

PSALM 20

Prayer for Victory over Enemies

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (12-29-93).
- B. To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.
- C. "A Psalm of David" may mean "A Psalm about David" or "A Psalm written by David."
Since this psalm seems to be written about the king, or a prayer of the people for their king, it may be "about David." It may well be that David was inspired to write a psalm that would instruct the common people how to petition God for their rulers. Coffman quotes from Baigent who says that this psalm is still used ceremonially in prayers for the Queen of England in Anglican services.
- D. This psalm divides naturally into three parts, as indicated by the use of the personal pronouns, "we," "I," and "we." This is a companion Psa. to 21. Psalm 20 is a prayer for victory, and Psa. 21 is thanksgiving for the victory.

TEXT.

- 20:1** May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble!
May the name of the God of Jacob set you *securely* on high!
- 2** May He send you help from the sanctuary
And support you from Zion!
- 3** May He remember all your meal offerings
And find your burnt offering acceptable! Selah.
- 4** May He grant you your heart's desire
And fulfill all your counsel!
- 5** We will sing for joy over your victory,
And in the name of our God we will set up our banners.
May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.
- 6** Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed;
He will answer him from His holy heaven
With the saving strength of His right hand.
- 7** Some *boast* in chariots and some in horses,
But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.
- 8** They have bowed down and fallen,
But we have risen and stood upright.
- 9** Save, O LORD;
May the King answer us in the day we call.

COMMENTS.

- A. **[v1-5]** The "we" in v. 5 shows that this is the voice of the people offering this prayer in the sanctuary on behalf of their king.
- B. **[v1]** "in the day of trouble," reminds us that we all have trouble as we live, whether we serve God or not. Even those in the Lord's kingdom: "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." Acts 14:22 It is generally believed that this psalm was written during the Syrian war which was the occasion of David's adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband.
- C. **[v2]** "help from the sanctuary...,out of Zion" shows the ark of the covenant was in Jerusalem.
- D. **[v3]** "May he remember all of your offerings and accept your burnt sacrifice" could either refer to sacrifices that David had offered in the past or at this time of trouble.
- E. **[v5]** "We will rejoice in your salvation" indicates faith and gratitude.

- F. **[v6]** In the ceremonial use of this psalm, a single speaker, maybe the king himself, expresses his confidence of God's acceptance of the sacrifice and answers the prayers of the people. Whether this is the intent of the psalm or not, it does harmonize with the thought expressed.
- G. **[v7]** "Some trust in chariots,...in horses" is characteristic of men to have confidence in physical force, property or wealth. Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:26-28) and Sennacherib's army surrounding Jerusalem were destroyed (2Kgs. 19:35-37). (This verse expresses David's attitude when he went against Goliath, 1Sam. 17:45.)
- H. **[v8]** "They have bowed down and fallen" describe those who trust in physical strength.
- I. **[v9]** is a prayer of the people for the King and for his concern for their needs.