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Psalm 140

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 140.

Topics.

- Deliver me, LORD, from men who speak as serpents.
- Guard me, O LORD, from arrogant violent men.
- Grant not LORD the desire of the wicked or they will be exalted.
- Let the head of those who surround me be cast into fire.
- God will help the afflicted, and execute justice for the needy.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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BOOK FIVE (PSALM 107-150)

PSALM 140:1-3

To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

Deliver me, LORD, from Men who Speak as Serpent's.

- **Psalm 140:1-3:** Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men; preserve me from violent men,² who plan evil things in their heart and stir up wars continually. ³They make their tongue sharp as a serpent's, and under their lips is the venom of asps. *Selah*

In verse nine David makes the following statement: "As for the head of those who surround me," (v9) these words shine a light upon the fact that at this time a certain group of men who have authority and power are speaking as serpents to gather others to rise up against David. David in this Psalm does not mention who these violent, evil men who speak as serpents against him are which means that the Psalm could apply to any of David's enemies who plotted against him. It is perhaps a deliberate principle of the writers not to mention names so that the principles taught can apply to any similar person of any generation in similar circumstances.

Serpent: comes from the Hebrew word (*nachash*) and refers to a snake (from its hiss i.e. whisper) generally it means to prognosticate, soothsay, predict and foretell. Figuratively it carries the idea of a spell that influences the mind by enchantment, flattery, seduction and charm.

Asps: (adder in KJV) comes from the Hebrew word (*akshuwb*) and means to coil up it carries the idea of one lurking in secret waiting an opportunity to spread its venom and poison.

David prays that God would deliver him from those who have surrounded him and who speak as serpents with the venom of asps. At various times David had men who acted as his friend while with him, but behind his back plotted to destroy him and bring his kingdom to ruin. It is interesting to notice when Jesus spoke of the powerful Pharisees and Sadducees (the corrupt religious leaders of his generation) he said: -

- You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (Matt. 3:7).
- You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? (Matt. 12:34).
- You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? (Matthew 23:33).

Viper in these verses comes from the Greek word (*echidna*), and means and adder or other poisonous snake (literal or figurative). David's enemies could be likened to the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes of Jesus generation who though they acted as the religious leaders of Israel behind closed doors they plotted the murder of Israel's Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ as David's enemies are plotting against him.

PSALM 140:4-5

Guard Me, O LORD, from Arrogant, Violent Men.

- **Psalm 140:4-5:** Guard me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from violent men, who have planned to trip up my feet. ⁵The arrogant have hidden a trap for me, and with cords they have spread a net; beside the way they have set snares for me. *Selah*

David prays that God would deliver him from these treacherous enemies who are acting as poisonous serpents against him. The Lord Jesus Christ prayed a similar prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane:

- Jesus said to his disciples, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." ³⁹And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." (Matt. 26:38-39) (Mark 14:34-36).

Jesus being fully aware of the horrific fate that awaited him, prayed, "God if there is any other way to save mankind take this cup of suffering from me." Had Jesus gone the way of his own will and not said, "Nevertheless not my will, but your will be done," God's plan of salvation would have been left bankrupt and we would all die in our sins never to rise again. God did deliver Jesus from his serpent enemies in a manner that no-one at that time could have ever comprehended, his heavenly Father not only delivered him from his immediate enemies and from all future enemies in such a miraculous manner that even his own disciples did not believe it when they were told that Jesus had risen from the dead. Through the darkest hour of Jesus life, came the greatest triumph and victory this world has ever seen. David's prayer was also answered, God did deliver him from his enemies, but his prayer will be ultimately and perfectly answered as Jesus was when David is raised from the dead to see face to face Israel's promised Messiah the Christ and Son of God the Saviour of the world who David always held by faith and by love before him. There are seasons in life when seasons of grief, hardship and troubles come upon us as they came upon David and Jesus, but if we take the right attitude, we will find that on the others side of the darkness comes blessing in ways we could never imagine. The following three testimonies shine a light upon this principle of life:

1. Teresa, a young African woman from childhood had suffered extreme hardships and sorrow that most do not have to cope with in a lifetime. When asked how did she survive she replied, "I believe there is always a minor setback before a major come back," Today she is happily living her dream with a peaceful heart that is forever filled with joy and gratitude for every little thing she has.

