

PSALM 41

The Psalmist in Sickness Complains of Enemies and False Friends.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. A Psalm of David. "A Prayer for Deliverance."
- B. Coffman describes the structure of the psalm: "This psalm is remarkably balanced and regular with four stanzas, each having three lines, concluded by (13), which is actually the Doxology marking the end of BOOK I. It is not considered a part of the psalm itself."
- C. The occasion is identified by Halley as an illness of David that gave the opportunity for the rebellion of Absalom.
- D. Ash has three divisions for the psalm:
 - 1. The Gracious Lord (1-3).
 - 2. A Plea for Healing (4-10).
 - 3. God delivers (11-13).

COMMENTS.

- A. The Gracious Lord (41:1-3).

How blessed is he who considers the helpless;

The LORD will deliver him in a day of trouble.

2 The LORD will protect him and keep him alive,

And he shall be called blessed upon the earth;

And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies.

3 The LORD will sustain him upon his sickbed;

In his illness, You restore him to health.

[v1] "Blessed is he who considers the poor..." is essentially the same as "blessed are the merciful" from Mt. 5:7.

[v2,3] Six blessings are listed from the lord:

- 1. "The Lord will preserve him"
- 2. "will keep him alive"
- 3. "he will be blessed on the earth"
- 4. "will not deliver him to the will of his enemies"
- 5. "will strengthen him on his bed of illness"
- 6. "will sustain him on his sickbed"

These seem to be three pairs of Synonymous Parallelisms.

- B. A Plea for Healing (41:4-10).

As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me;

Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."

5 My enemies speak evil against me,

"When will he die, and his name perish?"

6 And when he comes to see *me*, he speaks falsehood;

His heart gathers wickedness to itself;

When he goes outside, he tells it.

7 All who hate me whisper together against me;

Against me they devise my hurt, *saying*,

8 "A wicked thing is poured out upon him,

That when he lies down, he will not rise up again."

9 Even my close friend in whom I trusted,

Who ate my bread,

Has lifted up his heel against me.

10 But You, O LORD, be gracious to me and raise me up,

That I may repay them.

[4-10] David opens this section and closes it, with an appeal for God's grace.

[v4] He confesses sin, the only time that sin is mentioned in the psalm and does not attribute his misfortune to his sin. Ash suggests that the confession of sin may be simply a standard part of a prayer for help. At least in this psalm, it sounds feasible.

[v5-9] describe the treachery of his enemies who visit him to make accusations against him.

[v9] "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." Jesus quoted this in Jn. 13:18 at the last supper before his crucifixion to describe Judas. But there does not seem to be reason to consider the entire psalm Messianic. If this was the occasion of Absalom's rebellion, it would fit the actions of David's close friend Ahithophel, who aided Absalom.

C. God Delivers (41:11-13).

By this I know that You are pleased with me,

Because my enemy does not shout in triumph over me.

12 As for me, You uphold me in my integrity,

And You set me in Your presence forever.

13 Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,

From everlasting to everlasting.

Amen and Amen.

[v11] "By this I know that you are well pleased w/me, because my enemy does not triumph over me." It is a great blessing to be able to see the blessings that God gives us.

[v13] This same type of doxology is found at the end of other sections. See Psa. 72:18-20; 89:52; 106:48. The last psalm seems like a doxology of praise in its entirety.