

Longman's Charity ~ Psalms

A Novel about Landscape and Childhood, Sanity and Abuse, Truth and Redemption

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The extracts from the psalms that open each chapter were based, initially, on existing translations, however I then re-translated by going back to the original Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible: *The Septuagint*, from the late 2nd century BC.

Prologue—A Welcoming

Κύριε, μὴ τῷ θυμῷ σου ἐλέγξῃς με
μηδὲ τῇ ὀργῇ σου παιδεύσῃς με.
PSALM 6 vv. 2

*“Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak;
O Lord, heal me, for my very bones are troubled.”*
PSALM 6:2

PART ONE THE LAND & THE CHILD

ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἐν ἀνομίαις συνελήμφθην, καὶ ἐν ἀμαρτίαις
ἐκίσσησέν με ἡ μήτηρ μου.
PSALM 50 (51) vv. 5

*“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my
mother did conceive me.”*
PSALM 51:5

Chapter 1

καὶ ἔστησεν αὐτὴν τῷ Ἰακωβ εἰς πρόσταγμα καὶ τῷ
Ἰσραὴλ διαθήκη αἰώνιον λέγων Σοὶ δώσω τὴν γῆν
Χανααν σχοίνισμα κληρονομίας ὑμῶν ...
ἐξανατέλλων χόρτον τοῖς κτήνεσιν καὶ χλόην τῇ
δουλείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοῦ ἐξαγαγεῖν ἄρτον ἐκ τῆς
γῆς. PSALM 103 (104) vv. 10-11a, &, 14

*“He sends the springs into the valleys, they flow among
the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field . . .
He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and
vegetation for man, that he may bring forth food from
the earth...”*
PSALM 104:10-11a & 14

Chapter 2

ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἐν ἀνομίαις συνελήμφθην, καὶ ἐν ἀμαρτίαις
ἐκίσσησέν με ἡ μήτηρ μου.
PSALM 50 (51) vv. 5

*“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my
mother did conceive me.”*
PSALM 51:5

Chapter 3

ὅτι σὺ ἐκτίσω τοὺς νεφρούς μου, κύριε, ἀντελάβου
μου ἐκ γαστρὸς μητρὸς μου. ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι,
ὅτι φοβερῶς ἐθαυμαστώθην· θαυμάσια τὰ ἔργα σου,
καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ μου γινώσκει σφόδρα. οὐκ ἐκρύβη τὸ
ὄστούν μου ἀπὸ σοῦ, ὃ ἐποίησας ἐν κρυφῇ.
καὶ ἡ ὑπόστασις μου ἐν τοῖς κατωτάτοις τῆς γῆς.
PSALM 138 (139) vv. 13-15

*“O Lord, for you formed my inward parts; you covered
me in my mother’s womb. I will praise you, for I am
fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are your
works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame
was not hidden from you, when I was made in secret,
and skilfully created.”*
PSALM 139:13-15

Chapter 4

...καὶ τὰ πεδία σου πλησθήσονται
πίοτιτος· πιανθήσονται τὰ ὠραῖα τῆς ἐρήμου, καὶ
ἀγαλίαςιν οἱ βουνοὶ περιζώσσονται.
PSALM 64 (65) vv. 12b-13

*“The little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are
clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered with
grain; they shout for joy! They sing!”*
PSALM 65:12b-13

Chapter 5

καὶ φοβηθήσονται οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὰ πέρατα ἀπὸ τῶν σημείων σου· ἐξόδους πρωΐας καὶ ἐσπέρας τέρψεις. ἐπεσκέψω τὴν γῆν καὶ ἐμέθυσας αὐτήν, ἐπλήθυνας τοῦ πλουτίσαι αὐτήν· ὁ ποταμὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπληρώθη ὑδάτων· ἠτοίμασας τὴν τροφήν αὐτῶν, ὅτι οὕτως ἡ ἐτοιμασία σου. τοὺς αὐλακάς αὐτῆς μέθυσον, πλήθυνον τὰ γενήματα αὐτῆς, ἐν ταῖς σταγόσιν αὐτῆς εὐφρανθήσεται ἀνατέλλουσα.
PSALM 64 (65) vv. 9a, &, 10-11

“You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it . . . You water its ridges abundantly, you settle its furrows; you soften the earth with showers, you bless its growth. You crown the year with your goodness, and our paths are full with your abundance”
PSALM 65: 9a & 10-11

PART TWO THE VILLAGE IDIOT

ὅτι ἐξέλιπεν ἐν ὀδύνη ἡ ζωὴ μου καὶ τὰ ἔτη μου ἐν στεναγμοῖς· ἠσθένησεν ἐν πτωχείᾳ ἡ ἰσχὺς μου, καὶ τὰ ὀστέα μου ἐταράχθησαν.
PSALM 30 (31) vv. 11

“I am a reproach among all my adversaries, but especially among my neighbours, and am repulsive to my acquaintances; those who see me outside flee from me.” PSALM 31:11

Chapter 6

Ὁ θεός, ἐπὶ σοὶ ἠλπισα, μὴ καταισχυνοθεῖν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. ἐν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ σου ῥύσαι με καὶ ἐξελοῦ με, κλῖνον πρὸς με τὸ οὖς σου καὶ σῶσόν με.
PSALM 138 (139) vv. 13-15

“In You, O Lord, I put my trust, let me never be put to shame. Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline Your ear to me—and save me!”
PSALM 71:1-2