2. A boyfriend threw petrol on his very beautiful girlfriends face and set her alight, she of course suffered extreme pain and physical deformity. Her testimony today, "This tragedy has become my blessing because I have become someone on the inside who I could never have become had I still had my beauty." Something most of us cannot comprehend or understand until such circumstances come upon us and we are forced to face the truth that true life, true beauty and true strength is determined by what dwells on the inside and not by how we appear on the outside.
3. Sally Pearson who won Gold in the London Olympics for Australia said, "I didn't realise how much pain I was in until I started warming up for the event and we went into the first core room where everyone jumps around and does their little bit of a warm up and run throughs. I just sat there and thought, "I can't even do this, I can't even get up," then she said to the interviewer, "I was obviously going to be OK for the race because I didn't care how I felt, I was going to do it, but trying to warm up was hell" and she did do it and came home with gold, now that is the attitude of a real overcomer. Sally's story shines a brilliant spotlight on the following truths, no one becomes an overcomer without:
 - Enormous heartfelt passion and total commitment year after year
 - Endurance to persevere through the failures and overcome the obstacles that life brings across our path.
 - The mental strength to conquer all the negative voices that rise up in the mind with a hundred reasons why you should give up.

God does not promise us a charmed and trouble-free life but He does promise the following seven eternal blessing to those who endure in their faith and overcome to the end of the race:

1. To the one who overcomes I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (Rev. 2:7).
2. The one who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death. (Revelation 2:11).
3. To the one who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give them a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it. (Rev. 2:17).
4. The one who overcomes and who keeps my works until the end, to them I will give authority over the nations, and they will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father and I will give them the morning star. (Rev. 2:26-28).
5. The one who overcomes will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot their name out of the book of life. I will confess their name before my Father and before his angels. (Rev. 3:5).
6. The one who overcomes, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall they go out of it, and I will write on them the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. (Revelation 3:12).
7. The one who overcomes, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. (Revelation 3:21).

It matters not how rich one maybe in this world, or how beautiful their palace and how great their power might be it all pales in glory compared to these seven eternal promises of God since whatever this world gives no matter how glorious will pass away as will all who deny God and His plan of eternal salvation.

Grant not LORD the Desire of the Wicked or they will be Exalted.

- **Psalm 140:6-8:** I say to the LORD, You are my God; give ear to the voice of my pleas for mercy, O LORD! ⁷O LORD, my Lord, the strength of my salvation, you have covered my head in the day of battle. ⁸Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked; do not further their evil plot or they will be exalted! *Selah*

David is fully aware that God is his salvation against his enemies that come against him in battle and also his salvation to eternal life. He humbly prays that God in His mercy would not allow his wicked enemies to triumph over him so that unbelievers would not exalt Israel's enemies above God's people and have cause to exalt their pagan gods above the God of Israel. David obviously cared about his own life being saved from the evil plots of his enemies, but he also equally cared about how his life and events concerning him and Israel would reflect upon God to the surrounding nations.

PSALM 140:9-11

Let the Head of those who Surround Me, Be Cast into Fire.

- **Psalm 140:9-11:** As for the head of those who surround me, let the mischief of their lips overwhelm them! ¹⁰Let burning coals fall upon them! Let them be cast into fire, into miry pits, no more to rise! ¹¹Let not the slanderer be established in the land; let evil hunt down the violent man speedily!

This may seem like a harsh prayer to pray, but remember the Psalms are not written to be nice and appeal to our Christian calling they are the honest expression of the writers' heart before God. Added to this these people were under the law that stated, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," this was their mindset so it is easy to understand why David would pray such a harsh prayer. It should also be noticed that he is not saying he will go out and administer such vengeance, but praying that should such things come upon his enemies God would not do anything to stop them. Before judging David too harshly ponder for a moment how you would feel in your heart if a pagan group of people attacked your family, destroyed your home and abused your daughters, or you were standing with the crowd watching the religious leaders of Jesus generation smiling as they watched with glee the Roman soldiers mocking, whipping and brutally forcing a crown of thorns on Jesus head then cruelly nail his broken, suffering and bleeding body to the cross perhaps we might pray the same prayer with tears in our eyes. Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is a very high calling and only one man has attained to its perfection and he gave his life so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

PSALM 140:12-13

God will Help the Afflicted, and Execute Justice for the Needy.

- **Psalm 140:12-13:** I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and will execute justice for the needy. ¹³Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your name; the upright shall dwell in your presence.

This prayer of David's could be seen as a prayer for everyone who loves the LORD and hates injustice and for all who feel surrounded by the wickedness and suffering in the world today and those who are hurt when they hear of the multitudes of innocent children being abused and teenage girls being kidnapped to be used on the black market as sex slaves, or the poor being oppressed by the rich, or innocent mother's fathers and

families being killed and lamed because some ruthless king wants power and the multitudes killed in war by weapons of mass destruction. Added to all this hurt and offence for every Christian is the blasphemy of evolution taught through the media, TV nature programs, and our schools proclaiming through the teaching of evolution that there is no God, perhaps when you ponder all these evils you feel very much like praying as David did, "Lord destroy all your wicked and evil enemies and let them rise no more."

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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