

Psalm 13

Title: Prayer for Help with Enemies

Author and Date: David

Key Verse: Psalm 13:3

Outline

- A. The protest/complaint: exasperation, repeated questions (verses 1-2).
- B. The prayer/call: entreaty, urgent petitions (verses 3-4).
- C. The praise/comfort: exaltation, confident songs (verses 5-6).

Notes

Title: See the notes on Psalm 3 and 4. David may have written this psalm when he was fleeing from Saul (see 1 Sam. 26:20).

Verse 1: For “hide thy face” see also Psalm 27:9; 30:7; 44:24; 69:17; 88:14; 102:2; and 143:7.

Verses 1-2: “How long?” is a question frequently asked in the psalms and in times of trial and trouble (see Psa. 6:3; 35:17; 74:10; 79:5; 80:4; 82:2; 89:46; 90:13; and 94:3). When the righteous suffer, they might believe that God has forgotten them or abandoned them. The psalmist moved from protest (verses 1-2), to prayer (verses 3-4), and from prayer, to praise (verses 5-6).

Verse 3: The psalmist makes this request of the Lord: “lighten my eyes” (KJV, ASV). This may be a request for physical healing from illness. The psalmist did not want to die at the hands of his enemies because it would give them an opportunity to rejoice, and, thereby dishonor God (see Num. 14:15-16).

Verse 4: “When I am moved” (ASV, KJV) or “shaken” (NASV, ESV), is a reference to the “fall” (NIV) or “downfall” (NLT) of the psalmist as he is overcome by his enemies and adversaries. The psalmist does not want to be “upended” (NET Bible) by his enemies.

Verse 5: In times of trouble, trust (see Job 13:15).

Questions

1. What question does the psalmist ask four times (verses 1-2)?

2. What occasion caused the psalmist to question the Lord (verse 2)?

3. What request does the psalmist ask of the Lord and why (verse 3)?
4. What concern does the psalmist have regarding his enemies and adversaries (verse 4)?
5. What has the psalmist trusted in and what has he rejoiced in (verse 5)?
6. What does the psalmist promise to do and why (verse 6)?

Applications for Today

1. When the righteous suffer, they often ask “How long?” (verses 1-2). What answer did the Lord give to suffering Christians who asked this question (Rev. 6:9-11)?
2. The Lord will always help us in time, but it may not be *when* we want him to help us. The Lord knows “how long” our trials should last because he knows exactly what we need to grow better and stronger (verses 1-2). What did James and Peter say about the benefit of trials (Jas. 1:2-4, 12; 1 Pet. 1:6-8)?
3. Suffering often causes sorrow (verse 2). What did Jesus do when suffering caused him sorrow (Mt. 26:38-39)?
4. When troubles, trials, and tribulations come, pray to God (verse 3), trust in God (verse 5), and praise God (verse 6). What did Paul do when he experienced tribulations and trials (Acts 14:22; 20:19)? What did Paul say to do in tribulations (Rom. 5:3; Eph. 3:13)? What did Peter say to do in trials (1 Pet. 1:6)?
5. Prayer and trust leads to rejoicing. Rejoice in the Lord’s salvation (verse 5). What did Mary, the shepherds, and Simeon do at the birth of Jesus (Lk. 1:47; 2:20; and 2:28)? What did Paul prescribe (Phil. 4:4-6)?