



The Psalms of Lament

PART 2: Psalm 13

How Long, O Lord?

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- Shuffle the Deck
- Deal the Cards
- What Are You Holding?
- Group Option
- Play Your Hand



Part 2 – Psalm 13

Shuffle the Deck ([see PDF version](#))

Deal the Cards

Read Psalm 13.

For the music director; a psalm of David.

13:1 How long, Lord, will you continue to ignore me?

How long will you pay no attention to me?

13:2 How long must I worry, and suffer in broad daylight?

How long will my enemy gloat over me?

*13:3 Look at me! Answer me, O Lord my God! Revive me,
or else I will die!*

*13:4 Then my enemy will say, "I have defeated him!" Then
my foes will rejoice because I am upended.*

*13:5 But I trust in your faithfulness. May I rejoice because
of your deliverance!*

13:6 I will sing praises to the Lord when he vindicates me.

1. Tradition says that David wrote Psalm 13. We're not positive, but there's a good chance that's correct. We don't know the exact circumstances in his life that would have been behind his experience expressed in this psalm, but 2 Samuel 15:1-23 gives us the sort of story that could have evoked such a prayer. Read [2 Samuel 15:1-23](#) (printed out on last page). Then go back and look more carefully, identifying elements commonly found in prayers of lamentation.



2. How does the psalmist address God (1)? List the two ways he states his question (parallelism). More literally we could translate the phrases “How long, Lord, will you forget me continually? How long will you hide your face from me?”

3. What appears to be the psalmist’s primary complaint (v. 2)?

4. How many times does the psalmist ask God a question in Psalm 13? What does the psalmist ask (v. 3)? Why (4)? Note that the word “revive me” is more literally “Give light to my eyes.” Similar uses of “light” elsewhere suggest moral guidance.



5. Is there any evidence that God has answered (6)?

6. What expression(s) do you see of the psalmist’s confidence in God (v. 5)?

7. Did you identify with anything the psalmist said? If so, what? Have you ever felt like God was ignoring you? If so, what were the circumstances.

8. When God has delivered you, have you remembered to go back and praise him?



What Are You Holding?

Your turn: Write your own private psalm of lament, pouring out your heart to God. Feel free to use or discard any of these elements. They are here only to give you a guide.

One person wrote, *“Long enough, GOD—you’ve ignored me long enough. I’ve looked at the back of your head long enough. Long enough I’ve carried this ton of trouble, lived with a stomach full of pain.”*

Remember times when God has delivered you in the past. Write a few lines of praise.

Group Option: As a group, agree on a common lament and write it out using these elements as a guide.

1. An introductory appeal:
2. The problem and how you feel about it:



3. Your request: what you want God to do:
4. Your answer from God (to be filled in when you receive it):
5. Your expression of trust/confidence (to be done both now and after he answers):

Play Your Hand

Decorate a playing card or a playing-card-sized piece of paper or cardboard that expresses one of the following:

- an area of your life where you feel God is silent.
- how you feel when God seems silent.
- the “enemies and foes” in your life.
- what God’s deliverance looks like to you.
- your thanks for God’s deliverance.



2 Samuel 15:1-23

Absalom Leads an Insurrection against David

15:1 Some time later Absalom managed to acquire a chariot and horses, as well as fifty men to serve as his royal guard.

15:2 Now Absalom used to get up early and stand beside the road that led to the city gate. Whenever anyone came by who had a complaint to bring to the king for arbitration, Absalom would call out to him, "What city are you from?" He would answer, "I am from one of the tribes of Israel." 15:3 Absalom would then say to him, "Look, your claims are legitimate and appropriate. But there is no representative of the king who will listen to you." 15:4 Absalom would then say, "If only they would make me a judge in the land! Then everyone who had a judicial complaint could come to me and I would make sure he receives a just settlement."

15:5 When someone approached to bow before him, Absalom would extend his hand and embrace him and kiss him. 15:6 Absalom acted this way toward everyone in Israel who would come to the king for justice. In this way Absalom won the loyalty of the citizens of Israel.

15:7 After four years Absalom said to the king, "Let me go and repay my vow that I made to the Lord while I was in Hebron.

15:8 For I made this vow when I was living in Geshur in Aram: 'If the Lord really does allow me to return to Jerusalem, I will serve the Lord.'" 15:9 The king replied to him, "Go in peace." So he got up and went to Hebron.



15:10 Then Absalom sent spies through all the tribes of Israel who said, "When you hear the sound of the horn, you may assume that Absalom rules in Hebron." 15:11 Now two hundred men had gone with Absalom from Jerusalem. Since they were invited, they went naively and were unaware of what Absalom was planning. 15:12 While he was offering sacrifices, Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's adviser, to come from his city, Giloh. The conspiracy was gaining momentum, and the people were starting to side with Absalom.

David Flees from Jerusalem

15:13 Then a messenger came to David and reported, "The men of Israel are loyal to Absalom!" 15:14 So David said to all his servants who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come on! Let's escape! Otherwise no one will be delivered from Absalom! Go immediately, or else he will quickly overtake us and bring disaster on us and kill the city's residents with the sword." 15:15 The king's servants replied to the king, "We will do whatever our lord the king decides."

15:16 So the king and all the members of his royal court set out on foot, though the king left behind ten concubines to attend to the palace. 15:17 The king and all the people set out on foot, pausing at a spot some distance away. 15:18 All his servants were leaving with him, along with all the Kerethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites--some six hundred men who had come on foot from Gath. They were leaving with the king.



15:19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why should you come with us? Go back and stay with the new king, for you are a foreigner and an exile from your own country. 15:20 It seems like you arrived just yesterday. Today should I make you wander around by going with us? I go where I must go. But as for you, go back and take your men with you. May genuine loyal love protect you!"

15:21 But Ittai replied to the king, "As surely as the Lord lives and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king is, whether dead or alive, there I will be as well!" 15:22 So David said to Ittai, "Come along then." So Ittai the Gittite went along, accompanied by all his men and all the dependents who were with him.

15:23 All the land was weeping loudly as all these people were leaving. As the king was crossing over the Kidron Valley, all the people were leaving on the road that leads to the desert.

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