



## 8. WHAT WAS THE FIRST PS?

As I was dreaming through another lecture, I dug not far below the letter of the crucified man where I found the remains of an ancient book.<sup>1</sup> I said, master, I saw something. Was it Solomon's journal?<sup>2</sup>

I awoke and wrote down the little I remembered, and as much as I could find in the book he gave me.

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<sup>1</sup>**The crucified man:** Psamathek 4 (p-sa-m-tch-k, *I am the son bound in chains* aka "Inaros, *Psamathek the rock, Psamathek who was not Re*) led a revolt on the Nile against the sons of Darius, won several battles and killed some Achaemenid leaders before he was captured by Artaxerxes and executed in Susa, c. 454 BCE. Fifty years after his death, he was seen as a prophet and martyr, as his grand-nephew Amyrtaeus (*Re again burns [in] the land of the sons*) expelled Darius 2 (aka "Orchus," aka "Darius the bastard"), temporarily restoring native rule in Egypt. Remnants of a letter of Psamathek 4 appear in Isaiah 1-12. [See Vol. 1, chapter 4 (ed).]

<sup>2</sup>**Solomon** (saw-imn, *guardian of secrets*, "Solon") Psamathek 3 Ankhakahenre was a son and heir of Amasis of Sais ("Ahmose 2," "David") and Bathsheba (ba-tu-sha-ba, *voice of the marsh of the lands of the ram*), heiress of Babylon. He was captured at Memphis by his rival Cambyses of Djddjdu ("Busiris") in 525 BCE, then murdered in prison at Susa by Darius, c. 522. After the Aryans were expelled from the Nile in 404, Psamathek's effigy was given life at a reconstructed family tomb in Sais. That body was called Ankhakahenre, *body living in heaven of Re*. The earliest Psalms may date from that later period, but there is an authenticity about them.

## LAST DAYS

the journal of Psamatchek 3 as retrieved from the first book of Psalms

### **Ps 1. My thought is upon heaven<sup>3</sup>**

My thought is upon heaven.  
I watch by day and by night.  
Ever-flowing is that stream,  
always fruitful those orchards.  
Their leaves do not wither. They do not fall.  
They do not fly as chaff upon the winds.

[As Solomon was beginning to judge in Sais, his sister Tamyris executed the Medusa Cyrus, in retaliation for Deborah's execution of Adonijah. Cyrus had married Cassiopeia, a princess of Kush, to establish control of the Nile.<sup>4</sup> Their daughter Cassandra married their son Cambyses, and with the death of Cyrus they now asserted claims to rule the empire on behalf of their future children.<sup>5</sup> The nobles apparently did not support Cambyses' claim until it they saw that Psamatchek had little military support. Most of the judge's supporters then switched sides, and he had only heaven to defend him.]

### **Ps 2. Our judge is heaven's son<sup>6</sup>**

Rebel kings and their counselors conspire.  
"We will break ties with heaven," they say.  
"We will throw her out!"  
Our judge laughs at all of their foolishness,  
or he punishes them according to heaven's law.

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<sup>3</sup>**The way of heaven** guided the judges of the Nile to regulate activities on earth. [An astronomical description of the way appears in Vol. 1, chapter 24 (ed).]

<sup>4</sup>**Cassiopeia** (Qasheihapperre, *rising Kush binds the house of Re*): heiress of Kush, secured passage to the sea through her marriage to Cyrus of Djddjdu, a city in the central delta. She didn't plan on the sea monster.

<sup>5</sup>**Cassandra** (Qashandre, *heavenly Kush [is] the hand of Re*), daughter of Cyrus and Cassiopeia, defeated the Saite army of Adonijah in Kush, c. 526 BCE; Adonijah was executed in Djddjdu, leaving his brother Solomon as judge in Sais. Cassandra is described in the book of Judges as Deborah (*the bee*), but her hopes ended when her brother-husband Cambyses died in a mysterious accident, and his brother Bardiya then was murdered by or for Darius, c. 522. Iranian defamation of the victims of Darius passed down through the Greeks and Romans to my own time.

