

Psalm 21 – The Joy of Victory and the Justice of God

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Psalm 21 is a companion to Psalm 20. While Psalm 20 is a prayer before battle, Psalm 21 is a song of thanksgiving after victory. David, as king, reflects on how God answered his prayers, honored his faith, and gave him triumph over his enemies. But this psalm is more than historical reflection—it is prophetic, personal, and praise-filled.

The king rejoices, the people join him in celebration, and God is magnified as the source of salvation, stability, and strength.

Psalm 21:1–2 (NKJV)

*“The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD;
And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!
You have given him his heart’s desire,
And have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah”*

David begins by expressing deep gratitude. His joy is not in himself, his strategies, or his strength—but in God’s strength and salvation. Every victory, every answered prayer, is credited to the Lord.

- **“His heart’s desire”** – The victories and blessings David experienced were not just wishes granted—they reflected alignment with God’s purposes.
- **“Not withheld the request of his lips”** – God responds to prayer that flows from an upright heart (cf. Psalm 37:4). David isn’t rejoicing in selfish gain, but in divine favor.

Personal Application:

When God answers your prayers, do you stop and rejoice? Or do you move on to the next request? Let Psalm 21 remind you to find your joy not just in the answer, but in the One who answers.

Psalm 21:3–5 (NKJV)

*“For You meet him with the blessings of goodness;
You set a crown of pure gold upon his head.
He asked life from You, and You gave it to him—
Length of days forever and ever.
His glory is great in Your salvation;
Honor and majesty You have placed upon him.”*

David recounts God’s generosity:

- **“Blessings of goodness”** – These are not earned; they are expressions of divine favor.
- **“A crown of pure gold”** – Likely referring to his anointing and victory as king, but also symbolic of honor bestowed by God, not man.

- **“Length of days forever and ever”** – In David’s life, this meant long reign and legacy. Prophetically, it speaks of the Messiah, whose kingdom is everlasting (see Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:33).
- **“Glory...honor...majesty”** – These belong to God alone, yet He shares them with those He appoints and anoints.

Personal Application:

Everything good in your life—every blessing, every position, every answered prayer—is from God. Rejoice in Him, and remember: your legacy is not in your accomplishments, but in how God’s glory is reflected through your life.

Psalm 21:6–7 (NKJV)

*“For You have made him most blessed forever;
You have made him exceedingly glad with Your presence.
For the king trusts in the LORD,
And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.”*

David declares his source of joy and stability:

- **“Exceedingly glad with Your presence”** – His gladness isn’t merely in what God gives, but in God Himself.
- **“Trusts in the LORD...he shall not be moved”** – Trust anchors the soul. David wasn’t moved by war, betrayal, or hardship because his confidence was in the unchanging mercy of God.

Personal Application:

Ask yourself: Do I rejoice more in God’s gifts or in God’s presence? The world can strip away possessions and accolades, but no one can take away the joy of knowing God and trusting in His steadfast mercy.

Psalm 21:8–12 (NKJV)

*“Your hand will find all Your enemies;
Your right hand will find those who hate You.
You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger;
The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath,
And the fire shall devour them.
Their offspring You shall destroy from the earth,
And their descendants from among the sons of men.
For they intended evil against You;
They devised a plot which they are not able to perform.
Therefore You will make them turn their back;
You will make ready Your arrows on Your string toward their faces.”*

These verses shift the focus from David's deliverance to God's judgment on the wicked. This is not personal vengeance—this is divine justice.

- **“Your hand will find”** – God's judgment is inescapable. Those who oppose Him will be exposed and dealt with.
- **“Fiery oven...wrath...fire”** – These are symbols of complete and consuming judgment. This is not hyperbole—it's a warning.
- **“They intended evil...devised a plot”** – God's enemies always try to subvert His plans, but they will not succeed. Their schemes fall flat.
- **“You will make them turn their back”** – A picture of total defeat. God will not be mocked or resisted forever.

Personal Application:

Do not envy the wicked. Their prosperity is temporary, and their plans cannot stand against the purposes of God. Rest in the reality that justice belongs to the Lord. He will right every wrong in His perfect time.

Psalm 21:13 (NKJV)

*“Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength!
We will sing and praise Your power.”*

The psalm ends not with self-congratulation, but with worship. David and the people recognize that every victory, every answered prayer, and every act of justice is a reason to exalt the Lord.

- **“In Your own strength”** – Not ours. God's strength is what lifts us, saves us, and sustains us.
- **“We will sing and praise Your power”** – Praise is the only appropriate response to a God who saves and reigns in righteousness.

Personal Application:

Let your victories point others to God. Don't just celebrate what happened—praise the One who made it happen. Your life is meant to be a song that exalts God's power and mercy.

Conclusion: A Psalm of Praise for a Faithful King and a Faithful God

Psalm 21 reminds us that:

- God answers prayer (vv. 1–2)
- God blesses abundantly (vv. 3–5)
- God sustains the trusting (vv. 6–7)
- God judges the wicked (vv. 8–12)
- God deserves our highest praise (v. 13)

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Ultimately, while this psalm speaks of David, it points forward to the greater King—Jesus Christ, who reigns forever and will bring perfect justice at His return.

*“Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength!
We will sing and praise Your power.”*

May that be the song of every believer—those who find their joy, strength, and hope not in earthly victories, but in the eternal faithfulness of the Lord.