

Psalm 84: an Old Testament 'Pilgrim's Progress'.

To the chief musician on the Gittith. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

1. How beloved are your dwelling places, O Lord of hosts!
2. My soul longs, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh shout for joy to the living God.
3. Even the sparrow has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
4. Blessed are those who dwell in your house, they will be still praising you! Selah.

5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.
6. Passing through the valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with blessings.
7. They go from strength to strength, before appearing before God in Zion.
8. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah.

9. Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of your anointed!
10. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.
12. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in you!

The title of the psalm associates the psalm with the 'sons' ('the descendants', that is) of Korah. This indicates that the psalm was either written by one of them, written for them, or in some other way belonged to them.¹

This is one of eleven psalms which carry this particular title. These eleven psalms fall into two separate sets:

- (i) Psalms 42 to 49 (where Psalm 43 doesn't actually boast the title because it simply continues the mournful theme of Psalm 42), and
- (ii) Psalms 84 to 88 (but excluding David's Psalm 86).²

Interestingly, our psalm (which opens the second group) is linked very closely with Psalms 42 and 43, which open the first group. They share many common themes and expressions, and it may be worth noting at the outset that the divine title 'the living God' occurs in only these two places³ in the whole book of Psalms.

And yet there is one striking difference. For, whereas Psalms 42 and 43 maintain a constant lamentation on behalf of those who are debarred by circumstances from attending God's house and courts, Psalm 84 expresses the joy and jubilation of those who *are* privileged to go, to be, and to serve there.

For my part, I view our psalm very much as a Pilgrim Psalm.

According to the law of God, the men of Israel were required to journey to Jerusalem, nestling among the high mountains of Judea, three times a year to celebrate the great annual Feasts of the Lord, namely, (i) the Passover/Unleavened Bread, (ii) Weeks/Pentecost, and (iii) Tabernacles.⁴ I infer from his reference to 'the early rain'⁵ (which fell in late October/early November) that our psalmist had in view particularly the Feast of Tabernacles, which fell during the time of the autumn harvest.

The psalm is broken up neatly into three sections or stanzas of four verses each, a division clearly marked by the word 'Selah' (indicating a pause of some kind, possibly a musical interlude) at the close of the first two sections.

Each of the three sections (verses 1 to 4, verses 5 to 8, and verses 9 to 12) contain a beatitude (a pronouncement of blessedness) on genuine and godly worshippers. Addressing God in each case, in order these declare :

- (i) 'Blessed are those who dwell in your house' in verse 4;
- (ii) 'Blessed is the man whose strength is in you' in verse 5; and
- (iii) 'Blessed is the man who trusts in you' in verse 12.

The psalmist speaks, that is, of the three-fold blessedness of (i) *dwelling* in His presence, (ii) *drawing* on His strength, and (iii) *depending* on Himself.

The underlying theme of the first section is that of the fervent desire of the psalmist's soul for God and His dwelling place. ('The plural ['dwelling places'] is used because the temple building (the house) and its courts are embraced'.⁶)

The Lord's dwelling place is the place which, according to verse 1, the psalmist dearly loves, and for which, according to verse 2, he both longs and faints.

Verse 1

Note that the opening words should be rendered 'How beloved' or 'How well-loved' rather than 'How amiable' or 'How lovely'.⁷ The point made is not that God's dwelling place looks *lovely* and is aesthetically pleasing, but that it is greatly *loved* by the God's faithful people (himself included) simply because it is the dwelling place of their sovereign Lord, 'the Lord of hosts'.

This title 'the Lord of hosts' focuses attention on God's sovereign power: It indicates that all 'armies' in heaven and on earth are at His disposal to carry out His purpose. Let us remember today that, whatever circumstances we face, this is the God we worship and serve!

Verse 2

Because the Lord is all-powerful, the psalmist cannot contain his emotions and is consumed with the desire to be in the place where He has made His presence known.

Interestingly, the Greek Old Testament translates the Hebrew word rendered 'longs' by the same word as that by which Paul expresses his 'earnest desire' (his 'yearning') for a very different kind of 'house', the 'house which is from heaven', namely, the glorified, heavenly body of the believer.⁸ You and I have every reason to share his longing for that great 'change' (transformation) from our present 'lowly' body to one like our Lord's own 'body of glory'.⁹

But, ultimately, what causes the psalmist both to yearn and to cry out for joy is not (i) the grandeur of the Temple building, (ii) the Temple's elaborate ritual, (iii) the company of other like-minded worshippers, or (iv) the songs which the worshippers sing with great passion and enthusiasm.

