

Psalms 5:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

Analysis

Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. This opening verse establishes the psalm as prayer, specifically as morning prayer (verse 3 clarifies timing). David addresses Yahweh directly with two requests that use synonymous parallelism—"give ear" and "consider" both request divine attention, while "my words" and "my meditation" both describe David's prayer.

"Give ear" (ha'azinah, הָאִזְנָה) is a Hiphil imperative from azan, meaning to give ear, listen, pay attention. The form emphasizes urgency and earnestness—David isn't casually mentioning something but passionately seeking God's attention. The image of God's ear being inclined toward His people's prayers appears throughout Scripture: "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry" (Psalm 34:15). God's attentiveness contrasts with pagan idols that have ears but cannot hear (Psalm 115:6).

"My words" (amarai, אֲמָרַי) refers to spoken prayers, the articulated expressions of David's heart. These aren't mere thoughts but verbalized petitions. While God knows our thoughts before we speak, Scripture consistently emphasizes vocal prayer—giving voice to faith, concerns, praise, and lament. Verbalization clarifies thought, strengthens conviction, and bears witness to faith. Romans 10:9-10 connects confession with salvation: "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

"Consider" (binah, בִּנָה) means to understand, discern, perceive deeply. David asks God not merely to hear the sounds of his words but to understand their deepest meaning—to perceive the heart behind the language, to discern the spirit

motivating prayer. This reflects awareness that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). God sees beyond stammering speech, imperfect expression, and confused articulation to the genuine heart cry.

"My meditation" (hagigi, הַגִּיגִי) derives from hagah, meaning to mutter, murmur, meditate, moan. This describes inarticulate groaning or murmuring—the deep sighs and groans that express what words cannot fully articulate. Romans 8:26 describes the Spirit similarly: "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Not all prayer is eloquent; sometimes the heart's deepest cries emerge as wordless sighs. David asks God to understand even these inarticulate meditations.

Historical Context

Psalm 5 bears the superscription "To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth," indicating use in temple worship. "Nehiloth" likely refers to wind instruments (from chalil, flute or pipe), suggesting this psalm was accompanied by woodwinds rather than stringed instruments. Its designation as morning prayer (verse 3) suggests use in daily temple worship, which included morning and evening sacrifices with accompanying psalms and prayers.

Morning prayer was central to Jewish piety. The Shema was recited at morning and evening (Deuteronomy 6:4-7). Daniel prayed three times daily, including morning (Daniel 6:10). Jesus rose "a great while before day" to pray (Mark 1:35). The pattern of seeking God at day's beginning, before worldly concerns crowd in, demonstrates wisdom in prioritizing divine communion. Beginning the day in God's presence orients the rest of the day toward Him.

The historical context likely involves threats from enemies (verses 8-10 address those who oppose David). Whether during Saul's pursuit, Absalom's rebellion, or other crises in David's reign, the psalm reflects sustained opposition requiring daily divine help. Morning prayer becomes the spiritual foundation for facing the day's challenges. David's example teaches believers to begin each day by bringing

concerns to God, seeking guidance, and affirming trust before engaging with opposition or difficulty.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to ask God to 'give ear' to your prayers, and how does this reflect understanding of prayer as communication with a personal God?
2. How does the practice of morning prayer—seeking God at day's beginning—shape the rest of your day differently than praying only when crises arise?
3. What 'meditations' (inarticulate groans or sighs) do you bring before God that you struggle to articulate in words?
4. How does knowing that God 'considers' not just your words but your heart's meditation change your approach to prayer?
5. What obstacles prevent you from establishing consistent morning prayer as David modeled, and how can you overcome them?

Interlinear Text

תָּנוּןִים בְּנֵה יְהִי הַפָּזִים אֶמְבָּדָה
to my words Give ear O LORD consider my meditation
H561 H238 H3068 H995 H1901

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 19:14 (Word): Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

Psalms 54:2 (Word): Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

Psalms 64:1 (Parallel theme): Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

1 Peter 3:12 (References Lord): For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Psalms 86:1 (References Lord): Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy.

Psalms 17:1 (References Lord): Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.

Romans 8:26 (Parallel theme): Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

1 Samuel 1:16 (Parallel theme): Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

Psalms 80:1 (Parallel theme): Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.

1 Samuel 1:13 (Parallel theme): Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.