

SBC – April 7, 2024
Psalm 21 (NKJV)
“God’s Preserving Power”

Psalm 21 (NKJV)
To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

David commonly attributes his Psalms “To the Chief Musician” – either referring to a KEY musical leader in his day or some think it is a veiled reference to God Himself.

Logically Psalm 21 connects with Psalm 20 so that they are sometimes called “Twin Psalms”. In Psalm 20 victory is prayed for; in Psalm 21 God has answered and God is praised for it. The exact occasion (or battle) in view is unknown.

Psalm 21 is a Royal Psalm that clearly has David in view but many think it is also Messianic in that it ultimately prefigures the coming Messianic King.

Psalm 21

Theme: God’s Preserving Power”

OUTLINE:

- vv. 1-7 Rejoicing in God’s Salvation & Blessing
- vv. 8-12 – Anticipating Future Victories
- v. 13 – Praising the God of Strength

1 The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD; And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!

David, as king, is writing this. He is rejoicing in God’s strength and in God’s deliverance (salvation). Certainly God’s people should continually be celebrating God’s salvation that He has provided for us through His power. We celebrate Him and what He has done for us.

The Jews in ancient times believed that the “king” here echoed the idea of the coming Messiah/King.

“The ancient Jewish Targum (the Chaldean paraphrase of the Old Testament) and Talmud render the word *king* in verse 1 by *melek mashiach* (King Messiah), which means that the Jews in an early period understood these words to be spoken of the Messiah.

A change came in the Middle Ages as a result of a judgment by Rabbi Solomon Isaaci, known as Rashi (b. A.D. 1040). He endorsed the early view but suggested it be dropped, saying, 'Our old doctors interpreted this psalm of King Messiah, but in order to meet the Schismatics [that is, the Christians] it is better to understand it of David himself.'" (James Montgomery Boice)

So the early Jews clearly saw Messianic overtones in this Psalm but then because of the Christians they wanted to avoid it. That is interesting because it goes to show they clearly got what the Christians were saying about Jesus – that He is the Messiah.

2 You have given him his heart's desire, And have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah

Remember back in Psalm 20 this is what they asked of the Lord.

Slide # 2

Psalm 20:4 (NKJV)

4 May He grant you according to your heart's desire, And fulfill all your purpose.

This was not some carnal prayer merely for personal success, but rather that as God's anointed he would be successful in going to battle for the good of God's people and for the glory of God.

God has given the king his heart's desire for victory over his enemies. God has answered prayer! As noted in verse one God has given deliverance!

As we noted this morning God works through prayer and we don't always know how to pray. But there are various reasons why God may not answer prayer. David Guzik lists the following...

Slide # 3

- Not abiding in Jesus (John 15:7).
- Unbelief (Matthew 17:20-21).
- Husband not honoring his wife (1 Peter 3:7).
- Not asking (James 4:2).
- Selfish praying (James 4:3).
- Disobedience (1 John 3:22).

- Not praying in God's will (1 John 5:14-15).

Slide # 4

- Unconfessed sin (James 5:16).
- Cold, passionless prayer (James 5:16-18; 2 Kings 20:5).
- Prayerlessness or a lack of persistence in prayer (Luke 18:1-7; Psalm 55:17).
- Sin against others (Matthew 5:23-24).
- Not praying in the name of Jesus (John 14:13-14).
- Pride (James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5, Proverbs 3:34).
- Trusting in the length or the form of prayer (Matthew 6:7).

But God works through prayer. We have not because we ask not. But when we do pray our goal should always be to pray "in the Spirit" meaning in step with the Spirit. God delights in answering those prayers and then we need to THANK Him for what He has done.

Often people are quick to ask prayer and then sometimes give no follow up on what God has done. We need to be just as quick to say "Thank you and give praise to God" as we were to say "please".

Selah is a Hebrew word found 74 times in the OT. It is commonly thought to refer to a reflective pause – although some think it may have also included the idea of a musical interlude of some kind.

3 For You meet him with the blessings of goodness; You set a crown of pure gold upon his head.

The picture here is of David returning victorious from battle and it pictures God meeting him with blessing and goodness.

And in particular he has a crown of gold – evidently taken in battle from the opposing king. Some suggest this is portraying David being crowned as king over all Israel after a great struggle for many years. Whatever, the case David is celebrating God's victory and crowning him.

The crown is used as a sign of victory over a defeated power (2 Sm. 12:30). – HCSB

Slide # 5

2 Samuel 12:29–30 (NKJV)

29 So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, fought against it, and took it.

30 Then he took their king's crown from his head. Its weight was a talent of gold, with precious stones. And it was set on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance.

4 He asked life from You, and You gave it to him— Length of days forever and ever.

A familiar chant in the old days was “Long live the king”. David is here recognizing that God preserved his life. Often in battle if the king was defeated, he would be killed. David asked God to preserve him and He did.

The phrase “Length of days forever and ever” may be an example of hyperbole but others think it may allude to the endless dynasty God promised to David in the Davidic covenant which finds ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah (2 Sam. 7:11-16).

5 His glory is great in Your salvation; Honor and majesty You have placed upon him.

David recognizes that God has placed him in this position of great honor. He was not a self-made man. God did it!

6 For You have made him most blessed forever; You have made him exceedingly glad with Your presence.

Again, the emphasis is STRONG that God did this. It is a double emphasis. God made him most blessed; God made him exceedingly glad. This was all God's doing.

David saw himself as most blessed forever. As God's children we should all have this perspective. What more could God do for us than that which He has done.