What causes him to pine away and to shout for joy is the presence of the Lord Himself, the presence of 'the living God'. It has been well said that, 'God Himself is the final object of desire; the Temple is only the means of realising His Presence'.¹⁰

I note that the same earnest longing for God had surfaced in the first of the earlier set of 'sons of Korah' psalms: 'As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?'¹¹

Verse 3

And with a handful of words the psalmist paints a most beautiful verbal picture of the enviable position of others who abide where God does: (i) first, in verse 3, of small birds, and, (ii) second, in verse 4, of the Levites of Jerusalem.

First, then, he speaks of the small birds (quite possibly, as our translation suggests, of common sparrows and restless swallows) who make their dwellings in God's house. To his mind, the very humblest of birds are privileged, not only to fly over the Temple precincts, but to build their nests and lay their young in the very neighbourhood of God's altars.¹² Truly, they make their 'home' there.

One commentator (concerned that 'it is scarcely feasible' that birds would be able to build their nests in the altars themselves) suggests an alternative interpretation: 'It is perhaps better to see the reference to the birds as a parenthesis, in which the Psalmist is comparing the rest and comfort of sparrows and swallows with his own longings. They have found houses and nesting places, and why should not he find rest at the altars of his God? ... If this reference to the birds is viewed parenthetically, then substantially the Psalmist is saying, "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God ... even thine altars, O Lord of hosts"'.¹³

Personally, I share the sentiments of another, who wrote, 'it is unnecessary to suppose that the text ... must be emended by the insertion of words to give the sense: 'Birds have their

nests, and so have I found (or rather, would I fain find) a home by thine altars'.¹⁴ I see no reason why these little feathered friends should not have found themselves comfortable, snug homes in the area around the altars of the Lord, possibly 'in the Temple eaves'.¹⁵

Verse 4

But not only did the psalmist himself focus his attention upon 'the living God' and His dwelling place, but he knew that so too, did a company of highly favoured men, namely, the Levites¹⁶ – of whom the 'sons of Korah' represented one family, belonging, as they did to the Kohath branch of the tribe of Levi.¹⁷

True, the visitor to God's sanctuary may be blessed, but how much more those who 'dwell' there! For the Levitical personnel (such as the singers and musicians¹⁸) were housed there whenever it was their turn (by course) to serve at the Temple, so as to be available for all of its services. All of these the psalmist regards as most 'blessed', to be resident in the Temple area, spending their time praising the Lord. Oh, how he would have loved to be there all the time himself.

For such men had the high privilege and joy of 'still' praising God, he says. That is, such men had the joy of 'ever' ... of 'constantly' and 'continually' ... of 'again and again' ... praising God, an occupation in which, no doubt, in their own distinctive way, the feathered residents of the Temple precincts also joined!

Verse 5

Following the 'Selah' which marked the end of the opening section of the psalm, in the second section (or stanza), the camera sweeps as it were away from the Temple courts to the spiritual joy of the crowds of pilgrims pursuing their journey towards Jerusalem for the purpose of joining in the worship at the forthcoming Feast.

As we noted earlier, all males in Israel were required to make three pilgrimages every year to appear before God 'in the place which He shall choose' to celebrate the great annual Feasts of the Lord, namely, (i) the Passover/Unleavened Bread, (ii) Weeks/Pentecost, and (iii) Tabernacles.¹⁹ 'It may be that the Psalmist is thinking of those who looked forward to such pilgrimages to Jerusalem, travelling not by compulsion, nor of necessity, but with a willing eagerness, just for the joy of being at the temple courts again'.²⁰

The travelling pilgrim draws the strength²¹ for his long journey, the psalmist notes, from the Lord. And the pilgrim's 'heart' remains firmly focused on the 'highways to Zion'.²² 'To say the highways are in their hearts is to say that the trip was on their mind—they were intent on making the journey, the word "hearts" referring to their desire and decision to go'.²³

Verse 6

And the prospect before such pilgrims (of arriving at their eagerly anticipated destination, the place which God Himself calls 'my city'²⁴, and especially the Temple, God's 'blest abode'²⁵ within that city) made all the exertions and difficulties of their pilgrimage seem ever so light.²⁶ For they experience both abundant blessings (verse 6) and abnormal strength (verse 7) along their way.

