

Psalm 54

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, [A Psalm] of David, when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

Psalm 54: The superscription indicates that the psalm records David's reaction to the Ziphites' betrayal of him to Saul. The historical situation is described (in 1 Sam. chapter 23). Consequently, David prays for deliverance from his oppressors (verses 1-3), expresses his confidence in being heard (verses 4-5), and promises his thanksgiving upon deliverance.

Verses 1-7: This psalm apparently comes from the same period of David's life as does Psalm 52. Even though David had recently rescued an Israelite border town from the Philistines, he was still considered a traitor to Saul (1 Sam. chapters 23 and 26). In the wake of this emotional devastation, David prayed to God for vindication. The psalm proves encouragement to any believer who has been maligned.

- I. The Prayer for Deliverance (54:1-3).
- II. The Anticipation of Deliverance (54:4-5).
- III. The Thanksgiving for Deliverance (54:6-7).

Psalm 54:1 "Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength."

David wrote this psalm after the Ziphites revealed to Saul where David was hiding (1 Sam. 23:19-23). David appeals for help based on God's character: His "name", His power, and His "strength".

"By thy name": In the ancient world, a person's name was essentially the person himself. Here, God's name includes His covenant protection.

"Judge": David requests that God will execute justice for him as in a court trial when a defendant is declared not guilty.

It's all in the name of Jesus. Even the name means Savior. Jesus is the Savior of all mankind, especially those that believe. This cry of David to God to save him is our cry as well. It is not by our strength or might that we are saved, but by the power in His name.

Psalm 54:2 "Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth."

The psalmist first puts up his petitions, and then desires to be heard. His distress, and the fervency of his spirit, not suffering him to observe order.

"Give ear to the words of my mouth": For the prayer which was conceived in his mind, and inwrought there by the Spirit of God, was expressed vocally. "Give ear": An anthropomorphism meaning: "listen", "pay attention".

I may pray all night long, but I need to know that my prayer has been heard and received of God. As long as we know that God has His ear turned to us, we continue to pray and believe.

Psalm 54:3 "For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah."

“Strangers”: Either non-Israelites or Israelites who had broken the covenant with God might be called strangers. Since in this case Saul and the Ziphites are the oppressors, the strangers are apostate Israelites (compare 1 Sam. 23:19; 26:1).

This is a strange statement, but it is so true. So many times, those who do not even know us, rise up against us and say terrible things about us. David is saying here, that these are people who do not know God coming against him. The sad thing in our time is, that brothers and sisters in other denominations say cruel things about your ministry, when they have no idea what you believe. Notice what Jesus said about other groups who do good in Jesus name.

Luke 9:50 "And Jesus said unto him, Forbid [him] not: for he that is not against us is for us." All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ should be pulling together to try to get the lost world saved. There is no time for fighting.

Psalm 54:4 "Behold, God [is] mine helper: the Lord [is] with them that uphold my soul."

If we are for him, he is for us. And if he is for us, we need not fear. Every creature is that to us, and no more, which God makes it to be. The Lord will in due time save his people, and in the meantime, he sustains them, and bears them up so that the spirit he has made shall not fail. There is truth in God's threatenings, as well as in his promises. Sinners that repent not, will find it so to their cost. David's present deliverance was an earnest of further deliverance. He speaks of the completion of his deliverance as a thing done, though he had as yet many troubles before him. Because, having God's promise for it, he was as sure of it as if it was done already. The Lord would deliver him out of all his troubles. May he help us to bear our cross without discontent, and at length bring us to share his victories and glory. Christians never should suffer the voice of praise and thanksgiving to cease in the church of the redeemed.

"The Lord is with them that uphold my soul": My friends; those who have rallied around me to defend me. Those who comfort me by their presence; and those who sustain me in my cause, and who keep me from sinking under the burden of my accumulated troubles.

On my own I can do nothing, but with God's help I can turn the world upside down for Jesus. Possibly a more accurate statement would be (I am God's helper). I cannot fail as long as He remains my Lord. Just as God was with David, He also was with those who were on David's side.

Psalm 54:5 "He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth."

That eyed him as Saul did. That observed his haunts, where he resorted, and who were with him, as the Ziphites did under Saul's direction. As the Word here used for "enemies" signifies. The

mischief they had devised for him, he believed, would be returned upon their own heads. The pit they dugged they would fall into themselves. And the net they had spread for others their own feet would be taken in. This was true as of David's enemies, so of Christ's, the wicked Jews, who narrowly watched him to take every advantage against him.

"Cut them off in thy truth": Root and branch, as Saul, and his family, and his courtiers, quickly were. According to the truth of promises made to David, and of threatenings unto them. "In thy truth": Since God is omniscient, He can execute perfect justice against the wicked.

We should not even take time to think bad thoughts about our enemies. God fights the battles of the believers for them.

Romans 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but [rather] give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance [is] mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

The following Scripture goes a little more in detail, what God will do to your enemies.

Romans 12:20 "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

Psalm 54:6 "I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for [it is] good."

Not legal sacrifices; or freewill offerings that the law gives directions about, though the allusion is to them. But the freewill offerings of his mouth (Psalm 119:108). The sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, on account of help, salvation, and deliverance, as appears from the following clause. Which he determines to offer, not by constraint, but willingly. Not by force, but of a ready mind; freely, and with all his heart. The sacrifice of his antitype is himself, his soul and body, as in union with his divine Person. And this was offered up to God, against whom man has sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied. And this was done freely and voluntarily as he gave himself for an offering. He laid down his life of himself, and that for sinners. The sacrifices of his people are their prayers and praises. Their acts of beneficence, and the presentation of their souls and bodies in divine service. All which they do freely, under the influence of divine grace.

"I will praise thy name, O Lord": Which explains what is meant by sacrificing. This is what is due to the Lord, and comely in his people.

"For it is good": Either the name of God; and therefore to be praised. He himself is good, as, he is, both in a way of providence and of grace. And it is good, both pleasantly and profitably good, to sing praises to him (Psalm 147:1).

David is speaking of the sacrificing of animals, as was the method under the law. The sacrifice of the believer is praise.

Hebrews 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name."

Notice the word freely, in verse 6 above. This means that he will sacrifice, even when it is not expected. This means the sacrifice is of love, and not of obligation.

Psalm 54:7 "For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen [his desire] upon mine enemies."

As he desired (1 Sam. 26:24); that is, out of all his present trouble. Not that he had no more afterwards; for as soon as one trouble is gone, generally speaking, another comes. But as God delivered him out of his present distress, so he believed he would deliver him out of all his afflictions in future times.

"And mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies": Or revenge, as the Targum supplies it. Not that he delighted in the destruction of his enemies, but in the justice of God glorified thereby, and in the goodness of God to him, in delivering him from them (see Rev. 18:20). David anticipates with confidence that which he has seen in the past, the defeat of his enemies.

Then this sacrifice above is of thanksgiving, because He has done such marvelous things in behalf of David. We have even more to thank Him for than David did. We are under grace, and not under the law. Our Sacrifice was one time in the person of Jesus Christ. There is no more need for sacrifice, Jesus paid it all. Now there is only room for praise and thanksgiving.

Psalm 54 Questions

1. It is all in the name of _____.
2. Who is Jesus the Savior of?
3. Why do we continue to pray and believe?
4. Who has come against David in verse 3?
5. If we feed our enemy, what will happen to the enemy?
6. What is the sacrifice the believer makes?
7. The sacrifice is of _____, and not of _____.