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Psalm 141

(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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Bible
at Home**

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 141.

Topics.

- LORD, I call upon you; let my prayer be counted as incense before you.
- Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth.
- Let a righteous man strike me it is a kindness; oil for my head.
- Judges thrown over the cliff, shall hear my pleasant words.
- As one ploughs the earth, so shall our bones be scattered at Sheol.
- Let the wicked fall into their-own nets, while I pass by safely.

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

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.

BOOK FIVE (PSALM 107-150)

PSALM 141:1-2

A Psalm of David.

O LORD, Let My Prayer be Counted as Incense Before You.

- **Psalm 141:1-2:** O LORD, I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you! ²Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!

David asks the LORD to hear his prayer he does not assume God is listening, obviously God would hear David's prayer, but it shows humility and courtesy toward God by the one praying. It also carries the idea of asking the LORD not just to hear his prayer, but also to answer it.

PSALM 141:3-4

Set a Guard, O LORD, over My Mouth.

- **Psalm 141:3-4:** Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! ⁴Do not let my heart incline to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their delicacies!

David asks the LORD not to let him keep company with men who are full of iniquity or to speak any evil and to keep his heart from being attracted to any wicked deed or any wonderful or pleasurable thing that would draw him away from God. Jesus told his disciple to pray a similar prayer in the following verse:

- Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (Matt. 6:13).

The following verse clearly shows that it is our own heart that leads us into sin and that God will never tempt anyone:

- Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (James 1:13-16).

Nevertheless, it is quite right to pray as David did in this Psalm, "LORD keep my heart from being attracted to any wicked way." This is because as God is Jesus heavenly Father, He is also by faith our heavenly Father. We are His adopted children and brothers and sisters of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore belong to the global and heavenly family of God. A child of an earthly father looks to their Dad for help, wisdom and advice as they grow and the father does all he can to help his children grow to maturity. Likewise, our heavenly Father will daily cover us with His mercy, grace and love and spiritually strengthen us as we go through the troubles, hardships, grief's and sorrows of life on earth. His word will guide us in wisdom and correct doctrine and His laws will guide us in good behaviour and right attitudes. So it is right and proper for those honestly desiring to live a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith to pray that God would keep their heart from being attracted to any wicked way.

PSALM 141:5

Let a Righteous Man Strike Me it is a Kindness; Oil for My Head.

- **Psalm 141:5:** Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it. Yet my prayer is continually against their evil deeds.

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The expression a righteous man in this context does not mean a godly and holy man, but refers to a man who belongs to the nation of Israel and believes in God much like king Saul did who though he was God's anointed king over God's people Israel he did not follow the ways of the LORD.

Concerning king Saul David said:

- This day your (Saul's) eyes have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed.' ¹¹See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know there is no wrong or treason in my hands. (1 Sam. 24:1-22).

David is saying that if someone who has faith in God corrects him, he will receive it, but if they are acting corruptly as Saul was, he would constantly pray against their wickedness. Like David we should all be ready to welcome the rebuke of our heavenly Father, and also the reproof of our brothers and sisters and like David we must show those correcting us that we receive it with kindness. Often words of healing are hurtful even though they are helpful. Should we find it difficult to receive correction in a good spirit we should earnestly pray God would grant us grace that we would receive correction with kindness and gentleness. David's humble and godly spirit is manifested in the following two things:

1. In his prayerful words, "It is a kindness and an excellent thing for him if a righteous person rebukes or strikes him," meaning they stand against him to correct him and prevent him from making wrong choices or doing the wrong thing as the prophet Nathan did to David concerning Bathsheba (the story is in 2 Samuel 12:1-7).
- 2 In his earnest prayer that he will not refuse correction.

In the book of Proverbs, it is written:

- The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice. ¹⁶The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult. (Prov. 12:15-16).
- A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent. (Proverbs 15:5).
- A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool. (Proverbs 17:10).
- A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. (Proverbs 18:2).

The character of a fool is such that they say in their heart there is no God they rebel against His will and are corrupt and full of wicked acts. They have no understanding or knowledge of what is important to God and have chosen to deny His existence and have no interest in seeking after Him so God has rejected them (Psalm 53) since God's nature is such that He will not force Himself upon anyone, especially the foolish and corrupt who consciously and deliberately choose to deny Him.

PSALM 141:6

Judges Thrown over a Cliff, will Hear my Pleasant Words.