'Passing through the valley of Baca', the psalmist says, 'they make it a place of springs', a place showered with the blessing of the autumn rains.

I am in no position to be dogmatic about the significance of that expression 'the valley of Baca'. But I suspect that it may well have referred to a literal valley, to some barren and arid valley through which the procession of pilgrims were compelled to pass on their way to the royal city.

I note that, in recording one dramatic incident, the English Old Testament renders the word translated as 'Baca' here as 'balsam trees' ('mulberry trees' in the King James Version).²⁷

I understand that the balsam tree not only thrives in dry and waterless areas, but that the gum which exudes from its bark seems to weep from there, and that, on account of this, the balsam tree was known to some in Old Testament days as 'the weeping tree'.²⁸

Putting all this together, I think it may well be that the author of the psalm has in mind a valley known to him, if not to others, as 'the Valley of Weeping',²⁹ through which the pilgrims had to pass. I note that some translate the expression (memorably) as 'the Vale of Tears'.³⁰

And, certainly, God's people throughout all eras (our own included) have known what it is to pass through many a 'Vale of Tears' when *en route* to their heavenly and eternal abode.

I say 'pass through' deliberately because that is how the psalmist spoke of the Valley of Weeping: 'passing through the valley of Baca'. And we can each thank God we are not going to stay in this present world for ever! It was well said by one of the English Puritans, 'It is no small comfort to the saints, that this world is the worst place that ever they shall be in'.³¹ So cheer up, poor sufferer, your pain and sorrow won't last for ever.³²

But the testimony of our psalmist is that the pilgrim who draws his (or her) strength from the Lord of hosts turns that very 'Valley of Weeping' into 'a Place of Springs'. And the otherwise dry and difficult terrain experiences what I might call, in the language of Ezekiel 34, 'showers of blessings';³³ indeed, not only 'showers of blessing' but veritable 'pools of blessing'!

But it is, I take the psalmist to be saying, the happy hope of reaching their goal (in their case, what the apostle Paul calls 'the Jerusalem which now is'³⁴) and God's house there which transforms the dreary and desolate valley into a place of refreshment for the soul.

And the same is true (or should be) on a far grander scale for the believer today. For, to us who 'seek the city which (for us) is to come'³⁵ ('the holy city, New Jerusalem'³⁶), and who await with anticipation seeing our Lord face to face, such a glorious prospect should transform our very darkest and most troubled days, enabling us, when passing through our Valley of Weeping to convert it into a place of spiritual refreshment.

As we know well, there will be no tears in our eternal home; God Himself has promised such several times!³⁷ Some time ago, I was moved when reading something written by Joni Earekson Tada: 'at the point when I *do* have the use of my arms to wipe away *my own* tears, I won't have to, because *God* will'.³⁸ He will indeed, Joni.

Pondering the very different ways in which you and I can react to the trials and difficulties which God allows us to face in *our* 'valley of Baca', I have long enjoyed the verse ...

A yacht can go east, or a yacht can go west
By the self-same wind that blows.
'Tis the set of the sails, and not the gales,
Which determines the way it goes.³⁹

Verse 7

The prospect of 'appearing before God' in company with many other worshippers of like-mind invigorates each of those whose strength is in Him (as said in verse 5).

Such a prospect put a spring in their steps. And so, although in normal circumstances, the strength of the footsore traveller diminishes the further he travels along his way, with these pilgrims the very reverse was true; 'they go from strength to strength'.⁴⁰

'Instead of fainting on their toilsome journey they gain fresh strength as they advance'.⁴¹

Verse 8

The psalmist brings his second section to a close by appealing to the '*Lord of hosts*', the '*God of Jacob*'. This is exactly the same combination of divine titles which we find in another 'psalm of the sons of Korah', namely, Psalm 46: 'The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge'.⁴² God's people could be confident that the sovereign, all-powerful Lord who had once preserved Jacob would also protect Jacob's descendants.

The author of our psalm is assured that, when addressed to such a God, his prayer will not fall on deaf ears.

Verse 9

And, having paved the way by asking God to cup His ear to his prayer, the psalmist opens his third stanza with a specific prayer for the king of David's line who filled the throne of Judah at

the time, and upon whose well-being, humanly speaking, the prosperity of the people depended.

Personally, I think that the words, 'our shield' are more likely to be a reference to the king, and not to God. When linked with the following expression, 'your anointed', this preserves the parallel structure of the verse.⁴³

If I am right, in effect, the psalmist is calling on God to 'behold' with favour (and so to protect and care for) the one whose office as God's anointed king obliges him to protect and to defend (and so to fulfil the role of 'the shield' for) the nation.

