

Psalm 4

Title: An Evening Prayer of Trust in God

Author and Date: David

Key Verse: Psalm 4:8

Outline

- A. The petitions of the psalmist: he asked (verse 1).
- B. The instructions of the psalmist: he believed (verses 2-5).
- C. The blessings of the psalmist: he received (verses 6-8).

Notes

Title: “For the Chief Musician; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.” The “Chief Musician” was probably the choir leader of the temple in David’s day (see 1 Chron. 25:1-8). The KJV has “Neginoth” instead of “string instruments”. This obscure term could refer to a type of song, the name of an instrument, or a musical notation meaning to play with stringed instruments such as a lyre, harp, etc. (see also Psa. 6, 54, 55, 67, 76, and Hab. 3:19).

Verse 1: The words “Thou hast enlarged me” (KJV) or “set me at large” (ASV), mean that God had given the psalmist freedom or “relief” from his distress (NASV, NIV, ESV, etc.)

Verse 2: For the word “Selah” here and at the end of verse 4, see the notes on Psalm 3:2.

Verse 4: These words are addressed to the psalmist’s enemies (v.2). “Stand in awe” is translated “Be angry” in the Septuagint (LXX). The Heb. word *rigzu*, from *ragaz*, means to “be agitated, quiver, or quake;” “be excited or perturbed.” “Tremble” is a good, literal translation (NIV, NASV, etc.). The agitation can be caused by fear, anger, grief, or something else. We are not told which cause is meant here, but agitated by fear fits the context well. The psalmist’s enemies should fear the Lord and sin not. Many people reverse this counsel and would sin, but not fear. Therefore, “be angry” (LXX, Latin Vulgate, NKJV, ESV, etc.) and “stand in awe” (KJV, ASV) are more interpretations, than translations. The LXX translation may be basis of Paul’s use (not a direct quote) of this verse in Ephesians 4:26. It expressed an idea that he, through the H.S., wanted to use.

Verse 6: The “many” here could be the “sons of men” (verse 2) or adversaries. Compare this mocking question with the mocking statement in Psalm 3:2. “Many” even today mock with their questions and comments in order to undermine the faith of the godly.

Verse 7: “Grain ... and new wine” are symbols of a prosperous harvest which make the farmer happy.

Verse 8: Psalm 4 is most likely an evening prayer of trust by David making this psalm the companion to Psalm 3 (a morning prayer of trust).

Questions

1. What does the psalmist request of God (verse 1)?
2. How does the psalmist describe the “sons of men” (verse 2)?
3. What things does the psalmist instruct the “sons of men” to do (verses 3-5)?
4. What do “many” ask the psalmist (verse 6)?
5. What things has Jehovah done for the psalmist (verse 6-8)?

Applications for Today

1. Go to God in prayer in times of distress (verse 1). What do Paul (Phil. 4:4-6) and Peter (1 Pet. 5:7) remind Christians to do in their prayers?
2. God hears the prayers of the godly (verses 1 and 3). What does Jesus tell us about his Father (Mt. 7:7-12; Jn. 15:16)? How are we to ask according to John (1 John 5:14)?
3. God is the “God of my righteous” because he is righteous himself and he has a plan to make mankind righteous through faith in Jesus Christ (verse 1). What role does Jesus have in God’s plan to make mankind righteous (Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 1:30)?
4. You seek after what you love, so, what do you love (verse 2)? What does Jesus say about one’s heart and treasure (Mt. 6:19-20)?

5. The godly are “set apart” unto the Lord (verse 3). How are Christians to live in this present world (2 Tim. 2:19; Tit. 2:14)?

6. The “sons of men” should turn away from sin and turn to the Lord in trust (verses 4-5). What does Paul say the Thessalonians did in their conversion (1 Thess. 1:9-10)?

7. Offer sacrifices to the Lord with trust (verse 5). What kind of sacrifices do Christians offer to God (Heb. 12:28; 13:15-16)? What must suffering Christians do with their souls (1 Pet. 4:19)?

8. Some people are constant complainers and pessimists, saying: “Who will show us any good”? (verse 6). What must Christians always avoid (Phil. 2:14)?

9. The godly will experience blessings from the Lord even in times of distress: gladness, peace, and safety (verses 7-8). What do suffering Christians receive from God according to Paul (Rom. 8:35-39; Phil. 4:4-7)? What do suffering Christians receive from God according to Peter (1 Pet. 1:8)?

10. Pray before going to bed (verse 8). How often are Christians to pray (1 Thess. 5:17-18)?

11. How you lie down tonight will depend upon how you live today and it may determine how you live tomorrow (verse 8). What will happen when one walks by God’s wisdom in the day (Prov. 3:21-24)?