

PSALM 55

Prayer for the Destruction of the Treacherous.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (9-28-94).
- B. To the Chief Musician. W/stringed instruments. A Contemplation of David.
- C. "Prayer in the Face of a Wicked Conspiracy Involving A Formally Trusted Friend"
- D. This psalm:
 1. This psalm seems to fit completely the time of the rebellion of Absalom and Ahithophel (2Sam. 15:30-37).
 2. The betrayal of David by Ahithophel is often used to refer to Judas' betrayal of Christ.
 3. Another friend and adviser of David's, Hushai (HU-shi), went back to Absalom and countered the good advice of Ahithophel (2Sam. 16:20-17:23).
- E. Coffman divides the psalm into seven small units:
 1. David's Cry to God for the Shameful Situation (v1-5).
 2. David's Yearning to Get Away From It All (v6-8).
 3. Plea for God to Destroy the Plans of the Wicked (v9-11).
 4. Parenthetical Mention of a Treacherous Friend (v12-14).
 5. The Prayer Resumed (v15-19).
 6. A Final Parenthesis Regarding the Traitor (v20,21).
 7. Conclusion (v22,23).

THE TEXT.

- 55:1** Give ear to my prayer, O God;
And do not hide Yourself from my supplication.
- 2** Give heed to me and answer me;
I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted,
- 3** Because of the voice of the enemy,
Because of the pressure of the wicked;
For they bring down trouble upon me
And in anger they bear a grudge against me.
- 4** My heart is in anguish within me,
And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
- 5** Fear and trembling come upon me,
And horror has overwhelmed me.
- 6** I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.
- 7** "Behold, I would wander far away,
I would lodge in the wilderness. Selah.
- 8** "I would hasten to my place of refuge
From the stormy wind *and* tempest."
- 9** Confuse, O Lord, divide their tongues,
For I have seen violence and strife in the city.
- 10** Day and night they go around her upon her walls,
And iniquity and mischief are in her midst.
- 11** Destruction is in her midst;
Oppression and deceit do not depart from her streets.
- 12** For it is not an enemy who reproaches me,
Then I could bear *it*;
Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me,
Then I could hide myself from him.
- 13** But it is you, a man my equal,
My companion and my familiar friend;
- 14** We who had sweet fellowship together
Walked in the house of God in the throng.

- 15 Let death come deceitfully upon them;
 Let them go down alive to Sheol,
 For evil is in their dwelling, in their midst.
- 16 As for me, I shall call upon God,
 And the LORD will save me.
- 17 Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur,
 And He will hear my voice.
- 18 He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle *which is* against me,
 For they are many *who strive* with me.
- 19 God will hear and answer them--
 Even the one who sits enthroned from of old-- Selah.
 With whom there is no change,
 And who do not fear God.
- 20 He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him;
 He has violated his covenant.
- 21 His speech was smoother than butter,
 But his heart was war;
 His words were softer than oil,
 Yet they were drawn swords.
- 22 Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you;
 He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.
- 23 But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction;
 Men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days.
 But I will trust in You.

COMMENTS.

- A. David's Cry for the Shameful Situation (55:1-5).
 [v1] "Give ear to my prayer, O God..." We should be reminded that God does hear our prayers, and wants us to express our needs.
 [v2] "...I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily..." He is greatly alarmed and distraught, and gives the reason.
 [v3] "Because of the voice of the enemy...the oppression of the wicked..." The enemy is mentioned in both the singular and the plural, which is often the case: with many in opposition, but a leader symbolizes them all.
 [v4] "...the terrors of death have fallen on me...fearfulness and trembling...horror has overwhelmed me." These words graphically describe mortal terror such as David must have felt for himself and all his faithful, when Absalom rebelled and took his kingdom.
- B. David's Yearning to Get Away from it All (55:6-8).
 [v6] "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest." We probably have all faced some situation when we would have liked to have left our responsibilities or from an unpleasant situation, even if not a life-threatening danger. Many do run hide from responsibility. Some w/drugs such as alcohol or narcotics, while some leave their families and work, to go to some other part of the country. David left Jerusalem, but prayed to God for help while he regrouped his supporters and fought for his kingdom, winning it back. Fleeing responsibility never restores what was endangered.
- C. Plea for God to Destroy the Plans of the Wicked (55:9-11).
 [v9] "Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues..." This was David's prayer when he learned that his close friend and personal advisor had joined Absalom in the rebellion (2Sam. 15:31). The answer to David's prayer was when Hushai was able to get Absalom to reject the excellent advice of Ahithophel (2Sam. 17:14).
- D. Paraphrased Mention of a Treacherous Friend (55:12-14).
 [v12] "For it is not an enemy....Nor is it one who hates me..." The greatest hurt seems to be the disappointment of betrayal by a close and dear friend. David gives five characteristics of his betrayer (13,14):
1. "a man my equal" ("equally valued with myself") Keil-Delitzsch

2. "my companion" ("one attached or devoted to anyone")
 3. "my acquaintance" ("an intimate acquaintance")
 4. "we took sweet counsel together" ("their confidential private intercourse")
 5. "and walked to the house of God in the throng." ("the unrestrained manifestation of it in public")
- E. The Prayer Resumed (55:15-19).
[v15] "Let death seize them..." David prays that these who live in sin receive punishment.
[v16-19] "As for me, I will call upon God..." He contrasts his attitude of thanksgiving and dependence on God with that of the sinners who are rebelling against him and seeking his life. David is certain that "God will hear..."
- F. A Final Parenthesis Regarding the Traitor (55:20,21).
The traitor deliberately betrayed those who "were at peace with him..." and was smooth and deceitful with his words.
- G. The Conclusion (55:22,23).
[v22] "Cast your burden on the lord, and He shall sustain you..." We should never lose our faith in God's righteous judgment in blessing the righteous.
[v23] We can have equal confidence that God will punish the wicked and the unfaithful among His own people.