Verse 10

The psalmist reverts to expressing his appreciation of the privilege and the blessedness of approaching God.

He gladly acknowledges that a single day in God's 'courts is better than a thousand elsewhere', promptly adding that 'I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness'.

I suspect that this latter sentence is loaded, coming as it does in a psalm linked very closely to 'the sons of Korah'.

For I recall that it was Korah, the first cousin of Moses and Aaron, who perished in the wilderness following his linking with Dathan and Abiram in rebellion (i) against the two brothers,⁴⁴ and (ii), as Moses pointed out at the time, against God who had bestowed on him and Aaron their respective offices.⁴⁵

I say 'perished', and so Korah did, in a most dramatic and unprecedented⁴⁶ manner, when he was swallowed up alive into the ground along with Dathan and Abiram and his own servants.⁴⁷

And yet, unlike the families of Dathan and Abiram, who were consumed along with them⁴⁸, in the sovereign mercy of God, the sons of Korah (and we are explicitly told this) did *not* die; 'Notwithstanding ('But') the children of Korah died not'.⁴⁹

But not only were the sons of Korah spared God's just judgement. Some of them were later chosen by God to lead both the choral and the orchestral music in both the tabernacle and the Temple.⁵⁰

And, not only so, but some of the sons of Korah were appointed (along with others of the Levitical families) as 'keepers of the threshold ('the entrance') of the tabernacle ... in charge of the gates of the Lord'.⁵¹ That is, they functioned as 'doorkeepers', both at the tabernacle and then later at the Temple.⁵²

In all likelihood, the most famous of Korah's descendants was the prophet Samuel ... God's 'emergency man' as he has been styled,⁵³ the man used by God to establish a monarchy in Israel following the dark and chaotic days of the Judges.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that, following God's revelation to young Samuel of the fate of Eli and his house, 'Samuel lay until morning; then *he opened the doors of the house of the Lord*'.⁵⁴

And with my eye firmly on the words of verse 10, '*the tents of wickedness*', I note that, back in the days of Korah's rebellion, before ever God's judgement fell on Korah, Dathan and Abiram, on God's instruction, Moses had exhorted the congregation of Israel, 'Depart, please, from *the tents of these wicked men!*'⁵⁵

It would be difficult to miss that connection: '*the tents of these wicked men*' ... '*the tents of wickedness*'.⁵⁶

And we have the author of this psalm (a psalm linked by its title with 'the sons of Korah') asserting in the strongest of language that he would 'rather':

(i) be a *doorkeeper* in the house' of his God (which is what, by the grace of God, the sons of Korah had become), than

(ii) to 'dwell in *the tents of wickedness*' (which is where Korah and those who perished with him had once dwelt).

The expression 'I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God' can equally well be rendered 'I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God'. This rendering would stress the psalmist's unhesitating choice (a) to undertake the most humble, mundane and unassuming of tasks in the Lord's service, rather than (b) to settle comfortably inside tents associated with the so-called 'pleasures of sin'.⁵⁷

Verse 11

I said earlier that, ultimately, what causes the psalmist both to yearn and to cry out for joy was not (i) the grandeur of the Temple building, (ii) the Temple's elaborate ritual, (iii) the company of other like-minded worshippers, or (iv) the songs which the worshippers sing with great passion and enthusiasm, but rather the presence of 'the living God' Himself.

And I have no doubt that the psalmist would have readily aligned himself with Martin Luther (whose birthday was commemorated last Tuesday⁵⁸), when the great Reformer wrote, 'Let the world have their rich ones, their powerful ones, and their wise ones, and their consolations in this world; let them trust and glory in their wisdom, their might, their wealth, and their possessions—my heart triumphs in *the living God*'.⁵⁹

And the psalmist made no secret of the reason for his two-fold preference of (i) a day in God's courts above a thousand elsewhere, and of (ii) performing the lowly duties of a doorkeeper in God's house above dwelling in the tents of wickedness.

In brief, it is because (i) of *that which God is*, and (ii) of *that which God does*.

In the psalmist's own words, it is because (i) 'the Lord God is a sun and shield', and (ii) 'the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly'.

In striking a comparison with the 'sun', he wants us to consider the Lord God as the beneficent source of our light, energy, and joy. And in striking a comparison with a 'shield', he wants us to consider the Lord God as our great Defender and Protector.

