

# PSALM 21

As the foregoing psalm was a prayer for the king that God would protect and prosper him, so this is a thanksgiving for the success God had blessed him with. Those whom we have prayed for we ought to give thanks for, and particularly for kings, in whose prosperity we share. They are here taught,

**I.** To congratulate him on his victories, and the honour he had achieved (v. 1-6).

**II.** To confide in the power of God for the completing of the ruin of the enemies of his kingdom (v. 7-13). In this there is an eye to Messiah the Prince, and the glory of his kingdom; for to him divers passages in this psalm are more applicable than to David himself.

## PSALM 21:1-6

### THE SUBJECT'S THANKSGIVING

*To the chief musician. A psalm of David.*

David here speaks for himself in the first place, professing that his joy was in God's strength and in his salvation, and not in the strength or success of his armies. He also directs his subjects herein to rejoice with him, and to give God all the glory of the victories he had obtained; and all with an eye to Christ, of whose triumphs over the powers of darkness David's victories were but shadows.

**1.** They here congratulate the king on his joys and concur with him in them (v. 1): "*The king rejoices*, he uses to rejoice *in thy strength*, and so do we; what pleases the king pleases us," <sup><1035></sup>2 Samuel 3:36. Happy the people the character of whose king it is that he makes God's strength his confidence and God's salvation his joy, that is pleased with all the advancements of God's kingdom and trusts God to bear him out in all he does for the service of it. Our Lord Jesus, in his great undertaking, relied upon help from heaven, and pleased himself with the prospect of that great salvation which he was thereby to work out.

2. They gave God all the praise of those things which were the matter of their king's rejoicing.

(1.) That God had heard his prayers (v. 2): *Thou hast given him his heart's desire* (and there is no prayer accepted but what is the heart's desire), the very thing they begged of God for him, ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 20:4. Note, God's gracious returns of prayer do, in a special manner, require our humble returns of praise. When God gives to Christ the heathen for his inheritance, gives him to see his seed, and accepts his intercession for all believers, he give him his heart's desire.

(2.) That God had surprised him with favours, and much outdone his expectations (v. 3): *Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness*. All our blessings are blessings of goodness, and are owing, not at all to any merit of ours, but purely and only to God's goodness. But the psalmist here reckons it in a special manner obliging that these blessings were given in a preventing way; this fixed his eye, enlarged his soul, and endeared his God, as one expresses it. When God's blessings come sooner and prove richer than we imagine, when they are given before we prayed for them, before we were ready for them, nay, when we feared the contrary, then it may be truly said that he prevented us with them. Nothing indeed prevented Christ, but to mankind never was any favour more preventing than our redemption by Christ and all the blessed fruits of his mediation.

(3.) That God had advanced him to the highest honour and the most extensive power: *“Thou hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head and kept it there, when his enemies attempted to throw it off.”* Note, Crowns are at God's disposal; no head wears them but God sets them there, whether in judgment to his land or for mercy the event will show. On the head of Christ God never set a crown of gold, but of thorns first, and then of glory.

(4.) That God had assured him of the perpetuity of his kingdom, and therein had done more for him than he was able either to ask or think (v. 4): *“When he went forth upon a perilous expedition he asked his life of thee, which he then put into his hand, and thou not only gavest him that, but withal gavest him length of days for ever and ever, didst not only prolong his life far beyond his expectation, but didst assure him of a blessed immortality in a future state and of the continuance of his kingdom in the Messiah that should come of his loins.”* See how God's grants often

exceed our petitions and hopes, and infer thence how rich he is in mercy to those that call upon him. See also and rejoice in the length of the days of Christ's kingdom. He was dead, indeed, that we might live through him; but he is alive, and lives for evermore, and *of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end*; and because he thus lives we shall thus live also.

(5.) That God had advanced him to the highest honour and dignity (v. 5): “*His glory is great, far transcending that of all the neighbouring princes, in the salvation thou hast wrought for him and by him.*” The glory which every good man is ambitious of is to see the salvation of the Lord. *Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him*, as a burden which he must bear, as a charge which he must account for. Jesus Christ *received from God the Father honour and glory* (2 Peter 1. 17), the glory which he had with him before the worlds were, ~~1215~~ John 17:5. And on him is laid the charge of universal government and to him all power in heaven and earth is committed.