<sup>6</sup>**Judge**: the office of judge may have appeared as early as dynasty 1 in Djrr (*word judge*), Djrn (*Nile judge*) or Pdn (*the hand of the Nile*), but the rule of heaven first appears clearly in dynasty 3, in the time of Djoser (djrr), builder of the first known "step pyramid" observatory in the west, c. 2650 BCE. Judges were replaced by sun kings at the start of dynasty 5, c. 2500 BCE, but judgeship was restored under Djedekare (*judge of the body of Re*) until it fell again after the murder of Tutu ("Teti I") and expulsion of Sargon at the start of dynasty 6, c. 2334 BCE. Periods of judges and kings alternated on the Nile during the Bronze Age, which should never be described as "Old Kingdom," "Middle Kingdom" and "New Kingdom." Nor is it right to speak of pharaohs as westerners have done for thousands of years. A pharaoh (*fai-rw, raised lion*) is a resurrected lord conceived as living among the stars of Leo, the ancient flood sign of the Nile. They are known to us through their sphinxes.

Heaven remains over his little mountain.  
She says to him,  
*You are my son; I bore you in the strong light of heaven.  
I gave you jurisdiction to the farthest parts of earth.  
Do the rebels hope to shatter it as a pot of clay?*

*Let all kings and counselors choose their actions carefully.  
Let them treat me with respect, and forever keep my way.  
They will fall by the way who disturb me.  
They will live who remain true to my way.*

**Ps 3. O heaven, awake!<sup>7</sup>**

They have risen against me in the night.  
They say of me, the sun does not help him.  
Heaven, you are my shield, my glory. Uplift my courage!

On your mountain I have called you this night  
to awake: I need your protection! Now!  
Ten thousand and more warriors are arrayed against me!

Heaven, arise! Save me! Strike my enemies from behind!  
Hit them in the head! Knock out their teeth!  
Safety rests only in your blessing upon your people.

**Ps 4. Hear us, judge**

Hear us, judge! As you have defended us before in our need, have mercy now! Hear us! Vain men, liars, are seeking to turn our glory into shame. Make them know that you hear us when we call on you. Even in the night, let your heart hear us. We have sacrificed for you. We have put our trust in you. Lift up the light of your face upon us. Let them stand in awe. Only you, judge, can make us safe.

**Ps 5. Judge, I greet you**

Judge, I greet you this morning as my righteous ruler. I respect you, and I receive your abundant mercy, but you must give ear to words being spoken against you, even here in this great house. Those faithless to you are lying about you. They say you serve the god of evil. They say you are pleased by wrong. They say you promote fools, evil-doers, liars and deceitful men.

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<sup>7</sup> **Heaven:** Solomon's foolish enemies (as he imagines them here) regard the sun as the source of royal power, so they attack at night.

Those faithless ones flatter you with their tongues, but their hearts are false. They privately stir rebellion against you. You must cast them out! Let them fall for their seditions. They seek favor with our enemies.

Support those who are loyal to you. Openly defend those who love you. Bless those who are true.

### **Ps 6. Judge, I am old and weak**

Judge, I am old and weak. My bones are tired. Have mercy on me. Do not accuse me in a fit of anger. Do not blame me in a rage. These are trying times, but show me your mercy.

How can I remember you when I am dead? Will I give you thanks for my execution? I have groaned all this night. My bed is wet with tears. My enemies have brought me to this grief. They have done to me this evil. Let them be shamed for their wrongs!

Please, have mercy on me.

### **Ps 7. Judge, I trust you to deliver me**

Judge, I trust you to deliver me from the lion. He hopes to tear my body in pieces and destroy my soul! If I wronged you, as he claims, then let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay my honor in the dust. Give judgment for him, and let him advise you. Surround yourself with his people. Use the power to further to their interests. Let their angers become yours.

Judge me according to my righteousness and integrity. Those who do evil should come to an evil end, but the righteous must be upheld by justice. I depend on you to defend and to save those who are upright in heart.

Our enemy whets his sword. He bends his bow to make it ready. He prepares his arrows to be instruments of my death. He walks in the way of evil, conceiving mischief and telling lies. Let him fall into the grave that he has dug for me! Let his mischief be turned against him. Let his violence come down on his head!

Let me forever praise you for righteousness.

### **Ps 8. O heaven, how glorious**

O heaven, how glorious  
are the moon and the stars on this wonderful night.

