

Psalm 124

Feast of the Holy Innocents
Evening Prayer Monday Week 3

To the title 'A Song of Ascents', Psalm 124 adds 'Of David.' It is a liturgical hymn of thanksgiving (verse 6) to YHWH for having saved the people from extreme danger.

The style of these verses is found only in a few texts in Old Testament:

If you had not ploughed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle.

– Judges 14:18

If YHWH of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.

– Isaiah 1:9

If YHWH had not been my help, I would soon have lived in the land of silence.

– Psalm 94:17

Fire and water are the two elements most commonly used to describe destruction.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

– Isaiah 43:2

You delivered me from choking fire on every side ... from the deep belly of Hades.

– Sirach 51:4-5

Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

– Matthew 17:15

We are to put our trust in YHWH.

I trust in God and am not afraid.
What can a mere mortal do to me?

– Psalm 56:11

I, I am he who comforts you; why then are you afraid of a mere mortal who must die, a human being who fades like grass?

– Isaiah 51:12

**¹If it had not been YHWH* who was on our side – so says Israel –
²if it had not been YHWH who was on our side, when our enemies attacked us,
³they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us;
⁴the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us;
⁵the raging waters would have overwhelmed us.**

Rescued by YHWH

⁶Blessed* be YHWH, who has not left us a prey to their teeth.

⁷We escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare was broken, and we escaped.

⁸Our help is in the name of YHWH, who made heaven and earth.

I broke the fangs of the unrighteous, and made them drop their prey from their teeth.
– Job 29:17

They set a net for my steps;
my whole being was bowed down.
They dug a pit in my path,
but they have fallen into it themselves.
– Psalm 57:6

Save yourself like a gazelle from the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler.
– Proverbs 6:5

He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler.
– Psalm 91:3

My help comes from YHWH,
who made heaven and earth.
– Psalm 121:2

We invoke YHWH our God.
– Psalm 20:7

The name of YHWH is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.
– Proverbs 18:10