

PSALM 124

Praise for Rescue from Enemies.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (11-20-96).
- B. A Song of Ascents. Of David. "Praising God for Rescue of Israel From Enemies."
- C. Coffman quotes the following by Derek Kinder as the best "guess" for the setting of this psalm:
"As a Psalm of David, this psalm gives us rare insight into the early peril of his kingdom, particularly from the Philistines, who had thought to see the last of Israel when they shattered the kingdom of Saul. In 2 Samuel 5:17-25 is shown how serious the threat was, and how little confidence David placed in his own power to survive it. This (the experience with the Philistines) was no mere raid to gain territory; it was meant to put an end to David and the hope of Israel."
(Derek Kinder, *PSALMS*, Vol. II. London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973, p. 273)
- D. It seems that the psalm divides into two logical parts:
 1. The danger is described (124:1-5).
 2. God is praised for the deliverance (124:6-8).

THE TEXT.

- 124:1** "Had it not been the LORD who was on our side,"
Let Israel now say,
2 "Had it not been the LORD who was on our side
When men rose up against us,
3 Then they would have swallowed us alive,
When their anger was kindled against us;
4 Then the waters would have engulfed us,
The stream would have swept over our soul;
5 Then the raging waters would have swept over our soul."
6 Blessed be the LORD,
Who has not given us to be torn by their teeth.
7 Our soul has escaped as a bird out of the snare of the trapper;
The snare is broken and we have escaped.
8 Our help is in the name of the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.

COMMENTS.

- A. The Danger is Described.
[v1,2] "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side..." David admonishes the people to realize that they did not deliver themselves. The credit was the Lord's.
"...when MEN rose up against us..." The danger was a great army, not natural disasters. The army is further described in verses 3-5.
[v3-5] "Then they would have swallowed us alive... Then the waters would have overwhelmed us... Then the swollen waters would have gone over our soul." The figure of an army as an overwhelming flood is used several times in the Scriptures. Isaiah used the figure to describe the ravaging armies of the Assyrians as the overflowing Euphrates river at flood stage (see Isa. 8:5-8).
These verses describe the danger and ascribe to the Lord their deliverance.
- B. God is Praised for the Deliverance.
[v6,7] "Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth... as a bird from the snare of the fowlers..." He has changed the metaphor from comparing the army to a flood of waters, to a pack of wild beasts which tears with their teeth, or to a hunter who snares birds with nets. But it is the Lord who has saved them from the great danger, and they are to praise Him for their deliverance.