What am I, that you should be mindful of me?  
and the son of man, that you stand watch over him?  
How low he is! Yet you will crown him with glory.

You will give him dominion.  
You will put every creature under his feet,

all sheep and oxen, yes, every beast of the field,  
bird of the air, fish and all that swim the river.  
Heaven, how glorious are you to me tonight.

**Ps 9. I praise you, judge, with my whole heart**

I praise you, judge, with my whole heart.  
I praise your marvelous works.  
I am happy and rejoice in you.  
I sing your praise.

You turn back my enemies. They run away when you approach.  
You uphold my rights and causes when you sit in judgment.  
You rebuke those in the wrong. You shame the wicked,  
and you destroy their names, cities and memorials.

Surely your good name will live forever and ever as a righteous judge.  
You minister to upright people. You are their comfort in affliction.  
You are a savior for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.  
Those who put their trust in you, you do not forsake.

I praise you, judge, that you hear the cry of a humble man like me.  
You will have mercy on me when you consider my trouble.  
You will protect me even as I stand before gates of death.  
And I will sing your praises forever and ever.

*[Solomon is surprised at his betrayal by Ionian mercenaries. They are led by the opportunist Phanes of Halicarnassus.<sup>8</sup>]*

**Ps 10. Where was [Phanes]?**

Where was [Phanes]? He was in Djddjdu, conspiring with [Cambyses]! Let him fall in the traps he set for you, judge [Cambyses]! May heaven punish the man who betrays his ally for money. He deceives himself with pride, saying, now I will be secure, I will be wealthy, I will never be in want. What he says is nothing but vanity and fraud. His tongue is full of mischief.

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<sup>8</sup> **Halicarnassus** under Iranian rule in Asia Minor was home to Herodotus, misnamed “the father of lies.” Accounts in his book concerning Psamatchek and his father Amasis (“David”), Phanes, Cambyses, and Darius distort events that had happened several generations before his time in Egypt and Iran. In my opinion, Herodotus knew much about those events, and he described what he knew, but his book was edited by barbarian censors. Nonsense passages clearly indicate the spots in the text of Herodotus where censors replaced the author’s original content with ridiculous space fillers.

Where is [Phanes] now in this time of trouble? The lion hides in secret places in the marsh, waiting to murder the innocent and rob the poor. He crouches in the villages where he appears to be humble: he hopes to draw the poor into his net. He says to them, your judge has forgotten you. He has gone into hiding. You will never see his face again.

O judge, lift up your hand! Do not let [Phanes] condemn you. Repay his mischief and spite. Keep the poor committed to you. Don't leave them fatherless. Break the rogue's arm. Cast all of the barbarians out of the land. You must remain as judge for the poor, or else they will be oppressed.

### **Ps 11. Judge, fly as a bird**

Judge, fly as a bird from your mountain. The enemy bow is bent and the arrow is strung to hit you from afar. If the foundation is destroyed, what will we do? Fly!

### **Ps 12. Judge, there is no more talk of victory**

Lord, there is no more talk of victory. The lips and tongues are gone that say you will prevail. Villains are everywhere now. They are exalted.

*[Betrayed by Phanes at Pelusium, Psamatchek flees to Memphis where he surrenders in 525 BCE. He is taken away and imprisoned in Susa where he resumes his log.]*

### **Ps 13. Heaven, how long have you forgotten me?**

Heaven, how long have you forgotten me?  
How long has your face been hidden from me?  
How long has sorrow been my counsel?  
How long has my enemy been exalted?  
Let me not sleep here in death.  
Let your light keep me awake!  
I trust in you to save me.

### **Ps 14. Heaven looks down**

Heaven looks down upon the barbarians, to see if any of them understand her.  
She says there are none. Not one. They have no knowledge of her.  
They ignore her.  
They devour her people as their bread.  
How can they call themselves kings of the earth?

### **Ps 15. Heaven, who sits in our seat of justice?**

Heaven, who sits in our seat of justice?  
Who now maintains our heavenly way?

Let him be just, and righteous,  
And speak the truth in his heart!

**Ps 16. I will trust in heaven to preserve me**

I will trust in heaven to preserve me.  
I will say in my soul, heaven remains.  
Heaven delights in her righteous one.  
She will not desire another king.

