

“CAST YOUR BURDEN ON THE LORD”

PSALM 55:12-23

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

This psalm is the Elohim counterpart to Yahweh-Psalm 41; the conspirator particularly mentioned here and there must be the same person. And this person, as important as he is, could hardly be unknown in the Scriptures and consequently to us, especially when he becomes a type of Judas who betrayed Christ. The betrayer is surely Ahithophel. The psalm was not written while David was on the run from Jerusalem, but rather during the 4 year period after the return of Absalom while the conspiracy was brewing. Thus, David is still in the city and can think of flying away to a place of refuge. True, Ahithophel did not officially go over to Absalom, and the report came to David, after David had fled Jerusalem (II Sam. 15:30); but the conspiracy had been brewing for some time and David must have been aware of some of the happenings. The conspirators became bolder as the time of implementation came closer and they saw that David was not taking steps to stop it.

Kidner, in his usual insightful way, comments that this psalm “helps to make the Psalter a book for the extremities of experience as well as for its normalities” (199). A believer “driven to distraction” [see v. 2] “finds a fellow-sufferer here.” Those who have not experienced such extremities may be able to learn how to relate to those who have and to share in their sufferings sympathetically; moreover, they may learn to pray for them more effectively—see Heb. 13:3, remember fellow prisoners as though in prison with them. The person who betrayed David carefully concealed his treacherous designs, and pretended to be very close to David. David was deeply hurt by his betrayal and “bitterly resented” it (P. 436). In sadness David would flee away (6-8); yet in anger he asks for God’s justice and wrath upon the man (vv. 9, 15, 23).

The last half of the psalm helps us to see the heart-breaking betrayal of a faithful man of God even by those close to them—such as often occurs in ministry in all periods. Moreover, this section gives us insight into the similar but much vaster sufferings and betrayals of Christ, and enables us to see the contrast of His self-mastery and redemptive attitude in comparison with David’s calls for justice and deliverance. The abruptness of the style of the psalm may be explained by the strong emotion under which it was written.

When times are dark; when your enemies seem strong; when hope seems lost; when your burdens seem too heavy to carry: it is then that you must call upon the Lord; it is then that you must trust in Him; it is then that you must:

CAST YOUR BURDEN UPON THE LORD AND HE WILL SUSTAIN YOU. [22]

- I. I AM BETRAYED BY MY CLOSE FRIEND AND COMPANION (12-14)
 - A. The one causing me the most trouble is not an “enemy” or “one who hates me” (12).
 - Then I could bear it (12b).
 - Then I could hide myself from him (12c).
 - B. This person was of “equal rank” with me. (13)
 - C. This person was David’s close companion. (13)
 - D. This person was David’s familiar friend. (13).
 - E. This person has “sweet fellowship/counsel” with David (14).
 - F. This person went to church with David and walked with God’s people at festive occasions.
- II. THOSE WHO BETRAY AND REBEL DESERVE JUDGMENT
 - A. Their Character
 1. There are “no changes” with them (19bc).
 2. They do not fear God (19d).

3. They are deceitful (v. 23).
 4. Evil is “in their dwelling, in their midst” (15).
- B. Their Behavior
1. They come near in order to attempt to harm me—the battle against me (18a)
 2. There are many of them against me and “exalt themselves against me (18b; 12b).
 3. They “reproach me” (12)
 4. They [“he”] “stretch out their hands” to hurt one who is at peace with him (20).
 5. They [“he”] **profanes** his covenant (20).
 6. They [“he”] uses **smooth deception**—“His butter-words/curds of his mouth were smooth” but his heart “was war.” (21)
 7. They [“he”] **feign friendliness**—“His words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords” (21).
 8. They are “men of bloodshed” (v. 23).
- C. Their Punishment
1. God will “hear” what they are doing and will “answer” them! (19)
 2. They won’t live out half of their days (23).
 3. Death comes upon them “deceitfully” (15).
 4. They are brought down to the **deepest pit, the pit of destruction, yes Sheol itself (23)**.
 5. Like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—rebels of the past—they go down alive into Sheol (15).

III. GOD WILL SAVE ME AND THE GODLY

- A. They “call upon God” for help (16a)
- At regular, stated times (17)
 - They bring “complaints” and “meditations” before God (17)
 - They cast their burdens [the lot they are given] on the LORD.
 - They “trust in” God (23c).
- B. The LORD is the Answer for His people.
1. He “sits [enthroned] as God and King from of old—from forever (19).
 2. He **saves** (16b), “hears the voice of His own (17b)
 3. He **redeems** the soul/person/self.
 4. He brings peace (18)
 5. He sustains the one who trusts in Him (22a).

CONCLUSION

“Indignation at the blackness of this treachery, so far worse to be endured than any open enmity. To have trusted, and to find his trust betrayed; to have been one with a man in public and in private, bound to him by personal ties, and by the ties of religion, and then to find honour, faith, affection, all cast to the winds—this it was that seemed so terrible, this it was that called for the withering curse”

Can we even begin to imagine what it must have been like for Jesus and His relationship with Judas Iscariot?

CAST YOUR BURDEN UPON THE LORD AND HE WILL SUSTAIN YOU. [22]

“He will never allow the righteous to be shaken”!

But the wicked will be more than shaken—they will be brought down to the lowest pit of Hell itself!