Psalm 21

Psalm 21 (CSB)

Psalm 21

THE KING'S VICTORY

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

1 LORD, the king finds joy in your strength.
How greatly he rejoices in your victory!
2 You have given him his heart's desire
and have not denied the request of his lips.

Selah

3 For you meet him with rich blessings;
you place a crown of pure gold on his head.
4 He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—
length of days forever and ever.
5 His glory is great through your victory;
you confer majesty and splendor on him.
6 You give him blessings forever;
you cheer him with joy in your presence.
7 For the king relies on the LORD;
through the faithful love of the Most High
he is not shaken.
8 Your hand will capture all your enemies;
your right hand will seize those who hate you.
9 You will make them burn

like a fiery furnace when you appear;

the LORD will engulf them in his wrath,

and fire will devour them.

10 You will wipe their progeny from the earth

and their offspring from the human race.

11 Though they intend to harm you

and devise a wicked plan, they will not prevail.

12 Instead, you will put them to flight

when you ready your bowstrings to shoot at them.

13 Be exalted, LORD, in your strength;

we will sing and praise your might.

Songs that Tell a Story

A. I think all of us love a good story.

1. We are born with a love for stories.

2. We read stories to little kids.

3. We watch movies that tell stories, read fiction and non-fiction books that tell us stories.

B. There is something powerful about a story set to music.

1. When a song tells a story, it takes us on a journey that lasts 3-4 minutes.

2. But there are exceptions.

    a. Don McClean's American Pie, which took 8 minutes 42 seconds and took both sides of the original 45 record.

    b. Classical music is built different.

    c. Many pieces last an hour or more, featuring several movements, each telling a different part of a story set to music. Gustav Mahler's Symphony No 3 is about 1 ½ hours.

3. The longest song ever is an organ piece written by John Cage called "As Slow as Possible." It started in 2001 and is designed to play until 2640, or 639 years.

4. Yet, I can't help but think that God has been telling a story that was written before the beginning of time.

a. We know how the story ends, but He is still reading it.

b. He is still singing the song, and we are in the final movements.

C. It might help us to think of Psalms 20 and 21 as the opening movements of the Greatest Story ever told.

1. Movement 1, The God who hears, may He answer our cries on the day of trouble.

2. Movement 2, The God who is victorious in battle.

3. Psalm 20 began and ended with the hopeful expression, "may he hear us when we call."

4. Psalm 21 begins and ends with a declaration, "We have joy in the Lord's strength."

5. "Psalm 21 is a celebration of the answered prayers of Ps 20."[1]

6. When your story begins and ends with the Lord's Strength, whatever happens in the middle are just details.

When reading the Psalms, notice what is repeated.

A. Psalm 20 it was: May…May the Lord…May He

B. Psalm 21, one of the words on repeat is "Will".

Psalm 21:8–13 (CSB)

8 Your hand **will capture** all your enemies;

your right hand **will seize** those who hate you.

9 You **will make** them burn

like a fiery furnace when you appear;

[1] James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, vol. 1, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 271.

the LORD **will engulf** them in his wrath,

and fire **will devour** them.

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and devise a wicked plan, **they will not prevail.**

12 Instead, you **will put them** to flight

when you ready your bowstrings to shoot at them.

13 Be exalted, LORD, in your strength;

we will sing and praise your might.

One of the first things I notice about Psalm 21 is

A Song of Waiting

A. When we say we will do something, that implies something in the future or in process.

1. I will file my taxes,
2. I will take out the trash,
3. I will make a decision.

B. The word "will" means there is a certainty of action and a gap in time.

1. The verb used here is imperfect, meaning it isn't complete.
2. It's in process…so I am waiting.
3. The victory is won, but the battle is still going.
4. The Lord will:
    a. Deliver me,
    b. Save
    c. rescue

d. Judge our enemies.

e. Punish.

f. Win

5. But we wait.

C. Psalm 21 tells of a great victory.

1. The victory is assured and in process.

2. The victory is “already, but not yet.”

D. Isn’t it amazing how you can live in victory and still feel like you are waiting?

1. As Christians, we have victory in Jesus, and we are still waiting to see His victory in areas of our lives.

2. It’s like leaving the house on the first day of vacation.

3. You are technically on vacation, but for many of us, it doesn’t feel like vacation until you get to your destination.

a. Many of us are living in victory, but it might not feel like one because we haven't reached our destination.

b. The Lord WILL….The victory is assured, but the battle is ongoing.

4. David had experienced many victories on the battlefield, yet he was writing about a victory that was still far off.

Who is David singing about?