I will not be taken from heaven's hand.  
My heart is hopeful. My mind rests at ease.  
Heaven will not leave my soul in darkness:  
She will not suffer her son to perish.

**Ps 17. Hear me, lord [Cambyses]**

Hear me, lord [Cambyses]. I will not lie to you. Let me come into your presence where you can hear me and witness my faith to you. Try me, and you will find that I have done nothing wrong. I will swear allegiance, and I will not lie.

I ask you to hear me. Just listen. Hear what I have to say. Show your love of justice. You are famous for saving those who are faithful to you. You have saved those faithful to you from enemies that have risen up against them.

Give me protection under the shadow of your wings.<sup>9</sup> I find myself surrounded by enemies who seek to destroy me, though I have never wronged them. They speak against me only to enrich themselves. They bow down to you now, but they used to flatter me. We are in a den of lions. They are preparing to jump on their prey.

I can tell you why in justice I should be delivered from the sword that they are preparing to kill me. They are men whose only aim is to fill their bellies with your treasure.

My righteous lord, let me see you.

**Ps 18. I call upon heaven to hear my cry!**

I call upon heaven to hear my cry! Let her anger awaken the earth-shaker, and let him shake the foundation of her mountains. Let him blow smoke from his nostrils, and fire from his mouth, bearing coals to burn her enemies. Let him ride with the wings of the wind as his

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<sup>9</sup> **Wings:** in public, like his father Cyrus, Cambyses wore enormous "wings," perhaps to shield his back from assassins. He projected the image of a hb-ru (lion ibis, "Hebrew") or Myrmidon, a protector of ancient writings.

cherub. Let him bring his dark powers to light, as lightning pierce even the thickest of clouds. Let his voice be as thunder. Let him fire his arrows and scatter my enemies!<sup>10</sup>

My enemies are strong! I cannot rise above them without help. I call upon this land to hear me! Emerge! Deliver me! Let your foundations reappear. As the flood recedes, draw me out of the waters and breathe life into my nostrils.

Heaven, protect me! I never departed from the way. As I judged, so let me now be judged. As I kept the way, so let me live! As I saved afflicted people, so let me be saved! Be as my candle: enlighten my darkness. Be as my shield: let me trust in you. Be as my strength: pursue the enemies who have risen against us. Let them fly from us as dust in the wind.

Our land must not be led by a stranger who does not obey you. Let him lead his barbarians back to whatever deserts they came from. Deliver us from our oppressors. Deliver us from the violent one, and we will sing your praises forever.

*[Psamatchek persuades Cambyses of his loyalty, and he is granted some access to the court.]*

### **Ps 19. I pledged loyalty to [Cambyses]**

I pledged loyalty to [Cambyses]. Would he be my strength, my rock, my fortress, my shield, my savior? I called upon him to save me. My enemies were preparing to kill me! They were setting traps for me! Would [Cambyses] save me?

Heaven declares the glory of the lord [Cambyses]. Let Earth rejoice. So I will say every day and think every night. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to him.

### **Ps 20. Your lord hears you in your trouble**

Your lord hears you in your trouble. He sends you help. He takes your word to heart. He takes your advice and will fulfill your petitions. So [Cambyses] says. Those who trust only in chariots and horses will be brought low, but those remember heaven will rise once again and stand upright in the presence of heaven.

*[Cambyses receives an official recognition as lord of the Nile. An attempt on his life fails.]*

### **Ps 21. The king rejoices in the strength of heaven**

The king [Cambyses] rejoices in the strength of heaven. Heaven gave him his heart's desire. Heaven did not withhold the requests of his lips.

O heaven, you gave him your good blessings. You set a crown of pure gold on his head. He asked you for it, and you gave it to him for ever and ever! His is the glory, honor and majesty.

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<sup>10</sup> **Poseidon** (pw-sa-ea-d-n, *great water hand of the son*): Psamatchek apparently was not yet aware of the admiral's support of Cambyses.



You smile on him, and he is happy. He trusts in you to hold him up, to find his enemies, and to burn them up in the fiery furnace of your anger, or to swallow them down into the pit of your wrath. You eat their fruit so that none of their seed remains among the children of men.

