

# When You Wonder What Ought to Be Important to Your Leaders

## Psalm 101

### INTRODUCTION

#### Leupold 2 Sam 6:1-11 compare 1 Tim 3:4,5

IT MUST still be maintained that “the contents of this psalm go far toward confirming the correctness of the superscription in ascribing it to David” (*Maclaren*). If we attempt to select some particular time in the reign of David, the evidence available does not point toward the beginning of his reign, when on general principles a pronouncement such as this could be very appropriate. Since the psalm seems to contain a direct allusion to a particular episode in David's life, the time when David was well established on the throne might be most suitable. When the psalm asks, “O when wilt Thou come to me?” (v. 2), this statement says in effect what David uttered at the time when he almost despaired of ever having the ark of the Lord, the very symbol of His presence among His people, come to Jerusalem. For he exclaimed after the Uzzah incident, which had so shocked the whole nation: “How can the ark of the Lord come to me?” (II Sam. 6:9). To David the presence of the ark and the presence of the Lord were synonymous. (See also 2 Sam 6:1-11) ¶We may mention further points that agree with the life and conduct of David as we know it. When v. 2 speaks of the discreet attention that David purposes to give to blameless conduct, the very same verb is used in I Sam. 18:14, 15, where David is said to have “behaved himself wisely in all his ways.” Long before he ever became king, blameless conduct was his idea and a pattern of life that was consistently followed. Furthermore, a similar description of a man whom the Lord will allow to come into His presence in the sanctuary as it is given in Ps. 15 agrees so obviously with our psalm that it may well be claimed that consistent objectives of the life of David are here being set forth. To all this must be added the fact that the earlier years of David's reign were well known to have been irreproachable: David practiced what he preached. ¶We are, therefore, justified in arriving at the conclusion that we have in this psalm “a mirror for magistrates”<sup>1</sup>

- a) **Kindness and justice are the objectives of a good ruler (v. 1).**
- b) **This must be in evidence in his own personal behavior (vv. 2—4).**
- c) **It must be true in what he requires of those about him (vv. 5—8).**<sup>2</sup>

### 101:1

#### Leupold

As one looks at the first line of the psalm only one might be inclined to raise the question: Are God's “kindness and justice” under consideration or man's? For on other occasions these two attributes are ascribed specifically to God, cf. Ps. 89:14. But it is equally true that in Is. 16:5 the same qualities are set forth as being distinctive of good human rule. I Besides, the rest of the psalm makes it entirely clear that these qualities in so far as they are in evidence in a worthy ruler's life are under consideration. In fact, by describing what he himself intends to practice David sets down a pattern of godly conduct for all rulers. ¶**It must be immediately apparent that these two traits in the conduct of a man reciprocally check one another. Kindness prevents justice from becoming too harsh; justice saves kindness from becoming flabby. Thus it becomes apparent in what sense the poet makes these two qualities “the theme of his song.” All that follows is a detailed description of what belongs under this head.**<sup>3</sup>

### 101:2

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<sup>1</sup> Leupold, *Psalms*, 701.

<sup>2</sup> Leupold, *Psalms*, p. 702

<sup>3</sup> Leupold, *Psalms*, p. 702.

## Leupold

The royal singer begins very properly by outlining what his personal conduct ought to be. We translated, “give discreet attention to” because the verb means to behave oneself wisely. As pointed out above, this resolution may have reached a climax as the result of the previous attempt to bring the ark of the Lord up to the capital city, when Uzzah was struck dead, and the whole nation was warned that the Lord and His worship were to be taken seriously (II Sam. 6:1—11). This experience caused David seriously to wonder if his goal of finding a house for the ark in the new capital (v. 2b) would ever be achieved.¶He realizes that blameless conduct on his part and that of the nation is a prerequisite for the fulfillment of his ambition. For this reason, it appears, this brief question is injected into the middle of the verse. The former train of thought is then resumed, in which the author expresses his resolution that, as far as he is concerned, he shall study to show himself above reproach in his personal family life. For all outward manifestations of irreproachable conduct are hollow if they are not accompanied by the same irreproachableness in the immediate family circle. But even there it must be more than the observance of certain outward conventions; the situation demands “integrity of heart.”<sup>4</sup>