A. David writes this song and gives it to the choir director.

1. The choir director tells his musicians and singers, all professionals, to sing about the king’s victory.

2. Tell the story of how the enemy attacked.

3. Tell the story of some dark days, tense meetings, hard decisions, and sleepless nights.

4. Tell the story of how, through it all, God will rescue and save us.

B. Who is David singing about?

1. The first verses sound like it is sung by David.

1 LORD, the king finds joy in your strength.

How greatly he rejoices in your victory!

2 You have given him his heart's desire

and have not denied the request of his lips.

2. This could easily relate to David.

3. And when sung with Psalm 20, we see that God did, indeed, give him his heart's desire.

a. I like verse 2 where we read the desire of the heart is expressed by the prayers of our lips.

b. Sometimes, we need to pray and sing the desires of our hearts.

c. We need to verbalize what is happening on the inside.

C. But then it feels like the focus or subject of the Psalm shifts.

3 For you meet him with rich blessings;

you place a crown of pure gold on his head.

4 He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—

length of days forever and ever.

5 His glory is great through your victory;

you confer majesty and splendor on him.

6 You give him blessings forever;

you cheer him with joy in your presence.

7 For the king relies on the LORD;

through the faithful love of the Most High

he is not shaken.

D. This Psalm is certainly about David.

1. It's possible that this song was sung at every coronation after David.

2. As the new king was being crowned, the people might have been singing these words about their new king.

David sang it first; Jesus sang it best.

A. The fulfillment is found in the future king, Jesus.

1. The one who was called "The Son of David."

2. It is Jesus who fulfills this Psalm better than any human king.

B. Verse 3: The crown of pure gold.

1. Jesus was given a crown of thorns in mockery by the Romans.

2. But when Jesus ascended to Heaven, he was given a crown of the purest gold.

C. Jesus asked for life.

1. He prayed, "Father, let this cup pass from me…"

2. This is a prayer that not only recognizes the pain and suffering to come, but the promise of Resurrection.

3. Jesus knew that His trials didn't end in death but ended in resurrection and the crowning with glory.

D. David prophesied this in verse 5-6

5 His glory is great through your victory;

you confer majesty and splendor on him.

6 You give him blessings forever;

you cheer him with joy in your presence.

1. Jesus glorified the Father during the trials and tribulations.

2. When God raised Jesus from the dead, majesty and splendor were lavished upon him.

3. Notice what Hebrews says:

Hebrews 2:5–9 (CSB)

[5] For he has not subjected to angels the world to come that we are talking about. [6] But someone somewhere has testified:

What is man that you remember him,

or the son of man that you care for him?

[7] **You made him lower than the angels**

for a short time;

you crowned him with glory and honor

[8] **and subjected everything under his feet.**

For in **subjecting everything** to him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. As it is, we do not yet see **everything subjected** to him. [9] But we do see Jesus—**made lower than the angels for a short time** so that by God's grace he might taste death for everyone—**crowned with glory and honor** because he suffered death.

a. As it is, we do not yet see everything subjected to him.

1. We may not see the victory, yet. But we will.

2. In the middle, in the struggle, in the suffering, in the darkest of nights, we have this confidence: God will give us the victory, God will defeat our enemies, God will deliver me. We WILL SEE THE VICTORY.

b. Even when I can't see the end, WE DO SEE JESUS!

E. David wrote, "They intend harm…"

1. Harm is an important word for our time.

2. There is a lot of pain in our world, and as a society, we are probably doing a better job of recognizing that than ever before.

a. The difference between hurt and harm is mostly that harm is almost always on purpose.

b. I can hurt you, and it be accidental.

c. But most definitions of harm involve an intentional aspect.[2]

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[2] Harm is physical injury to a person or an animal which is usually caused on purpose. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/harm

3. David foresaw a group of people wanting to harm the king.

4. But no one experienced harm like Jesus did!

a. They intended to harm Jesus, and it certainly looked like harm, felt like harm, and sounded like harm.

b. The enemy devised a wicked plan, but it didn't prevail.

F. Sometimes we must remember that the story isn't over.

12 Instead, you **will put them** to flight

when you ready your bowstrings to shoot at them.

1. Even though the disciples were the first to run in flight, it was the soldiers guarding the tomb that ran away in fear.

2. If you stop too soon, if you don't keep pushing through, it sure seems like the wicked win.

3. But that isn't how it ends.

Not only is Psalm 21 a song of waiting, it is also:

A Song of Victory and Power

A. The theme of power runs throughout the psalm in the nouns:

1. "help," "blessing," "life," "hand," "right hand," "glory," "splendor," "majesty," "fire," "bows," and "power."[3]

2. All of these nouns are words of victory and power.

3. Why is this so important?

B. Because of what comes next.

1. If you've read ahead, you know the song that comes up next.

2. Psalm 22 is the song of the Cross.

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[3] Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 204.

a. Upon Jesus' lips are the opening lines:

b. My God, My God why have you forsaken me?

