

PSALM 31

A Psalm of Complaint and of Praise

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Coffman concludes that this psalm was written while David was being pursued by Saul. He titles the paragraphs this way:
1. A Plea for Help, Reinforced by the Psalmist's Attitude (1-8).
 2. The Psalmist's Pitiful Situation (9-13).
 3. Further Cries to God for Help (14-18).
 4. Praise of God's Goodness to His People (19-22).
 5. A Closing Exhortation for All of God Saints to Trust Him (23,24).

THE TEXT.

- In You, O LORD, I have taken refuge;
Let me never be ashamed;
In Your righteousness deliver me.
- 2 Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly;
Be to me a rock of strength,
A stronghold to save me.
- 3 For You are my rock and my fortress;
For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me.
- 4 You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me,
For You are my strength.
- 5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit;
You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth.
- 6 I hate those who regard vain idols,
But I trust in the LORD.
- 7 I will rejoice and be glad in Your lovingkindness,
Because You have seen my affliction;
You have known the troubles of my soul,
- 8 And You have not given me over into the hand of the enemy;
You have set my feet in a large place.
- 9 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress;
My eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body *also*.
- 10 For my life is spent with sorrow
And my years with sighing;
My strength has failed because of my iniquity,
And my body has wasted away.
- 11 Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach,
Especially to my neighbors,
And an object of dread to my acquaintances;
Those who see me in the street flee from me.
- 12 I am forgotten as a dead man, out of mind;
I am like a broken vessel.
- 13 For I have heard the slander of many,
Terror is on every side;
While they took counsel together against me,
They schemed to take away my life.
- 14 But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD,
I say, "You are my God."
- 15 My times are in Your hand;
Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me.
- 16 Make Your face to shine upon Your servant;
Save me in Your lovingkindness.
- 17 Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I call upon You;
Let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silent in Sheol.

- 18 Let the lying lips be mute,
Which speak arrogantly against the righteous
With pride and contempt.
- 19 How great is Your goodness,
Which You have stored up for those who fear You,
Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You,
Before the sons of men!
- 20 You hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the conspiracies of man;
You keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues.
- 21 Blessed be the LORD,
For He has made marvelous His lovingkindness to me in a besieged city.
- 22 As for me, I said in my alarm,
“I am cut off from before Your eyes”;
Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications
When I cried to You.
- 23 O love the LORD, all you His godly ones!
The LORD preserves the faithful
And fully recompenses the proud doer.
- 24 Be strong and let your heart take courage,
All you who hope in the LORD.

COMMENTS.

- A. A Plea for Help, Reinforced by the Psalmist’s Attitude.
[v1-8] This plea for deliverance is characterized by faith and confidence. It is an excellent example of the way we ought to feel when confronted with great dangers or major threats. “Into Your hand I commit my spirit,” v. 8 was the last statement of our Lord on the cross.
“...the enemy” of v. 8 indicates that he is focused on a single source of danger as when Saul was pursuing him.
- B. The Psalmist’s Pitiful Situation.
[v9-13] Verse 8 had referred to “the enemy” and now he speaks in v11 of “all my enemies” and refers to many who find him repulsive. When Saul the king began to pursue David, those who did not know him would find it easy to be against him to please the king. It is easy to find a fugitive repulsive..
“...my eye wastes away with grief,” v. 9, and “my bones waste away,” v.10 seem to indicate complete fatigue and discouragement from running. It may be what we would call “eye weary and bone tired.”
- C. Further Cries to God for Help.
[v14-16] “Make Your face shine upon Your servant” may well be from the blessing that God commanded Aaron and his sons to confer upon the children of Israel: Num. 6:24-26. Several of the psalms seem to quote from this Aaronic blessing: 4:6; 67:1; 80:5,7,19; 119:135.
[v17-18] “Let the wicked be ashamed,” is another example of imprecatory prayer for the wicked to be punished according to their deeds.
- D. Praise of God’s Goodness to His People.
[v19-22] “Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You” is reflected by X, “Great is your reward in heaven,” (Mt. 5:12) and Paul who seems to quote Isa. 64:4. See 1Cor. 2:9.
- E. Exhortation for All God’s Saints to Trust Him.
[v23,24] All we should need to be grateful is to remember how many blessings that God has given us.