

PSALM 124

David penned this psalm (we suppose) upon occasion of some great deliverance which God wrought for him and his people from some very threatening danger, which was likely to have involved them all in ruin, whether by foreign invasion, or intestine insurrection, is not certain; whatever it was he seems to have been himself much affected, and very desirous to affect others, with the goodness of God, in making a way for them to escape. To him he is careful to give all the glory, and takes none to himself as conquerors usually do.

I. He here magnifies the greatness of the danger they were in, and of the ruin they were at the brink of (v. 1-5).

II. He gives God the glory of their escape (v. 6, 7 compared with v. 1, 2).

III. He takes encouragement thence to trust in God (v. 8). In singing this psalm, besides the application of it to any particular deliverance wrought for us and our people, in our days and the days of our fathers, we may have in our thoughts the great work of our redemption by Jesus Christ, by which we were rescued from the powers of darkness.

PSALM 124:1-5

THE SECURITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

A song of degrees of David.

The people of God, being here called upon to praise God for their deliverance, are to take notice,

I. Of the malice of men, by which they were reduced to the very brink of ruin. Let Israel say that there was but a step between them and death: the more desperate the disease appears to have been the more does the skill of the Physician appear in the cure. Observe,

1. Whence the threatening danger came: *Men rose up against us*, creatures of our own kind, and yet bent upon our ruin. *Homo homini lupus* — *Man*

is a wolf to man. No marvel that the red dragon, the roaring lion, should seek to swallow us up; but that men should thirst after the blood of men, Absalom after the blood of his own father, that a woman should be drunk with the blood of saints, is what, with St. John, we may wonder at with great admiration. From men we may expect humanity, yet there are those whose *tender mercies are cruel*. But what was the matter with these men? Why *their wrath was kindled against us* (v. 3); something or other they were angry at, and then no less would serve than the destruction of those they had conceived a displeasure against. *Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous*. Their wrath was kindled as fire ready to consume us. They were proud; and *the wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor*. They were daring in their attempt; they *rose up against us*, rose in rebellion, with a resolution to *swallow us up* alive.

2. How far it went, and how fatal it would have been if it had gone a little further: “We should have been devoured as a lamb by a lion, not only slain, but *swallowed up*, so that there would have been no relics of us remaining, swallowed up with so much haste, ere we were aware, that we should have gone down alive to the pit. We should have been deluged as the low grounds by a land-flood or the sands by a high spring-tide.” This similitude he dwells upon, with the ascents which bespeak this a song of degrees, or risings, like the rest. *The waters had overwhelmed us*. What of us? Why *the stream had gone over our souls*, our lives, our comforts, all that is dear to us. What waters? Why *the proud waters*. God suffers the enemies of his people sometimes to prevail very far against them, that his own power may appear the more illustrious in their deliverance.

II. Of the goodness of God, by which they were rescued from the very brink of ruin: “*The Lord was on our side*; and, *if he had not been so*, we should have been undone.”

1. “God was on our side; he took our part, espoused our cause, and appeared for us. He was our helper, and a very present help, a help on our side, nigh at hand. He was with us, not only for us, but among us, and commander-in-chief of our forces.”

2. That God was Jehovah; there the emphasis lies. “If it had not been Jehovah himself, a God of infinite power and perfection, that had undertaken our deliverance, our enemies would have overpowered us.”

Happy the people, therefore, whose God is Jehovah, a God all-sufficient. Let Israel say this, to his honour, and resolve never to forsake him.

PSALM 124:6-8

THE SECURITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Here the psalmist further magnifies the great deliverance God had lately wrought for them.

I. That their hearts might be the more enlarged in thankfulness to him (v. 6): *Blessed be the Lord*. God is the author of all our deliverances, and therefore he must have the glory of them. We rob him of his due if we do not return thanks to him. And we are the more obliged to praise him because we had such a narrow escape. We were delivered,

1. Like a lamb out of the very jaws of a beast of prey: God *has not given us as a prey to their teeth*, intimating that they had no power over God's people but what was given them from above. They could not be a prey to their teeth unless God gave them up, and *therefore* they were rescued, because God would not suffer them to be ruined.

2. Like *a bird*, a little bird (the word signifies a sparrow), *out of the snare of the fowler*. The enemies are very subtle and spiteful; they lay snares for God's people, to bring them into sin and trouble, and to hold them there. Sometimes they seem to have prevailed so far as to gain their point. God's people are taken in the snare, and are as unable to help themselves out as any weak and silly bird is; and *then* is God's time to appear for their relief, when all other friends fail; then God breaks the snare, and turns the counsel of the enemies into foolishness: *The snare is broken and so we are delivered*. Isaac was saved when he lay ready to be sacrificed. *Jehovah-jireh — in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen*.

II. That their hearts, and the hearts of others, might be the more encouraged to trust in God in the like dangers (v. 8): *Our help is in the name of the Lord*. David had directed us (^{BC16}Psalm 121:2) to depend upon God for help as to our personal concerns — *My help is in the name of the Lord*; here as to the concerns of the public — *Our help is so*. It is a comfort to all that lay the interests of God's Israel near their hearts that

Israel's God is the same that made the world, and therefore will have a church in the world, and can secure that church in times of the greatest danger and distress. In him therefore let the church's friends put their confidence, and they shall not be put to confusion.