They intended evil against him. They plotted to kill him, but you brought them to a bad end. They tried to run away, but you shot them with arrows. So, I sing of your strength and praise your power.

*[The Medes had annexed Elam in 540 BCE. The young Elamite prince Darius had become part of the imperial court, and he had earned the trust of the royal family, though he was deeply resentful that he had lost his kingdom. As Cambyses campaigns abroad, Darius now takes control in Susa, and he is determined that Psamatchek must die. Psamatchek is well aware of the duplicity of Darius.]*

### **Ps 22. Lord [Cambyses], why have you forsaken me?**

Lord, why have you forsaken me? Are you too far away to hear the roaring?

I am not silent. I cry day and night. Do you not hear me? I have trusted you as I used to trust my father. I cried to him, and I was delivered.

Am I a worm? Not a man? A reproach of all people? Despised by everybody? Do they laugh at me? Do they puff up their lips or shake their heads as they say: he trusted his lord to deliver him!

Lions gape at me here. I need some help.

I am feeling as if water has washed away my bones, my heart has melted, and all of me is about to pass through my bowels. The dogs have assembled for the feast. They will bow down to me when they eat. They will declare to all dogs who shall be born hereafter: the righteous judge has given us these good things!

*[Psamatchek despises Darius.]*

### **Ps 23. [Darius] is my shepherd now**

[Darius] is my shepherd now. Now I shall want for nothing at all. He will put me down, but death does not scare me. His rod and staff will bring comfort. The table is set where he will dine. When he has cut my throat, my blood will spill into his cup. That's it. [When I think of the care he bestows on the bulls in his house, I am sure it won't hurt.]

### **Ps 24. The earth is yours, lord [Darius]**

The earth is yours, lord [Darius]. All the rivers are yours. Who shall climb the mountains with you to watch over your floods? Only those with pure white hands and heart! Only they will be

raised with you. Only those who have not sworn allegiance in vain. Only they are wise. Only they will be saved.<sup>11</sup>

**Ps 25. O lord [Cambyses], lift up my spirit**

O lord [Cambyses], lift up my spirit. I have trusted in you. Let me not be shamed. Let not my enemies triumph over me. They should be shamed who have transgressed against me. Have mercy on me, for I am desolate. I am afflicted with madness.

*[Formal accusations are made against Psamatchek.]*

**Ps 26. Judge me, lord [Cambyses], as a man of integrity**

Judge me, lord [Cambyses], as a man of integrity, a man who puts all his faith in you. Examine me in person. Try me in court. You will find that I have been true to you. Whenever I have attended meetings of fools, dissemblers, doers-of-evil, or the wicked, I have openly voiced my thanksgiving for you and all of your wondrous works. I have spoken to them and to everybody of the love that I bear to your house and to your honorable self. I spend no time at all with my brothers or blood relatives who are making trouble, or paying bribes to secure my release. You must find that I am innocent of these charges. Thank you.

*[Psamatchek presents himself as a praise poet in the court of Cambyses.<sup>12</sup>]*

**Ps 27. I have desired only one thing, lord [Cambyses]**

I have desired only one thing, lord [Cambyses]. And I will desire it hereafter. I hope to dwell in your house forever. Here you can keep me safe, and I can keep singing your praises, unless you forsake me. You can deliver me from my accusers and their false witnesses, and the cruel punishments they propose. If I die, I will do nothing for you.

**Ps 28. Let me not be among those who go down into the pit**

Let me not be among those who go down into the pit. Speak up for me, lord [Cambyses]. When I lift up my hands to you, pull me away from the wicked, the workers of evil, the ones who never speak of peace. They deserve what they get. They are inconsiderate of you and your operations, so of course you destroy them. Lift me up from that crowd and hold me up forever.

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<sup>11</sup>**White:** Darius and his sons promoted an early form of Zoroastrianism, belief of the world's creation by good and evil (white and black) gods at war with each other. It was a hard sell for them among people of color.

<sup>12</sup>**Praise poet:** cf., identification of the author as a psalmist in the court of Saul of Israel.

**Ps 29. The voice of heaven is on the waters**

The voice of heaven is on the waters,  
waters above and waters below.