Chapter 7

Ἐκολλήθη τῷ ἐδάφει ἡ ψυχὴ μου ζῆσόν με κατὰ τὸν λόγον σου.
PSALM 118 (119) vv. 25

“My soul clings to the dust! Revive—please!—revive me according to your word.”
PSALM 119:25

Chapter 8

ὅτι ἐξέλιπεν ἐν ὀδύνη ἡ ζωὴ μου καὶ τὰ ἔτη μου ἐν στεναγμοῖς· ἠσθένησεν ἐν πτωχείᾳ ἡ ἰσχὺς μου, καὶ τὰ ὀστέα μου ἐταράχθησαν.
PSALM 30 (31) vv. 11

“I am a reproach among all my adversaries, but especially among my neighbours, and am repulsive to my acquaintances; those who see me outside flee from me.” PSALM 31:11

PART THREE THROUGH FIRE & WATER

ἐὰν ἀναβῶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, σὺ εἶ ἐκεῖ· ἐὰν καταβῶ εἰς τὸν ᾄδην, πάρει· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ ἡ χεὶρ σου ὀδηγήσει με, καὶ καθέξει με ἡ δεξιὰ σου.
PSALM 138 (139) vv. 8b & 10

“...if I make my bed in hell, you are there ... even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.”
PSALM 139:8b&10

Chapter 9

ἀπέδου τὸν λαόν σου ἄνευ τιμῆς, καὶ οὐκ ἦν πλήθος ἐν τοῖς ἀλλάγμασιν αὐτῶν. ἔθου ἡμᾶς ὄνειδος τοῖς γείτοσιν ἡμῶν, μυκτηρισμὸν καὶ καταγέλωτα τοῖς κύκλῳ ἡμῶν ἔθου ἡμᾶς εἰς παραβολὴν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, κίνησιν κεφαλῆς ἐν τοῖς λαοῖς. ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἡ ἐντροπή μου κατεναντίον μου ἔστιν, καὶ ἡ αἰσχύνη τοῦ προσώπου μου ἐκάλυψέν με
PSALM 43 (44) vv. 13-16

“You make us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to those all around us. You make us a byword among the heathen, they shake their heads at us in scorn. All day long my disgrace is before me, and shame has covered my face, because of the words of those who taunt and revile me, because of the looks from my adversaries and those who hate me.”
PSALM 44:13-16

Chapter 10

ἐὰν ἀναβῶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, σὺ εἶ ἐκεῖ· ἐὰν καταβῶ εἰς τὸν ἄδην, πάρει· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ ἡ χεὶρ σου ὁδηγήσει με, καὶ καθέξει με ἡ δεξιὰ σου.
PSALM 138 (139) vv. 8b & 10

“...if I make my bed in hell, you are there ... even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.”
PSALM 139:8b&10

Chapter 11

παρὰ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθρούς μου ἐγενήθην ὄνειδος καὶ τοῖς γείτοσίν μου σφόδρα καὶ φόβος τοῖς γνωστοῖς μου, οἱ θεωροῦντές με ἔξω ἔφυγον ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ. ὅτι εἶπαν οἱ ἐχθροί μου ἐμοὶ καὶ οἱ φυλάσσοντες τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐβουλεύσαντο ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ λέγοντες· Ὁ θεὸς ἐγκατέλιπεν αὐτόν· καταδιώξατε καὶ καταλάβετε αὐτόν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ῥυόμενος.
PSALM 30 (31) vv.12 & 70(71) 10-11

“I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. For my enemies speak against me; and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, saying, ‘God has forsaken him, pursue and take him! For there is none to deliver him!’”
PSALM 31:12 & 71:10-11

Chapter 12

εἰσήγαγες ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν παγίδα, ἔθου θλίψεις ἐπὶ τὸν νῶτον ἡμῶν. ἐπεβίβασας ἀνθρώπους ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς ἡμῶν, διήλθομεν διὰ πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος, καὶ ἐξήγαγες ἡμᾶς εἰς ἀναψυχὴν.
PSALM 65 (66) vv.11-12

“You brought us into the net. You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads! We went through fire and through water—but you brought us out to a rich place: to fulfilment!”
PSALM 66:11-12

Epilogue—A Leave-Taking

δόντος σου αὐτοῖς συλλέξουσιν, ἀνοίξαντος δέ σου τὴν χεῖρα τὰ σύμπαντα πλησθήσονται χρηστότητος. ἀποστρέψαντος δέ σου τὸ πρόσωπον ταραχθήσονται· ἀντανελεῖς τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐκλείψουσιν καὶ εἰς τὸν χοῦν αὐτῶν ἐπιστρέψουσιν. ἐξαποστελεῖς τὸ πνεῦμά σου, καὶ κτισθήσονται, καὶ ἀνακαινιεῖς τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς. ἦτω ἡ δόξα κυρίου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, εὐφρανθήσεται κύριος ἐπὶ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ.
PSALM 103(104) vv.28-31

“When you give them their needs, they gather! You open your hand, they are filled with good. You hide your face, and they are troubled. You take away their breath: they die!—and return to their dust. You send forth your Spirit, they are created. And you renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the Lord endure forever, May the Lord rejoice in all His works!”
PSALM 104:28-31

End of Text—Concluding Psalm

κατευθυνθήτω ἡ προσευχή μου ὡς θυμίαμα ἐνώπιόν σου, ἔπαρσις τῶν χειρῶν μου θυσία ἑσπερινή.
PSALM 140(141) vv.2

“Let my prayer be set before you as incense, O Lord, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”
PSALM 141:2