C. Psalm 22 is raw and tells the story of incredible suffering, pain, and abandonment.

1. It describes life our lives pretty well:

a. One moment we are celebrating victory, and

b. the next moment we feel abandoned.

2. The album, the playlist, begins with God who hears our cries.

a. The second song tells of a God who is victorious.

b. The third song tells of what it feels like in the darkest moments and days.

D. David knew the struggle.

1. David knew what it was like to feel heard by God.

2. David knew what it was like to experience the victory of God.

3. David knew what it was like to feel like God had abandoned and forgotten you.

David sang it first, Jesus sang it best, the Church sings it still.

A. This Psalm has been sung by the Church since the beginning. It has been prayed

…during the earliest hours of Sunday morning, the Resurrection day of her Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, traditionally it was chanted during the night's vigil between Saturday and Sunday, the weekly nocturnal watch commemorative of the Passover, wherein God's Church celebrates her freedom from the bondage of sin, death, and hell." [4]

1. In many churches around the world, they recite Psalm 21 during the midnight hours.

2. It is read in the hours when the darkness is at its peak.

3. In the hours of waiting, before the sun rises and the empty tomb is revealed, the church sings this song.

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[4] Patrick Henry Reardon, *Christ in the Psalms* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2000), 39.

4. God WILL BE VICTORIOUS. He WILL GIVE VICTORY. HE WILL RISE.

B. Imagine the Church singing this to Jesus!

Psalm 21 (NLT)

Psalm 21

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

[1] How the king rejoices in your strength, O LORD!
He shouts with joy because you give him victory.
[2] For you have given him his heart's desire;
you have withheld nothing he requested.
Interlude
[3] You welcomed him back with success and prosperity.
You placed a crown of finest gold on his head.
[4] He asked you to preserve his life,
and you granted his request.
The days of his life stretch on forever.
[5] Your victory brings him great honor,
and you have clothed him with splendor and majesty.
[6] You have endowed him with eternal blessings
and given him the joy of your presence.
[7] For the king trusts in the LORD.
The unfailing love of the Most High will keep him from stumbling.
[8] You will capture all your enemies.
Your strong right hand will seize all who hate you.
[9] You will throw them in a flaming furnace
when you appear.

The LORD will consume them in his anger;

fire will devour them.

[10] You will wipe their children from the face of the earth;

they will never have descendants.

[11] Although they plot against you,

their evil schemes will never succeed.

[12] For they will turn and run

when they see your arrows aimed at them.

[13] Rise up, O LORD, in all your power.

With music and singing we celebrate your mighty acts.

C. When I sing this Psalm about Jesus, I experience the benefits of his victory.

1. After a team wins a championship, there is usually a parade.

2. The Chiefs, Royals, and Cardinals all know what it is like to travel through a MO street celebrating a championship.

a. Maybe you watched online or got to be in attendance celebrating your teams victory.

b. But the funny thing is this: we had nothing to do with winning.

c. We didn't throw a pass, catch a ball, hit a homerun, or anything to add to the victory.

d. But the fans get to celebrate with the victors.

3. When the Church sings about Jesus' victory, we get to experience the benefits.

D. Because Jesus conquered death, hell, and the grave, I do not fear what is to come.

1. Because Jesus conquered sin, I do not have to give in to its power.

2. Because of Jesus, we get to taste of the joy of God's presence.

Joy in the Waiting

A. For the next few moments, I want to invite us to the altar so that we might experience the joy in the waiting.

1. You see, I have read the next few psalms.

a. I know how the playlist.

b. For all of you math geniuses, we know that after Psalm 22 is Psalm 23.

c. Psalm 22 begins with "My God why have you forsaken me?

d. Psalm 23 begins with "The Lord is my Shepherd…"

2. We will all walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

a. I know that after Psalm 23 is Psalm 24.

b. Psalm 24 invites, in fact, it commands the ancient gates and the doors of heaven and earth to open up and to rise up and let the King of Glory come in.

3. I know how the playlist goes, I know how the album ends.

B. And yet we find ourselves here in the middle, waiting.

1. I don't know what happens next in your story.

a. I don't know where you are at in the song that God has created for you.

b. The next words in your next song might Be "my God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

2 Yet, I am convinced that there can be joy and victory in the waiting, and God does hear and answer prayer.

C. I love this hope we read about in Hebrews.

1. Hebrews 2:8b As it is, we do not yet see **everything subjected** to him. **9** But we do see Jesus

2. Maybe you feel like you are losing right now.

3. Maybe you feel that you are surrounded by enemies and wondering if victory will ever come.

D. But what if God is getting ready to turn over the album?

1. What if God is getting ready to play the other side of the tape?

2. Don’t give up!

3. Psalm 30:5