It is the voice of power and majesty  
that shatters the cedars of Lebanon.  
It makes Damascus skip like a young calf  
and it shakes the wilderness of Kush.  
It is that voice which makes that great flood.

*[Psamatchek receives a favorable judgement from Cambyses.]*

**Ps 30. Lord, you have lifted me out of the flood**

Lord, you have lifted me out of the flood.  
I cried out to you, and you pulled me out.  
You have let me live, saved me from the grave.  
You said I should not go down to the pit.

I said thanks that you remembered me.  
I wept all night.  
When you hide your face, I am sore troubled.  
Morning brings joy.

*[Joy is short-lived. Cambyses dies. His brother Bardiya becomes king in name, but Darius makes all decisions. Psamatchek now is starved to death by Darius.]*

**Ps 31. O lord [Bardiya], free me from the net**

O lord [Bardiya], free me from the net that my enemies have cast over me. Your hand alone has the strength to save me. Let me rejoice in your mercy. Let me return to court.

I am consumed with grief. I hunger, and my strength begins to fail. My body is shrinking away. I am abandoned by all who have been my neighbors or acquaintances: they have fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man. I hear the accusers as they take counsel together. They are planning to take away my life.

Let them be silent in their graves.

*[Darius demands a confession of guilt from Psamatchek.]*

### **Ps 32. Happy is the one whose mistakes are forgiven**

Happy is the one whose mistakes are forgiven. Let me tell you my mistakes so that I may become as one of those happy souls. As long as I keep silence, my bones grow only more frail and dry. I'll tell you some transgression or other that you may show your mercy. I'll make a confession if you will pardon me.<sup>13</sup> I suppose that any loyal person would do this for you. Free me from this place, my lord. Let everyone sing songs of my deliverance, songs of your mercy.

[*Darius pretends to act as judge.*]

### **Ps 33. Rejoice in [Darius], O ye righteous**

Rejoice in [Darius], O ye righteous. It is both upright and comely to praise him.  
Praise him with the psaltery. Or any harp or other instrument with strings.  
Sing to him new songs that he will like. Make them loud.

Let all the words be just right. Forget about facts.  
He is the righteous one. Earth is full of his judgments.  
By words he made the heavens. And man by breath of his mouth.

He smoothed the waves of the sea. They had been rough before.  
All creatures stood in fear of him: as he gave them their names.  
For as he called them, so they were: even in the beginning.

He gave wisdom to the barbarians: first to them and now to us.  
Surely his word will stand forever, unlike heaven's.  
Happy are men he acquits: well spent is their money.

Let us look up to him now. And to his heirs forever.  
Let our hearts be loving: for he can see straight into them.  
What lord ever fed such a multitude? None, let's suppose.

[*The memorial in Sais to Psamatchek's father Amasis ("David") is destroyed.*]

### **Ps 34. Let's praise my father once again**

Let's praise my father once again.<sup>14</sup> Let's raise up his name together, you and me. When a poor man cried, he listened. That man was saved from his oppressors. Heaven protected my father,

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<sup>13</sup> **Pardon:** Psalm 32 indicates that the author has confessed a transgression, and he has been forgiven by the Lord of Israel. I adapt the psalm here on a theory that Psamatchek never confessed. I think Darius probably offered to pardon Psamatchek if he admitted to a capital crime, but it seems to me that Psamatchek was well aware that Darius was a liar.

<sup>14</sup> **Father:** Psamatchek's father Amasis of Sais ("Ahmose 2," "David") judged in Egypt for some forty years, seven in the time of Haäibre (*broken heart Re*, "Apries"), son of Neferibre (*Re good heart*, Psamatchek II), and then thirty-three years thereafter independently. His memory stirred rebellion against Darius and sons in the east,

and he gave thanks to heaven. Happy were those who trusted my father. They did not starve. Happy was he to serve heaven. He judged Sais for many years.

Teach your children to fear oppression. Let all who hope to see many days on earth keep their tongues from speaking ill of justice. Heaven cuts off those who do wrongs. It cuts off even the remembrance of them. Let us remember the just and their defenders. My father saw the good that resides in common people. His ears were open to their heartbroken cries. He set his face against their oppressors. He passed judgements against them, but he spared those who were contrite. Many were afflicted by their masters, but he delivered them.

