

## STUDIES IN PSALMS

6. Is there some connection between the first half of this psalm (verses 1 thru 6) and the last half? (verses 7 thru 14) what is it?
7. Discuss the terms "law"—and "testimony"—as they relate to God's word.
8. Discuss the adjectives: "perfect"—"right"—"clear"—"clean"—"truth" as they relate to our response to God's Law.
9. If the Old Covenant was to produce such response as: "refresh"—"make wise"—"gladden"—"enlighten"—how much more the New Covenant—discuss how this can actually happen.
10. How can God help us overcome sin? Be practical and personal.

## PSALM 20

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

To Prayer for a King in Distress, a Favourable Answer  
is Confidently Awaited.

### ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-4, Petitions for Divine Succour. Refrain, ver. 5, Promise of Praise for Victory. Stanza II., vers. 6-8, Assuring Answer Acknowledged. Refrain, ver. 9, Praise Offered in Anticipation.

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(Lm.) Psalm—By David.

- 1 May he<sup>1</sup> answer thee in the day of distress,  
may the<sup>2</sup> God of Jacob set thee on high;
- 2 Send help to thee out of the sanctuary,  
and out of Zion uphold thee;
- 3 Remember all thy grain-offerings,  
and thine ascending-sacrifice esteem.<sup>3</sup>
- 4 Give thee according to thy heart,  
and all thy purpose fulfill.

1. M.T.: "Jehovah."

2. M.T.: "name of the."

3. "Find thy sacrifice fat"—Dr.

## PSALM TWENTY

We will ring out our joy in thy victory,<sup>1</sup>  
and in the name of our God will we exult.<sup>2</sup>

- 6 Now hath the hand of Jehovah been made known,<sup>3</sup>  
Jehovah hath given victory to his Anointed One:  
he answereth him out of his holy heavens,  
by the mighty deeds of victory of his right hand.
- 7 These by chariots and horses  
but we by Jehovah are strong:<sup>4</sup>
- 8 They have bowed down and fallen,  
but we have arisen and are established.
- 9 Jehovah hath given victory to the king,—  
He answereth us on the day when we call.

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician.

## PARAPHRASE

### PSALM 20

In your day of trouble, may the Lord be with you! May the God of Jacob keep you from all harm.

2 May He send you aid from His sanctuary in Zion.

3 May He remember with pleasure the gifts you have given Him, your sacrifices and burnt offerings.

4 May He grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your plans.

5 May there be shouts of joy when we hear the news of your victory, flags flying with praise to God for all that He has done for you. May He answer all your prayers.

6 "God save the king"—I know He does! He hears me from highest heaven and sends great victories.

7 Some nations boast of armies and of weaponry, but our boast is in the Lord our God.

8 Those nations will collapse and perish; we will arise to stand firm and sure!

9 Give victory to our king, O Lord; oh, hear our prayer.

1. Or: "salvation."

2. So with many critics, and some copies of Sep. M.T. adds: "Jehovah fulfill thy petitions." Prob. repetition from ver. 4.

3. Thus, by Br., conjecturally restored. M.T.: "Now do I know that Jehovah hath saved his Anointed One."

4. M.T.:

These by chariots and those by horses

But well by the name of Jehovah our God make memorial.

But, in any case, according to Ginsburg, make memorial (*nazkir*) shd. give place to "be strong" (*nigbir*).

## STUDIES IN PSALMS EXPOSITION

This psalm and the next, pair well together. The occasion of them (in the present form), was, in all probability, the peril and deliverance of King Jehoshaphat as recorded in 2 Ch. 20. "The victory of Jehoshaphat in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, cf. 2 Ch. 20, gives us a most appropriate historical situation; and the promise of victory, given by the prophet, gives an appropriate explanation of the change from petition to certitude in the two parts of the psalm"—Briggs. It is observable that whereas the prayer had been that Jehovah would send help *out of the sanctuary*, the assurance, later on, traces the victory *to the holy heavens* as its source. There is in reality no contradiction between the two representations: king and people were already assembled "in the house of Jehovah, before the new court," when Jahaziel a Levite, and therefore a servant of the sanctuary, stood forth in the midst of the convocation; and, with the spirit of prophecy upon him, gave the people a Divine assurance of victory. It was rightly felt that this assurance came direct from heaven, as also the signal deliverance which on the next day became an accomplished fact. "For if God then condescended to dwell in visible glory among men, yet He would teach his people that he is not limited by the bounds of time and space"—Perowne. "This turning toward heaven is not inconsistent with the previous turning toward the sanctuary as the source of help, for the conception of theophanic residence in sacred places on earth, did not from the earliest times of the Hebrew religion, lead them away from the thought that the real residence of Yahweh was in heaven"—Briggs.

Notwithstanding the opinion expressed above that Psalms 20 and 21, "in their present form," commemorate primarily the peril and deliverance of King Jehoshaphat, both psalms in their original form may have come from David, and may have had special reference to Solomon. From these assumptions, it becomes all the more striking to note how well their main characteristics suit Hezekiah also. "The words were a timely prayer for Hezekiah, in whose reign vers. 7-9 were added (note the plural number predominating in the pronouns here)"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 314.

## PSALM TWENTY

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Read II Chronicles chapter 20 and see if you agree with Rotherham that this psalm as well as the 21st refer to Jehoshaphat. Discuss.
2. William Graham Scroggie had another concept of this psalm—Read the following and discuss:

Psalms xx and xxi are a pair: both are *Battle Songs*; the twentieth precedes the encounter, the twenty-first follows it; the one is *prayer* and the other is *praise*; the one anticipates, and the other reflects. Each of them is in two parts, and taken together present an inverted parallelism. In xx, in the main, the *People* speak first (1-5), then the *King* (6-8); and in xxi, the *King* speaks first (1-7), and then the *People* (8-12). Read the two Psalms now, with this in mind, and remember, the battle takes place between them.

Both Psalms fit the time of David, and both in their deepest sense are Messianic, and point to Him Who cannot but be victorious at last over all that opposes His Throne. Verses 1-5 are the address of the people to their king, and it is worthy of notice that their confidence is not in the king's strength, skill, or past successes, but in Jehovah, the "*God of Jacob*." The psalmist does not speak of "the God of Abram"; that would have been less encouraging, for Abram was so great in faith that we feel far removed from him, but we all are more on Jacob's level. Warfare and worship should go together (3); he who does not sacrifice is not likely to succeed. The LORD will *fulfil our petitions* when they are on this note and in this vein (5).

To this desire of the people the king replies (6-8, or in 6 only, if 7-9 be attributed to the people). They had asked for help from Zion (2), but the king looks higher up, to heaven (6). God acts when His people pray. "A whisper may start an avalanche." Impotence can set Omnipotence in motion. The "*Name of the LORD our God*" is opposed to the enemies, chariots and horses. "What's in a name?" It depends upon whose name it is. Nothing can successfully oppose the NAME OF THE LORD.

The address to the earthly king in verses 1-5 rises to an appeal to the heavenly King in verse 9. Now for the battle which is not recorded, his, yours, mine!

Thought: *Always kneel before you fight.*

From PSALMS, p. 131, 132.