If we are in *darkness*, the psalmist is saying, the Lord will be to us a *sun*, to enlighten and to enliven us. If we are in *danger*, He will be to us a *shield*, to guard and protect us.

We might associate his assertion of faith with the words of another (well-known) psalm: 'The sun shall not strike you by day (for God is a 'sun' to *light*, not to *smite*) ... The Lord shall preserve you from all evil'.⁶⁰

When the Lord had said to Abraham many centuries before, 'Fear not, Abram, I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward', the patriarch had immediately probed for details of that 'exceeding great reward': '*What* will you *give* me ...?'⁶¹

Our psalmist doesn't need to ask. He knows what blessings to expect. He knows that the Lord God gives, and gives unstintingly. He *gives* (i) grace, (ii) glory, and (iii) good.

I suppose that we could say, with our eyes on the pilgrim character of the psalm, that (i) *grace* is how our spiritual pilgrimage *began*, and (ii) *glory* is how it will *end*.

And what, we may ask, of (iii) the *good*? Ah, '*no good thing will He withhold* from them that walk uprightly'. Let's hear you take that a stage further for us, please, Paul: 'He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely *give us all things*'?⁶²

Alas for us, we forfeit so much of our spiritual peace and joy because we often mistake that which is really 'good' for us. Surely, God can be trusted to lavish on 'those who walk uprightly' all those things which He (in His *infinite* wisdom) knows to be good for them.

Verse 12

'God can be trusted', did I say?

Did you notice that that is precisely the note on which our psalm closes? In one sense, summarising the whole of the psalm, the writer proclaims the blessedness of the one who trusts in the Lord of hosts (the very same divine title with which he had begun the psalm).

Let us close by reminding ourselves of the three beatitudes imbedded in our psalm:

- (i) 'Blessed are those who dwell in your house';
- (ii) 'Blessed is the man whose strength is in you'; and
- (iii) 'Blessed is the man who trusts in you'.

May we each prove for ourselves the three-fold blessedness (i) of *dwelling* in His presence; (ii) of *drawing* on His strength; and (iii) of *depending* on Himself.

Footnotes

¹ 'In the inscription, the sons of Korah are mentioned, but there is no general agreement about the preposition which links them with the Psalm. Is it "for", or "by", or "to", the sons of Korah? ... These sons of Korah are frequently mentioned in connection with the temple service, both as singers and as doorkeepers (1 Chron. 9. 19; 26. 1; 2 Chron. 20. 19)', J. M. Flanigan, *'What the Bible Teaches; Psalms'*, page 190.

² The first set refer *mainly* to 'God', and the second to 'Lord'.

³ Psa. 42. 2; 84. 2.

⁴ Exod. 23. 14-17; Deut. 16. 16.

⁵ Psa. 84. 6.

⁶ T. W. Davies, *'The Century Bible: The Psalms (73-110)'*.

⁷ 'The word signifies always "beloved" and never "lovely"', E. W. Hengstenberg, *'Commentary on the Psalms'*, Psalm 84. 1-4.

⁸ 2 Cor. 5. 2. Remember that it was a tent-maker (Acts 18. 3) who spoke of his earthly body as being a 'tent', which, one day, would give way to 'a house ... eternal in the heavens', v. 1.

⁹ Phil. 3. 21.

¹⁰ A. F. Kirkpatrick, *'The Book of Psalms'* (Cambridge Bible), page 506.

¹¹ Psa. 42. 1-2.

¹² With reference perhaps both to the brazen altar of burnt offering in the court and to the golden incense altar in the Holy Place; cf. 'altars', Num. 3. 31.

¹³ J. M. Flanigan, *op. cit.*, page 367.

¹⁴ A. F. Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, page 506.

¹⁵ W. VanGemeren, *'Psalms'* (Expositor's Bible Commentary), on Psalm 84. 1-4.

¹⁶ '... there is a special reference to priests and Levites, and here perhaps particularly to the sons of Korah employed about the temple and having their residences nearby', W. S. Plumer, *'Psalms'*, page 795.

¹⁷ 'Korah ... the son of Kohath, the son of Levi', Num. 16. 1; cf. 1 Chron. 6. 37-38.

¹⁸ 1 Chron. 15. 16-22; 16. 5, 42; 25. 1-7; 2 Chron. 20. 19.

¹⁹ Exod. 23. 14-17; Deut. 16. 16.

