

Psalm 41

Title: The Supplication of a Sick, Sinful, and Suffering Soul

Author and Date: David

Key Verses: Psalm 41:1, 4, 10

Type: Thanksgiving / Lament

Outline

- A. God's favor: the considerate man (verses 1-3).
- B. God's forgiveness: the contrite man (verses 4-9).
- C. God's faithfulness: the confident man (verses 10-12).
- D. Closing doxology (verse 13).

Notes

Title: "For the Chief Musician." See the notes on Psalm 4. "A Psalm of David." See the notes on Psalm 3.

Summary: Psalm 41 is a thanksgiving / lament psalm and it concludes "Book I" of the psalms. The psalmist laments his problems (sickness, sin, and suffering) and he prays to the Lord for healing and for help. This psalm opens with a description of the various blessings of the man who actively considers the poor in order to help them (verses 1-3). This man also experiences his own sin and suffering at the hands of his enemies (verses 4-9). The psalmist concludes with a prayer for deliverance (verses 10-12) and a closing doxology (verse 13). The psalmist is experiencing some sickness (verse 3 and 8) and he is rejected by his "own familiar friend" (verse 9). This occasion fits the conspiracy of Absalom against David (2 Sam. 15:12; 16:20-17:4; see also Psalm 38-40).

Verse 1: The "poor" are those who are "weak" (NIV) and "helpless" (NASV) (see Psa. 40:17). For "blessed is he", see the notes on Psalm 40:4.

Verses 5-8: Note that these two-faced enemies are visiting a *sick* man with malicious intent – how terrible! They want his "name" (both the psalmist and his descendents) to perish. "An evil disease" (KJV) in verse 8 is literally, "a thing of Belial."

Verse 9: A "familiar friend" is literally, "the man of my peace." If the psalmist is David, he may have had in mind his friend, Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:12; 17:1ff; compare with Psa. 55:13-14). This verse is quoted by Jesus in John 13:18 and applied to Judas who would betray him. Judas is the "familiar friend" (Mt. 26:23; Mk. 14:18; Lk. 22:21). To

“lift up the heel” (Heb. made great a heel) against someone is to kick, trip, or trample them. It means to do them some kind of hurt or violence.

Verse 10: The psalmist’s desire, “That I may requite them” (KJV), appears to be dishonorable, but we are not told the exact method of his requital (repayment). He may have simply wanted his recovery to be requital (his healing would prove them wrong), or he may have wanted to be healed so that he could pronounce God’s judgment upon them.

Verse 13: This verse contains a closing doxology. The double “Amen and Amen” means “let it be so” or “so it is.” It shows a strong endorsement for what has been said in this psalm and in the first 40 psalms. These words may have been said by the entire congregation that gathered for worship in the temple. Compare this doxology with the ones found in Psalm 72:18-19; 89:52; and 106:48. For praise doxologies found elsewhere, see 1 Kings 1:48, Nehemiah 9:5, and Luke 1:68.

Questions

1. What will the Lord do for the man who considers the poor (verses 1-3)?
2. What request does the psalmist have and what does he confess (verse 4)?
3. Who speaks evil of the psalmist and what question do they ask (verse 5)?
4. What do the psalmist’s enemies speak (verse 6)?
5. What do the psalmist’s enemies say and do (verse 7)?
6. What do the psalmist’s enemies say about him (verse 8)?
7. Who lifted up his heel against the psalmist (verse 9)?
8. What does the psalmist request of the Lord and why (verse 10)?

9. How does the psalmist know that the Lord delights in him (verse 11)?

10. What does the Lord do for the psalmist (verse 12)?

11. Who is blessed (verse 13)?

Applications for Today

1. We need to have a caring, considerate, and compassionate attitude toward the poor if we want to be blessed by the Lord (verses 1-3). Who were the OT judges supposed to care for (Psa. 82:3-4)? Who were the Israelites to pity (Deut. 15:11; Prov. 14:20-21)? Who did Jesus say are blessed (Mt. 5:7)? Who did Paul remember (Acts 20:35; Gal. 2:10; 6:10)? What constitutes “pure and undefiled religion” (Jas. 1:27)?
2. We need God’s mercy when we sin (verse 4). What saves us from sin according to Paul in Ephesians 2:4-9 and Titus 3:4-7?
3. Enemies will conspire against us when we try to live right and some of them will even be those who are close to us (verses 5-9). Who caused problems for Job (Job 19:14, 19), for Jeremiah (Jer. 20:10), for Jesus (Jn. 13:18), and for Paul (2 Cor. 11:26)? Where can a man’s foes come from (Mic. 7:5; Mt. 10:36)?
4. We need to live with confidence because God is for us and against our enemies (verses 10-12). Who is on our side in times of trial and tribulation (Rom. 8:31-39)?
5. It is important to maintain our integrity even in times of sickness, sin, or suffering (verse 12). What does trouble, trial, and tribulation produce in a faithful person (Rom. 5:3-4)?

6. The Lord God is to be blessed for ever (verse 13). What is the Lord God blessed for in the following scriptures: Luke 1:68; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; and 1 Peter 1:3?