Slide # 6

Romans 8:32 (NKJV)

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

But the greatest thing of all is being in the presence of God. For David experiencing God's presence made him "exceedingly glad". The greatest thrill in all the world is experiencing God! Nothing compares!

And for the believer the best is yet to be.

Slide # 7

Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

11 You will show me the path of life; **In Your presence is fullness of joy**; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

7 For the king trusts in the LORD, And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.

Here is the bottom line. David trusted in the LORD – that is in YHWH – the covenant keeping God of Israel. He is faithful. He keeps His promises.

David trusted in the mercy of the Most High that God would preserve him. His throne was established and wasn't going anywhere – all because of God.

The word "mercy" is the Hebrew word "hesed" which refers to God's covenant faithfulness – sometimes translated as "steadfast love" or "loyal love". It inherently has the idea of God's FAITHFULNESS!

God would be faithful to preserve David according to His promises in the Davidic Covenant. And the complete fulfilment of all God promised him will be entirely fulfilled in the Messiah – the greater David!

8 Your hand will find all Your enemies; Your right hand will find those who hate You.

God's hand is often used as a symbol of His power in judgment (cf. Ex. 9:3; Deut. 2:15; Judges 2:15). They might run but they can't hide! God will find them! Twice this is stated for emphasis! God will find them!

The emphasis here relates to future battles and future victories that God will give to David and ultimately the greater David – the Messiah. Note because David trusts in the LORD (v. 7) he has confidence God will continue to give him victory.

David knew he was God's man – he was anointed for this position. As such he knew his enemies were really the enemies of God and commonly the Psalms regard the enemies of the king as enemies of the LORD.

David himself had tremendous respect for the idea of “the Lord's anointed”. Because of this he dared not touch Saul, but rather waited for the Lord to remove Saul and place him into position as king.

As the Lord's anointed David sensed that his enemies were in effect the enemies of God. To take on the Lord's anointed was in effect to take on God. David saw them as those who hated God and God would find them and destroy them.

9 You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger; The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath, And the fire shall devour them.

Wow! This is a powerful assertion! God is going to make His enemies (which were also David's enemies) into a fiery oven. In God's anger He is going to burn them up. In His wrath He will swallow them up in judgment. Fire shall devour them. This is graphic! They are coming to a fiery end under the judgment of God's hand.

R.C. Sproul said, “There's probably no concept in theology more repugnant to modern America than the idea of divine wrath.”

The world has no idea that it is on a collision course with the coming day of God's wrath. Judgment is coming to the world.

Slide # 8

Acts 17:30–31 (NKJV)

30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now

commands all men everywhere to repent,

31 because He has **appointed a day on which He will judge the world** in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

One day Jesus early in His ministry went back to His hometown of Nazareth. He took the scroll and read from Isaiah.

Slide # 9

Luke 4:18–21 (NKJV)

18 *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;*

19 *To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*

20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

21 And He began to say to them, “Today **this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**”

The amazing thing is that Jesus stopped His reading mid sentence.

Slide # 10**Isaiah 61:1–2 (NKJV)**

1 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, **And the day of vengeance of our God;** To comfort all who mourn,

Jesus stopped mid sentence because He came in grace presenting grace. Grace and truth came by Jesus (Jn. 1:17). It was not the day of vengeance. It was not judgment day. First GRACE would be presented to the world. The door of GRACE is still open to all who will come, but judgment day is coming and the whole world is put on notice. Now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).

10 Their offspring You shall destroy from the earth, And their descendants from among the sons of men.

Their offspring here picture those who follow their parents in their rebel ways. All those who go this way will ultimately be destroyed from the earth. Again, this looks forward to ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

11 For they intended evil against You; They devised a plot which they are not able to perform.

Depravity is so foolish as to scheme against God Himself.

What could be more foolhardy? In all their scheming they will not be able to pull it off! They have BIG plans but God is BIGGER still!

This reminds me of Psalm 2.

Slide # 11

Psalm 2:2–4 (NKJV)

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers **take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed**, saying,

3 “Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.”

4 **He who sits in the heavens shall laugh**; The Lord shall hold them in derision.

God mocks such folly! It’s absurd for them to plot and scheme against the Lord. Only LOSERS take on God.

Many threaten and confidently announce the demise of God’s work in our day, but they most definitely are **not able to perform it**.

– *David Guzik*

Slide # 12

Psalm 33:10–11 (NKJV)

10 The **LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing**; He makes **the plans of the peoples of no effect**.

11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.

In the end God’s plans will stand! The depraved plots of the peoples will come to nothing!

12 Therefore You will make them turn their back; You will make ready Your arrows on Your string toward their faces.

David saw the enemies of the LORD turning their backs and running for their lives. But God is going to shoot them right in the head with a kill shot! They are going DOWN!

Slide # 13

Psalm 7:11–12 (NKJV)

11 God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day.

12 If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready.

“The judgments of God are called his ‘arrows,’ being sharp, swift, sure, and deadly.” (George Horne)

13 Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength! We will sing and praise Your power.

The Psalm concludes with a prayer that God be exalted in His own strength. For David it was ultimately about God exalting Himself in the putting down of his enemies.

At the end of the book of Revelation we see the Hallelujah choir of heaven celebrating God’s victory over the rebel world. As He puts them down He will be exalted for the Almighty God that He is.

Slide # 14**Revelation 19:1–3 (NKJV)**

1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!

2 For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.”

3 Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!”

And then David ends by saying, “We will sing and praise Your power.” And indeed we will! We sing God’s praises for He is an awesome God.

He preserves His own and ultimately destroys all the enemies of God’s people who in the end are shown to be the enemies of God.

Indeed, we will sing and praise God’s awesome power” forever and ever!