

“BETRAYED BY FAMILY; SAVED BY GOD’S NAME”

PSALM 54

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INTRODUCTION

The Psalm title: For the Choir Director; On Stringed Instruments; Contemplative/Didactic Psalm—of David.

Historical Background: when the Ziphites came and told Saul: ‘Is not David hiding himself among us?’

This is one of the 8 psalms attributed to David’s persecution and flight from Saul; not long after the time of psalm 52. It is so hard when those closest to you betray you; but, the LORD is always **faithful**—see v. 6—and His Name will save us and vindicate us at the same time!

WHEN ALL LOOKS HOPELESS, GOD’S NAME WILL BE YOUR HELPER.

I. THE CRY UNTO GOD (1-2)

A. “Save me”—by your name.

- Once again “name” in reference to God refers to his self-revelation; the characteristics and qualities which are not only part of his nature, but which have openly been manifested on behalf of His people.
- God has a reputation as one who delights in his people and gladly delivers them

B. “Vindicate me” (judge)—by your power/might.

Such vindication, in the nature of the case here would not be so much pronounced in words as in deeds, showing David’s innocence. The slur on David’s character is that he is no more than a traitor. Later he asks Saul, “For what have I done? What guilt is on my hands?” (1 Sam. 26:18).

C. Hear me: my prayer; words of my mouth—Note the earnestness of his plea.

II. THE CAUSE OF THE CRY (3)

A. I am attacked by “strangers.”

- The “strangers” here can refer to those who act as ruthless as foreigners generally do—even though in this case the reference is to the wicked among his own people.

B. I am attacked by “violent men.”

- They seek his soul—life.

C. I am attacked by people who “do not set God before them.”

- This fact explains the reason for their behavior.
- How can David so equate his cause with that of God, so that those who oppose him “have not set God before them”? Any one at that time in Israel who feared God more than man, could not lend himself to be made a tool of Saul’s blind fury. God had already manifestly enough acknowledged David.

III. THE CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S ANSWER (4-5)

In the first 3 verses David had been seeking God’s attention; now he puts his attention on God!

A. God is my **Helper**

B. God is among those who **sustain** my soul.

- Using the name “Lord”—Adonai, the One who is Sovereign, Master, Lord.

- This statement does not disrespect God, but rather shows that God is the divine hand behind such groups as **the “thirty” mighty men, the “three” mighty men, the 600 soldier supporters** of David mentioned in I Sam. 23:13 and II Sam. 23:8ff. The faithfulness of such men was David’s support and delight.
 - God is the primary sustainer in David’s view, but supports and encourages the others to do so also.
- C. God is my Retribution—bringing the evil of the wicked back on them (5).
- God lies in wait for “those who lie in wait for me.”
 - Then David’s confident statement becomes a prayer: “Destroy them.”
- D. God is the Faithful One who punishes sin.
- It is just to ask God to destroy the wicked—wickedness is contrary to his nature and deserves to be destroyed. We must not wince at the thought of retribution here in v. 5, for David rightly leaves the matter to God and does not take vengeance into his own hands; such is in full accord with Rom. 12:19, even though David does not follow the second mile to which the next two verses in Romans are a signpost—feed your hungry enemy and give him drink, and overcome evil with good (K. 198). Such advanced teaching is the result of the merciful ministry of Messiah and fully awakened under the New Covenant.
 - Throughout Scripture the desire for ‘vengeance’ is not an attitude of gloating in unholy glee, but **is a feeling of holy sympathy for what God’s righteousness prompts Him to do”**

IV. THE CONSECRATION TO GOD’S SERVICE (6-7)

A. What I will do

1. Give sacrifice to God—willingly, with a freewill offering. Sacrifices were acceptable:

- The blood offering of the atoning sacrifices “gave access to God’s presence.”
- Such offerings ‘gave visible expression to one’s love.’
- Such sacrificial occasions enabled God’s people to worship together and share the festivities and remembrances of God’s greatness and goodness.

2. Give thanks to **God’s name**—representing all that God is and does for His people.

B. Why I will do it (6b-7)

1. God’s Name is **good**.
2. His name **has delivered** me from all trouble—straights, tight places, problems
3. My eye **has looked** with satisfaction upon His works—how He fulfills His righteous ways by destroying His enemies—His and mine!

CONCLUSION

In giving us this psalm, David has made straight paths for our feet in order to follow a similar pattern in dealing with our problems, going from near-despair to liberation: **the Cry, the Cause, the Confidence, the Consecration.**

The psalm does not have many unique elements; the way David meets his problems is almost stereotype. However, such experiences are common in the lives of David and other psalmists, and are still common in lives of humans; the lessons learned will always be applicable and appropriate.

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