

HANDOUT 1 – PSALM 151 Dead Sea Scroll Bible

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Of all the Psalms found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Masoretic Text, and the Septuagint, Psalms 151a and b (preserved only in 11QPs^a) are the only truly Davidic ones in terms of their autobiographical content. Of course, the superscriptions of many other Psalms ascribe them to David, but close examination of their contents does not unambiguously line any of them to actual events in his life. Psalm 151A, however, refers to David's role as shepherd, his musical gift, his anointing by Samuel, God's choice of him over his brother, and his kingship. Psalm 151b is very fragmentary, but it contains a clear reference to David's encounter with Goliath.

B. PSALM 151a:

¹ **A HALLELUJAH OF DAVID.** I was smaller than my brothers, the youngest of my father's sons. He made me shepherd of his flock, ruler over his kid goats.

² My hands made an instrument and my fingers a lyre. Let me give glory to the LORD, I said in my mind.

³ The mountains cannot witness to God; the hills cannot proclaim him. But the trees have cherished my words, the flocks my deeds.

⁴ For who can proclaim, who can announce, who can declare my deeds? The Lord of All saw, the God of All – He heard and listened.

⁵ God sent his prophet to anoint me, Samuel to make me great. My brothers went out to meet him, handsome in figure and appearance:

⁶ Although their stature was tall, and their hair beautiful, the LORD God did not choose them.

⁷ Instead, He sent and fetched me from behind the flock and anointed me with holy oil; and made me leader of his people and ruler over the children of his covenant.

II. PSALM 151b

A. In the Septuagint, the Book of Psalms ends with Psalm 151 as a single Psalm. In 11QPs^a however, the 11QPs^a Psalter ends with two distinct Psalms containing much of the material found in the Greek. Psalm 151b is clearly a new Psalm because of its superscription. Because of several differences between the two versions of Psalm 151, the Greek version cannot simply be a translation of the Qumran version. . The text found in 11QPs^a represents the original Hebrew with two originally separate Psalms, which the Greek translator has reworked and synthesized into a single Psalm.

- B. **PSALM 151b. “AT THE BEGINNING OF DAVID’S POWER AFTER THE PROPHET OF GOD ANOINTED HIM.** ¹ Then I saw a Philistine uttering insults from the ranks of the enemy. I [.....] the [....].
- C. [.....] means that words are missing from the Dead Sea Scroll. But other Hebrew and Syriac versions end Psalm 151b with “I uncovered his own sword, I cut off his head. So I removed the shame from the Israelites.”
- D. A blank column on the leather scroll of 11QPs^a follows Psalm 151a and 151b. The blank leather clearly shows that the collection found in 11QPs^a actually ended with Psalm 151b, a version of which also ends the book of Psalms in the Septuagint. The end of two other important collections (Psalm 91 and Psalm 150) also contain sections of blank leather in the Dead Sea Scrolls.