Numbers 19:13**).

**Psalm 51:8** - "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

bones = *etsem* - Here it can mean the bodily form, essence, substance

broken = *dakah* - crushed, collapse, crush to pieces (Used in verse 17 "contrite" to describe David's heart)

**Psalm 51:9** - "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities."

**Psalm 22:1** - "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Luke 23:34)  
And yet later in the psalm....

**Psalm 22:24** - "He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard."

**Psalm 51:10-11** - "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me."

**Ezekiel 36:26** - "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

**Psalm 51:12** - "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."

Free = *nadiyb* - willing, generous, liberal

**Psalm 51:13** - "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

Rashi - They will repent if they see that You forgive me.

**Psalm 51:14** - "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness."

bloodguiltiness = *dam* - blood. i.e. to die as the punishment for his crimes.

**Psalm 51:15** - "O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise."

Like in **Lamentations 5:21** - "Turn thou us to thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned" God must do it.

**Psalm 51:16** - "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering."

**Isaiah 1:11-16** - "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil"

**Psalm 51:17** - "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

broken = *shabar* - shattered, crushed, broken

contrite - *dakah* - collapsed, crushed to pieces

**Psalm 51:18** - "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

Do good = *yatab* - to act fitly, rightly, with acceptance toward

Rashi saw this as David's request for God "to build Your Temple in its midst in the days of my son, Solomon."

The combination of our confession and repentance with God's mercy are what build up the walls of the New Jerusalem.

**Psalm 51:19** - "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."

**Romans 12:1** - "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."