C. S. LEWIS ON THE PSALMS
Reflections on the Psalms

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Commission to Revise the Psalter

THE REVISED
PSALTER

The First Report of the Commission to
Revise the Psalter appointed by the
Archbishops of Canterbury and York

Book I: Psalms 1-42
The members of the commission

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Professor C. S. Lewis, D.D., D.Litt., Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature in the University of Cambridge
Professor D. Winton Thomas, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge
“Judgement” in the Psalms

• “O let the nations rejoice and be glad, for thou shalt judge the folk righteously” Ps. 67:4

• “Let the field be joyful...all the trees of the wood shall rejoice before the Lord, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth” Ps. 96:12, 13

• “Aslan is on the move.”
“Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy to him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.” Ps. 109:8-12
Death in the Psalms

• “O remember how short my time is: why hast thou made all men for nought?” Ps. 89:46
• “Shall the dust give thanks to thee?” Ps. 30:10
• “Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? Ps. 88:11-12
“The Fair Beauty of the Lord”

• “One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.” Ps. 27:4

• “For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” Ps. 84:10
Sweeter than Honey

• “The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes....More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than the honeycomb.” Ps. 19:8, 10
Connivance

• “I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.” Ps. 26:4-5

• “Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? Am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.” Ps. 139:21-22
Nature

• “Thy mercy, O Lord, reacheth unto the heavens, and thy faithfulness unto the clouds. Thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains, thy judgements are like the great deep.” Ps. 36:5-6

• “For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.” Ps. 139:13-14
A Word about Praising

• “What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?” Ps. 30:9

• “Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee?” Ps. 88:10

• “Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.” Ps. 119:175
Second Meanings

• “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over thy works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.” Ps. 8:3-5, cf. Heb. 2:6-8
Scripture

• “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?” Ps. 22:1

• “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Ps. 110:1

• “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” Ps. 118:22
Second Meanings in the Psalms

• “The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” Ps. 110:4
• “Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men.” Ps. 68:18
• “All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.” Ps. 45:8