### 101:3

## Leupold

Unfolding this pattern of personal conduct more fully, the psalmist indicates what type of projects are to engage his attention: never **“any worthless undertaking.”** In this general category belongs the question of the writer’s attitude toward apostates, “those who fall away,” for such unreliable conduct should be abhorred by any right-thinking man. Speaking still more strongly, he will not allow such an attitude to cling to him. That is to say, he intends to make it quite plain that he will have no association with those who become untrue to the Lord. There must have been many worthless men in Jerusalem and elsewhere in David’s day, and it was his duty to let men know how he felt about this class of evildoers.<sup>5</sup>

### 101:4

## Leupold

At first glance it might appear as if this verse began to consider others more than the psalmist himself. On second thought, however, the claim that “a wicked heart shall depart” from him does seem to imply that he on his part will not let a wicked heart be his. In a similar manner the second half of the verse may then be considered as presenting a further attitude on his part toward wicked persons: he “will not acknowledge” them. This statement means that he will not concede that such people are friends or intimates of his. Disavowal of evil men is as important as are the acceptance and acknowledgment of those who are true and upright. **Thus the holy writer has sketched briefly what belongs to true integrity and blamelessness of conduct. This is his ideal, and the major part of his reign furnished the proof as to how sincerely he meant what he said here.**

### 101:5

## Leupold

Even as a man should be meticulous about his own conduct, so, if he occupies a prominent public office, he should exercise extreme caution in the choice of his associates and, for that matter, in the whole issue of the individuals whom he tolerates at court. To express high ideals in

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<sup>4</sup> Leupold, *Psalms*, p. 703..

<sup>5</sup> Leupold, *Psalms*, p. 703.

this respect is not vainglorious or self-righteous but is the equivalent of a proclamation of public policy to be followed by a man while he is in office. If wicked men have played an important part in governmental affairs they must be publicly disavowed. That is what the psalmist does here.¶If he seems particularly severe in his attitude toward slanderers, it must be remembered that they are character assassins, and that slanders spoken about men in high places often led to the execution of those who were slandered. David, therefore, apparently threatens to do nothing worse than the persons in question themselves have been guilty of. For that matter, royal courts have almost universally been hotbeds of intrigue. To the slanderer are added two classes of men at court with whom the king is utterly out of sympathy: the proud and the arrogant. The one betrays his attitude by his manner of looking (“proud look”) and the other by his thinking (“arrogant mind”— Hebrew: heart).<sup>6</sup>

## 101:6

### Leupold

After the negative side of this issue has been stated, the positive follows almost of necessity. Whom does the king favor? Who are the men whom he loves to have about him? First of all, “the faithful in the land” whom he loves to have dwell with him or to be found in his immediate presence. In the Hebrew the idea of “faithful” is linked with the concept of “faith” just as it is in the corresponding English words. The parallel statement brings into the picture the man “that walks in a perfect way.” In this expression the emphasis is not so much on absolute perfection as it is on well-rounded character. Such men the king will choose to “serve” him in various public offices and in manifold duties great and small.

## 101:7

### Leupold

The last two verses revert to what the king purposes to do with wicked men whom he finds at court. When one considers the fact that the psalms so frequently make an issue of various kinds of evildoers that seem to have caused godly kings difficulty one can well understand that this must have been one of the foremost problems that engaged the attention of good men. So, then, a treacherous man, once his character becomes apparent, shall have no place in the king’s company; and similarly the liar shall also be put aside.

## 101:8

### Leupold

On the face of it the next statement could create the impression that the good writer is for the moment being carried away by his own eloquence on the subject when he promises to destroy all the wicked every morning. But a careful consideration of the customs that prevailed in days of old will reveal that Oriental tradition made the king also a judge who disposed of cases daily, beginning the sessions of his court for this purpose early in the morning (cf., II Sam. 15:2). An equivalent expression for “every morning” would, therefore, be: “each time the king conducts court trials.” To cherish the purpose of disposing effectively of all the wicked, whom the proper trials reveal to be such, is, therefore, nothing less than a wholesome ambition. The writer himself, however, discloses what goal he has in mind as he thus vigorously upholds the cause of justice in the land. His aim is “to cut off all evildoers out of the city of the Lord.” More and more, as time went on, it became customary to call the new capital, Jerusalem, “the city of the Lord” (cf., Ps. 46:4; 48:1, 8; Is. 1:26). Life and conduct in the holy city should do honor to Him to whom the

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<sup>6</sup> Leupold, *Psalms*, p. 704.

city is dedicated and after whom it is named. All in all it must be admitted that the king set a praiseworthy goal for himself as he went about, carrying out the duties of his office. What this good goal is he has here described.