Not even one blemish appeared on his body. I kept it from his enemies while I could.

### **Ps 35. O heaven, let me resist your attackers**

O heaven, let me resist your attackers.  
Lend me a shield and buckler, and draw out your spear,  
to stop violence. Let me stand in your defense.  
Let our enemies be confounded.  
Let them fly as chaff before the winds.

False witnesses arise and speak against us.  
We are charged with breaking laws nobody can read.  
Our oppressors reward our justice with evil.  
We mourn for our fathers and mothers.  
Save them now as you deliver us.

Will you not be saved from these young lions?  
They are the ones who bear false witness against you.  
They claim to want peace but they practice only war.  
O heaven, how can you keep silent?  
Have I not praised you among the nations?

*[He is concerned for his children.]*

### **Ps 36. Wrongdoers say there is no way of heaven**

Wrongdoers say there is no way of heaven. They flatter themselves that nothing is, except what they say. They deny that others see the light. They devise tortures for those who do.

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for Amasis ruled in Babylon for twenty years (560-540 BCE), until he was forced to withdraw to the Nile to contend with the Medusas and their allies in the Sudan. After Darius usurped power, historical records of Amasis, Cambyses and their families were revised very thoroughly. Darius is one of the great villains in literary history.

Heaven, show yourself through the dust and clouds. Let yourself be seen not only from the tops of mountains. Let the blind see how you preserve them and all other living creatures.

Show yourself to my children. Let them see you bringing food for every house, and drink from every river. Let them know you are the fountain of life. Let them see your lovingkindness. Let them be kind in all they do. Uplift their spirits.

*[He writes to his sons.]*

### **Ps 37. Our enemies will wither**

Our enemies will wither in the sun. They will burn away. Let us delight in heaven that sustains us, and in earth that satisfies our desires. Heaven will bring justice to light, even at noonday.

Let us not worry that others prosper by doing wrong. Our night will come. Our enemies will be shamed by their misdeeds, and they will be forgotten. Wait patiently and keep the way. It is the only way that your seed will grow. The poverty of a just man always brings more satisfaction than wealth of any man who has lost the way.

I have been young and I have been old but I have never forsaken the way. You and your seed will be blessed. Injustice will pass away.

### **Ps 38. Lord [Darius], do not rebuke me in another fit of anger**

Lord [Darius], do not rebuke me in another fit of anger. Your arrows stick fast in me. Your heavy hand weighs upon me. I am bowed down with your troubles.

There is no soundness in my flesh because of your temper. There is no rest in my bones. My wounds stink from infection. My whole body is filled with a loathsome disease. My flesh is no longer sound. I am weak and sore. My heart throbs, my strength fails. The eyesight is weak, but I see that my old friends and former companions now stand aloof from me. My kinsmen keep far away. These things cannot be hidden from you.

I am prepared to fall since only suffering is left before me. Our enemies thrive. You have made them strong. You have allowed rivals to destroy me, when I was your faithful ally. They will return evil to you for the good that you have given them.

Heaven will not forsake me, lord. Let it not forsake you.

### **Ps 39. Lord [Darius], tell me how long I must suffer**

Lord [Darius], tell me how long I must suffer. How many more hours? I come toward my end, and in no time at all to the heavens, but each hour matters to me. What are you waiting for? One more blow of your hands should do the job. Tell me when I may depart and be here no more.

*[Psamatchek's death likely occurred at about the same time as Bardiya's murder in 522 BCE. The journal entries that became Psalms 40 and 41 are post-scripts.]*

**Ps 40. I can wait no more**

I can wait no more to be brought up from the mire and set on a solid foundation. I can't recover my own footing. Let my sons build me a monument that will say I delighted in the way. I took justice to heart, and I proclaimed it to all. Every last hair on my head was loyal to heaven!

**Ps 41. I was imprisoned by enemies**

I was imprisoned by enemies who spoke of me as the lord of evil, and I was sick, languishing on my bed. They whispered together and conspired against me. A familiar friend of mine, in whom I trusted, one who had eaten my bread, put his heel upon my body and said to the others, he is dead. He will never again rise from his bed.

I am not dead. I will requite them. They lied to me, and they lied to others about me. They will not triumph. They will die, and their names will perish, but I will keep the way forever.