

- *Collections of songs – the same occasion or theme*
When David fled from Absalom

In the Book of Psalms there are collections of songs that have the same theme or that were written on the same occasion. **Psalms 1-2** are an introduction. **Psalms 3-8** are a group of psalms also. Psalm 3 has a title (*A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son*). The song was written just before David went to sleep (*I will both lay down and sleep, says 3:5*). **Psalm 4** is written in exactly the same circumstances ^{□1}.

□1 note 4:8

Psalm 5 still has the same setting in the life of David as Psalms 3-4, but now it mentions the morning. *Yahweh, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare myself for you and I keep watching* ^{□1}. How do you handle an enemy?

□1 5:3

1. You Pray

1. **You pray!** One way of being helped is to know the ingredients of prayer, the different types of praying. What we have here is **invocation** - the opening part of praying when we call on God to help us as we pray. It includes

- *Calling on God to help us pray*

(i) using the different titles for God ('Yahweh ... my King ... my God ... Yahweh');

(ii) telling God you are planning to pray ('for to you do I pray; in the morning you hear my voice');

(iii) asking God for his help and willingness to hear us ('Yahweh, listen to my words'). David also mentions how we should organize ourselves for prayer. 'In the morning I prepare myself for you and I keep watching' ^{□1}. Prayer requires some self-organisation.

□1 5:3

2. Think about God's character

2. **You take the opportunity to think about the character of God!** The question is: what does God think about these enemies of yours? The answer is: if they are wicked people God is more concerned than you are. David thinks ^{□1} of the way God views these enemies of the kingdom of God who were causing him such trouble.

□1 in 5:4-5

*For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil may not dwell with you.
The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.* ^{□1}

□1 5:4-5

- *Identify with God*
Flow with the character of God

This is one of the great secrets of prayer. You identify with God. You flow with the character of God. David knows that God hates evil, so David can pray against it. David knows that God eventually acts in judgement. He knows that God has a fierce hatred of wickedness. When you know what God is like you know how to pray. This is partly what is involved in praying in the **name** of God. You know what God is like in his character, so you know what pleases God and that means that you know what to pray.

3. Some Decisions

3. **You are to make a few decisions about yourself.** David determines to persistently seek fellowship with God. He will not pay much attention to his enemies. Instead he will pay attention to God.

- *Does not focus on enemies*

*But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house.
I will bow down toward your holy temple
in the fear of you* ^{□1}.

□1 5:7

- *Persistently seek fellowship with God and pray for guidance*

This language ('*your house ... your ... temple*) could refer to the tabernacle; or it could be purely metaphorical referring to fellowship with God. In this sense we are to 'dwell in the house of the Lord forever' (as Psalm 23:6 has it). David wants fellowship with God, and he prays for guidance.

Yahweh, lead me, in your righteousness

4. Faith in the prayers of Jesus

*because of my enemies;
make straight your way before me* ^{מ¹}.

^{מ¹} 5:8

4. **You put your faith in the prayers of Jesus.** Our psalm has an A-B-C-B-A structure and words forwards and backwards through three topics. We often find this kind of structure in the poetical books of the Bible.

- Verses 1-3. Finding strength in God
- Verses 4-6. The enemies.
- Verses 7-8. David Himself
- Verses 9-10. The enemies.
- Verses 11-12. Finding strength in God.

The enemies are considered again ^{מ¹} and David prays for their punishment.

^{מ¹} 5:9

*Make them bear their guilt, O God;
let them fall by their own counsels;
because of the abundance of their transgressions cast them out,
for they have rebelled against you* ^{מ¹}.

^{מ¹} 5:10

• Prayer for enemies punishment is not a pattern for us

• David is prophetic of Jesus

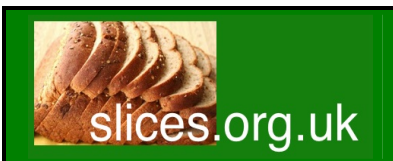
Can a Christian ever pray like this? No! The standard for the Christian is found in the words of Jesus. 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...' (see Matthew 5:44-45). So what are we to make of these cursing psalms? (i) David was personally a very forgiving person. He is not being vindictive in these prayers. (ii) He is longing for the honour of God. (iii) David is being realistic. If his enemy is defeated, he will be defeated because God will put him down. (iv) David is willing to pray about himself in the same way - as we shall see in Psalm 7:3-5. (v) **David is prophetic of Jesus.** We often find in the Bible that something that is said about David seems not to suit him. We have had it already in Psalm 2 (is it David who is the object of the enmity of all of the kings of the earth? Surely not!) We see it in Acts 16 and the comment of Acts 2:29. It was not David whose body did not perish! The person who can pray like this is Jesus, and David is prophetic of Jesus! Jesus intercedes for us and he does so as the righteous judge. When we are being persecuted we do not pray for judgement, but we do trust in the intercessions of Jesus, and he might be praying for God's judgement to come.

Remembering the protecting righteousness of Jesus

5. **You remember that you too were born a sinner and you put your trust in the protecting righteousness of Jesus.**

*But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy,
and spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may exult in you* ^{מ¹}.
*For you bless the righteous, O Lord;
you cover him with favour as with a shield* ^{מ²}.

^{מ¹} 5:11
^{מ²} 5:12



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