²⁰ J. M. Flanigan, *op. cit.*, page 367.

²¹ The Greek Old Testament version renders the word 'strength' by *'αντιλημψις'*; namely, 'help, support'.

²² That we need to supply the words 'to Zion' to complete the Hebrew sentence seems clear from what is said of the terminus of the pilgrims' journey in verse 7, where the travellers are spoken of as 'appearing before God *in Zion*'.

²³ Allen P. Ross, *'A Commentary of the Psalms: 42-89'*, page 753.

²⁴ Isa. 45. 13.

²⁵

'And since my glorious God
Makes thee His *blest abode*,
My soul shall ever love thee well'.

Being the last three lines of Isaac Watts' hymn, 'How pleased and blest was I'.

²⁶ The Christian can compare 2 Cor. 4. 16-17.

²⁷ 2 Sam. 5. 23-24 // 1 Chron. 14. 14-15.

²⁸ Although the actual word 'Baca' is never actually used in the Hebrew Old Testament as a word for 'weeping', it is derived from a root word which means 'to weep'.

²⁹ Or, possibly, 'the Valley of the Balsam Trees'.

³⁰ For example, the Latin Vulgate and E. W. Hengstenberg, *op. cit.*, Psalm 84. 6.

³¹ John Flavel, *'Divine Conduct or The Mystery of Providence'*, page 143.

³² 'From the tone of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, or the spirit of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, who would suspect that either of these works was written from a prison? It is much more important for us to learn wisdom by our trials than to escape from them', W. S. Plumer, *'Psalms'*, page 798.

³³ An expression which, courtesy of Major Daniel W. Whittle's hymn, *'There shall be showers of blessing'*, may well ring bells with some.

³⁴ Gal. 4. 25.

³⁵ Heb. 13. 14.

³⁶ Rev. 21. 2.

³⁷ Isa. 25. 8; Rev. 7. 17; 21. 4.

³⁸ Joni Earekson Tada, *'Hope ... the best of things'*, page 29.

³⁹ Based on lines written by Ella Wheeler Wilcox (confessedly, a most dubious source).

⁴⁰ Cf. *'from glory to glory'*, 2 Cor. 3. 18, and *'from faith to faith'*, Rom. 1. 17.

⁴¹ A. F. Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, page 508.

⁴² Psa. 46. 7, 11. This association of these two divine titles is limited to these two psalms.

⁴³ Although there is no doubt that the description 'shield' can legitimately be applied to God as well, which it does unambiguously in verse 11.

⁴⁴ Num. 16. 1-3.

⁴⁵ Num. 16. 11.

⁴⁶ 'A new thing', Num. 16. 30.

⁴⁷ Num. 16. 32; 26. 10

⁴⁸ 'Their households', Num. 16. 32.

⁴⁹ Num. 26. 11.

⁵⁰ 1 Chron. 6. 31-38; 15. 16-26; 25. 1, 4-6; 2 Chron. 5. 12; 20. 14-19.

⁵¹ 1 Chron. 9. 19; cf. 1 Chron. 26. 1. 'The expression "waiting at the threshold" is a word that occurs only here ... but is related to the word for "threshold"', Allen P. Ross, *op. cit.*, page 757.

⁵² Shallum 'the descendant of Korah, the son (descendant) of Abiasaph, a Korahite, and his brethren ... (called brethren because they, like him, belonged to the father's-house of Korah), were ... keepers of the thresholds of the tent, i.e., of the house of God, of the Temple, which, according to the ancient custom, was called tent, because God's house was formerly a tent – the tabernacle ... the author of this register goes back into the ancient time; and we learn that Shallum's ancestors, of the father's-house of the Korahite, Abiasaph, had held the office of guardian of the entrance to the house of God from the time of the conquest of Canaan and the setting up of the tabernacle in Shiloh.', C. F. Keil, *'Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch'*, on 1 Chron. 9. 19.

⁵³ W. W. Fereday; the title of his book, *'Samuel, God's Emergency Man'*.

⁵⁴ 1 Sam. 3. 15.

⁵⁵ Num. 16. 26.

⁵⁶ The same Hebrew noun.

⁵⁷ Heb. 11. 25.

⁵⁸ 10 November 1483.

⁵⁹ Martin Luther, *'A Manual on the Book of Psalms'* (1521), pages 219-220.

⁶⁰ Psa. 121. 6-7.

⁶¹ Gen. 15. 1-2.

⁶² Rom. 8. 32.