(6.) That God had given him the satisfaction of being the channel of all bliss to mankind (v. 6): “*Thou hast set him to be blessings for ever*” (so the margin reads it), “*thou hast made him to be a universal blessing to the world, in whom the families of the earth are, and shall be blessed; and so thou hast made him exceedingly glad with the countenance thou hast given to his undertaking and to him in the prosecution of it.*” See how the spirit of prophecy gradually rises here to that which is peculiar to Christ, for none besides is blessed for ever, much less a blessing for ever to that eminency that the expression denotes: and of him it is said that God made him full of joy with his countenance.

In singing this we should rejoice in his joy and triumph in his exaltation.

## ~~1215~~ PSALM 21:7-13

### THE SUBJECT'S HOPE

The psalmist, having taught his people to look back with joy and praise on what God had done for him and them, here teaches them to look forward with faith, and hope, and prayer, upon what God would further do for them: *The king rejoices in God* (v. 1), and therefore we will be thankful;

*the king trusteth in God* (v. 7), therefore will we be encouraged. The joy and confidence of Christ our King is the ground of all our joy and confidence.

**I.** They are confident of the stability of David's kingdom. *Through the mercy of the Most High*, and not through his own merit or strength, *he shall not be moved*. His prosperous state shall not be disturbed; his faith and hope in God, which are the stay of his spirit, shall not be shaken. The mercy of the Most High (the divine goodness, power, and dominion) is enough to secure our happiness, and therefore our trust in that mercy should be enough to silence all our fears. God being at Christ's right hand in his sufferings (**PS** Psalm 16:8) and he being at God's right hand in his glory, we may be sure he shall not, he cannot, be moved, but continues ever.

**II.** They are confident of the destruction of all the impenitent implacable enemies of David's kingdom. The success with which God had blessed David's arms hitherto was an earnest of the rest which God would give him from all his enemies round about, and a type of the total overthrow of all Christ's enemies who would not have him to reign over them. Observe,

**1.** The description of his enemies. They are such as hate him, v. 8. They hated David because God had set him apart for himself, hated Christ because they hated the light; but both were hated without any just cause, and in both God was hated, (**JO** John 15:23, 25.

**2.** The designs of his enemies (v. 11): *They intended evil against thee, and imagined a mischievous device*; they pretended to fight against David only, but their enmity was against God himself. Those that aimed to un-king David aimed, in effect, to un-God Jehovah. What is devised and designed against religion, and against the instruments God raises up to support and advance it, is very evil and mischievous, and God takes it as devised and designed against himself and will so reckon for it.

**3.** The disappointment of them: "They devise what they are *not able to perform*," v. 11. Their malice is impotent, and they *imagine a vain thing*, (**PS** Psalm 2:1.

**4.** The discovery of them (v. 8): "*Thy hand shall find them out*. Though ever so artfully disguised by the pretences and professions of friendship, though mingled with the faithful subjects of this kingdom and hardly to be

distinguished from them, though flying from justice and absconding in their close places, yet thy hand shall find them out wherever they are.” There is no escaping God's avenging eye, no going out of the reach of his hand; rocks and mountains will be no better shelter at last than fig-leaves were at first.

**5.** The destruction of them; it will be an utter destruction (~~4197~~Luke 19:27); they shall be swallowed up and devoured, v. 9. Hell, the portion of all Christ's enemies, is the complete misery both of body and soul. *Their fruit and their seed shall be destroyed*, v. 10. The enemies of God's kingdom, in every age, shall fall under the same doom, and the whole generation of them will at last be rooted out, and all opposing rule, principality, and power, shall be put down. The arrows of God's wrath shall confound them and put them to flight, being levelled at the face of them, v. 12. That will be the lot of daring enemies that face God. The fire of God's wrath will consume them (v. 9); they shall not only be cast into a furnace of fire (~~4130~~Matthew 13:42), but he shall make them themselves as a fiery oven or furnace; they shall be their own tormentors; the reflections and terrors of their own consciences will be their hell. Those that might have had Christ to rule and save them, but rejected him and fought against him, shall find that even the remembrance of that will be enough to make them, to eternity, a fiery oven to themselves: it is the worm that dies not.

**III.** In this confidence they beg of God that he would still appear for his anointed (v. 13), that he would act for him in his own strength, by the immediate operations of his power as Lord of hosts and Father of spirits, making little use of means and instruments. And,

**1.** Hereby he would exalt himself and glorify his own name. “We have but little strength, and are not so active for thee as we should be, which is our shame; Lord, take the work into thy own hands, do it, without us, and it will be thy glory.”

**2.** Hereupon they would exalt him: “*So will we sing, and praise thy power, the more triumphantly.*” The less God has of our service when a deliverance is in the working the more he must have of our praises when it is wrought without us.