# When You Wonder What Ought to Be Important to Your Leaders

## *Psalm 101*

### **BACKGROUND**

IT MUST still be maintained that “the contents of this psalm go far toward confirming the correctness of the superscription in ascribing it to David” (*Maclaren*). If we attempt to select some particular time in the reign of David, the evidence available does not point toward the beginning of his reign, when on general principles a pronouncement such as this could be very appropriate. Since the psalm seems to contain a direct allusion to a particular episode in David's life, the time when David was well established on the throne might be most suitable. When the psalm asks, “O when wilt Thou come to me?” (v. 2), this statement says in effect what David uttered at the time when he almost despaired of ever having the ark of the Lord, the very symbol of His presence among His people, come to Jerusalem. For he exclaimed after the Uzzah incident, which had so shocked the whole nation: “How can the ark of the Lord come to me?” (II Sam. 6:9). To David the presence of the ark and the presence of the Lord were synonymous. (See also 2 Sam 6:1-11). ... We are, therefore, justified in arriving at the conclusion that we have in this psalm “a mirror for magistrates”<sup>7</sup>

## **The Objectives of a Godly Leader, v 1.**

### ***KJV, mercy, NIV, love***

Hebrew word *hesed*, has to do with compassion, covenant-loyalty, a choice to be gracious and good to people with whom you've chosen to have a relationship.

### ***Justice***

Doing that which is right

### ***Please note both attributes are used of God and human leaders***

Isaiah 16:5, Psalm 89: 14.

### ***Please note that the objectives of any ruler or leader that would please God can't be financial gain, can't be to be "reelected," can't be to be popular.***

## **A leader must model these in his personal behavior, 2-4**

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<sup>7</sup> Leupold, *Psalms*, 701.

***Perhaps David reflected upon the failure of 2 Sam 6:1-11, v 2a.***

As pointed out above, this resolution may have reached a climax as the result of the previous attempt to bring the ark of the Lord up to the capital city, when Uzzah was struck dead, and the whole nation was warned that the Lord and His worship were to be taken seriously (II Sam. 6:1—11). This experience caused David seriously to wonder if his goal of finding a house for the ark in the new capital (v. 2b) would ever be achieved.¶He realizes that blameless conduct on his part and that of the nation is a prerequisite for the fulfillment of his ambition.

You can't do this thing "any old way." Failure is often a reminder of this.

***A leader must be a person of integrity at home as well as in front of people, 2b, see also 1 Tim 3:4-5.***

***I will be careful about that which I see, v3a***

"any worthless undertaking."

***I will be careful about who I fellowship with, 3b,4.***

That is to say, he intends to make it quite plain that he will have no association with those who become untrue to the Lord. There must have been many worthless men in Jerusalem and elsewhere in David's day, and it was his duty to let men know how he felt about this class of evildoers.<sup>8</sup>

***A leader must surround himself with these kind of people, 5<sup>9</sup>-8.***

***Not this, v 5***

***Slander, v 5.***

[I]t must be remembered that they are character assassins, and that slanders spoken about men in high places often led to the execution of those who were slandered. David, therefore, apparently threatens to do nothing worse than the persons in question themselves have been guilty of. For that matter, royal courts have almost universally been hotbeds of intrigue.

***Proud Look***

Swaggering demeanor and behavior, one who behaves as though he thinks he is somebody.

***Proud Heart***

One who thinks too much of his own opinions, his own accomplishments, his own way of seeing things. These people are often argumentative, stubborn and critical of others.

***But this, v 6***

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<sup>8</sup> Leupold, *Psalms*, p. 703.

<sup>9</sup> 6b.

**Dependable, humble**

**People of integrity**

***Not this, v 7***

**A person who speaks the truth.**

*Sometimes the truth is not comfortable, not popular, not easy.  
Sometimes leaders tell people what they want to hear, not what  
they need to hear. True in church as well as politics.*

***But this, v 8***

**A leader who deals with the hard stuff early.**

On the face of it the next statement could create the impression that the good writer is for the moment being carried away by his own eloquence on the subject when he promises to destroy all the wicked every morning. But a careful consideration of the customs that prevailed in days of old will reveal that Oriental tradition made the king also a judge who disposed of cases daily, beginning the sessions of his court for this purpose early in the morning (cf., II Sam. 15:2).

**This might not always be easy or popular, but it was right.**