

Psalm 151

Introduction

To the traditional Hebrew Psalter, the Septuagint (LXX) adds Psalm one hundred and fifty one, with a superscript describing it as "outside the number" (i.e., of the 150 Psalms); this is the basis of the NRSV translation. It is found in the fourth-century CE Greek Codex Sinaiticus with a different superscription and in the sixth-century Codex Alexandrius (with a superscription, "The 151 Psalms of David"). In Syriac, Psalm 151 is the first of a series of psalms (Ps 151-155) about the heroic exploits of David in 1 Sam 16-17.

Besides these hundred and fifty Psalms, there is one additional in the Syriac, Septuagint, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Arabic. A Hebrew version of psalm is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (11 QPs). This Hebrew version is made up of two distinct psalms: Ps 151A (=LXX Ps 151) is a poem based on 1 Sam 16.1-13, about David the shepherd becoming Israel's king, with a superscription; this psalm is truncated in the Greek and Syriac versions. Ps 151B is the fragmentary beginning of another psalm, also with a superscription, that must have followed Ps 151A in the original scroll; it apparently deals with David's contest with Goliath (1 Sam 17), a story that is also the subject of LXX Ps 151.6-7.

In form, Ps 151A is not a hymn or a petition, but a narrative (cf. Ps 78), an autobiographical poem in which David, the youngest of his brothers, speaks of his shepherding care for his father's flocks, of his psalms praising God, and of his anointment as Israel's king. The superscription of the Hebrew poem ("A Hallelujah of David the son of Jesse") is similar to the superscriptions of Ps 145 ("Praise. Of David") and the introductory "Hallelujah" of Ps 111-113, 146-150, and thus serves to integrate this psalm into the end of Psalms.



Psalm 151

This psalm is ascribed to David as his own composition (though it is outside the number), after he had fought in single combat with Goliath.

1 I was small among my brothers, and the youngest in my father's house; I tended my father's sheep.

2 My hands made a harp; my fingers fashioned a lyre.

3 And who will tell my Lord?

The Lord himself; it is he who hears.

4 It was he who sent his messenger and took me from my father's sheep, and anointed me with his anointing oil.

5 My brothers were handsome and tall, but the Lord was not pleased with them.

6 I went out to meet the Philistine, and he cursed me by his idols.

7 But I drew his own sword; I beheaded him, and took away disgrace from the people of Israel.



Other translations:

A) I was the smallest among my brothers, and the youngest in my father's household. I used to take care of my father's sheep. 2 My hands constructed a musical instrument; my fingers tuned a harp. 3 Who will announce this to my Lord? The Lord himself—he is listening. 4 He himself sent his messenger and took me from my father's sheep, and anointed me with his anointing oil. 5 My brothers were handsome and big, but the Lord did not approve of them. David's Victory over Goliath 6 I went out to meet the foreigner; he called down curses on me by his idols. 7 But I pulled out his

own sword; I beheaded him and thereby removed reproach from the Israelites. I WAS the least among my brethren; and the youngest in my father's house; and I kept also my father's sheep. My hands made the organ; and my fingers joined the psaltery.³ And who told it to my LORD? [Arab.: And who is he who taught me?] The LORD himself, he is my Master, and the Hearer of all that call upon him. He sent his angel, and took me away from my father's sheep; and anointed me with the oil of his anointing. [Others, the oil of his mercy.] ⁵ My brethren were taller and more beautiful than I; nevertheless the LORD delighted not in them. I went out to meet the Philistine, and he cursed me by his idols. [Arab.: IN the strength of the LORD I cast three stones at him. I smote him in the forehead, and felled him to the earth.] ⁸ And I drew out his own sword from its sheath, and cut off his head, and took away the reproach from the children of Israel.

B) 1. Smaller was I than my brothers and the youngest of the sons of my father, So he made me shepherd of his flock and ruler over his kids; 2. My hands have made an instrument and my fingers a lyre; And (so) have I rendered glory to the Lord, thought I within my soul 3. The mountains do not witness to him, nor do the hills proclaim; The trees have cherished my words and the flock my works. 4. For who can proclaim and who can bespeak and who can recount the deeds of the Lord? Everything has God seen everything has he heard and he has heeded. 5. He sent his prophet to anoint me; Samuel to make me great; My brothers went out to meet him handsome of figure and appearance. 6. Though they were tall of stature and handsome by their hair, The Lord God chose them not 7. But he sent and took me from behind the flock and anointed me with holy oil, And he made me leader of his people and ruler over the sons of his covenant.

Also known as: Apocrypha 151 Additional Psalm 1 1 5 1 551 115 151
Septuagint Saptuagint Septwagint Septuagent Septuajint Septugint
Apocryphal Apocryfal Apocryfa Abocryphal Abocryfal Abocryfa bsalm
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