- **Psalm 141:6:** When their judges are thrown over the cliff (overthrown in stony places in KJV), then they shall hear my words, for they are pleasant (sweet in KJV).

The word judges comes from the Hebrew word (*shaphat*) and means to judge and pronounce a sentence (for or against), by implication it means to vindicate or punish and by extension to govern which means it can also embrace magistrates; those in officers of government and, generals rulers and leaders of the common people or of the military.

When their judges are thrown over the cliff: (v6) carries the following ideas:

1. When the power and authority of the judges of the wicked is broken.
2. When those who have power and authority is destroyed.

The following verse shows that throwing enemies over a cliff to be crushed upon the rocks below was an ancient way of punishing enemies:

- The men of Judah captured another 10,000 alive and took them to the top of a rock and threw them down from the top of the rock, and they were all dashed to pieces. (2 Chronicles 25:12)

Clearly anyone punished in this way would be broken to pieces as their mortal bodies descended down the sides of the rocky ravines. Since David in this Psalm does not mention who these judges are that are thrown over the cliff it leaves the Psalm open so that it could apply to any of David's enemies who plotted evil against him. Not mentioning names and places maybe a deliberate ploy of David so that the principles taught can be applied to any similar person of any generation in similar circumstances. There are some very good speculations of who David had in mind when writing this verse, but since David himself does not tell us we must always keep in mind that they are only speculations.

Then they shall hear my words: (v6) means, after the power and authority of David's enemies is broken the people will hear David's peaceful and pleasant words. When David enemies are cast down and others subdued then the people of the land will hear David's words of victory and triumph and not only become obedient to him and gladly

welcome him, but also be happy to live under the laws of a just and equal administration. It means that the people will come to understand and acknowledge that David was not the malicious wicked person that these deceitful judges had made him out to be. The statement: "They shall hear my words, for they are pleasant and sweet," is especially true of all the words which David spoke by the inspiration of God's Spirit in his Psalms concerning the Messiah's suffering on the cross; the dividing of his garments (Psalm 22); the covenant of grace and the blessings of it and of the future Kingdom of God to come and the rich experiences of God's love. Those whose ears are open to hear David's sweet and pleasant words will hear and understand them, while others will not hear or perceive the sweetness they contain.

PSALM 141:7

As One Ploughs Earth, so Our Bones shall be Scattered at Sheol.

The English Standard Bible says:

- **Psalm 141:7:** As when one ploughs and breaks up the earth, so shall our bones be scattered at the mouth of Sheol.

The King James Bible says:

- **Psalm 141:7:** Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth *wood* upon the earth. (Psalm 141:7).

In the following verses David asks God to keep him from the trap and snares that evildoers have laid for him and let them fall into their own nets which clearly shows that this verse are in the context of David being surrounded by fierce and powerful enemies who he at this time feels powerless against.

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The English Standard Bible version: presents a picture of a farmers plough ripping up the earth with clumps falling to each side symbolising David's enemies attacking, persecuting and afflicting him without mercy and leaving their dead bodies to lie on the surface of the earth to rot and decay and be eaten by wild beasts and birds. The sense of this is that David's defence against his enemies is almost as hopeless as of those who are dead, and whose bones are scattered upon the face of the earth. It is expressive of the danger David and his men were in, and their sense of it. Their situation looked so hopeless that they considered themselves to be as dry bones facing the sentence of death and in this sense felt as though they were skeletons at the mouth of the grave.

The King James Bible version: presents a picture of a mighty wood chopper powerfully chopping wood with his razor sharp axe with clumps and chips of wood falling in all directions or of wood choppers felling a forest so that even the mightiest trees of the forest lay without life upon the surface of the earth, symbolising the fierce armies of David's enemies invading without mercy and massacring them in a most savage manner. It matters not that the translators of the English Standard Bible and the King James Bible vary in their interpretations since both carry the same idea.

PSALM 141:8

Let the Wicked Fall into their-Own Nets, while I Pass by Safely.

- **Psalm 141:8-10:** But my eyes are toward you, O GOD, my Lord; in you I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless! ⁹Keep me from the trap that they have laid for me and from the snares of evildoers! ¹⁰Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by safely.

David is surrounded and cries to God for protection and deliverance in his helpless circumstances he looked upward and kept his eyes fixed upon God and set his hope of deliverance in Him. He was fully aware no one could save him except the Almighty Omniscient and Omnipotent God. The words, "Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I escape," may not be a Christian prayer, but it is not wrong to desire that justice would fall upon the innocent and wicked alike and that the innocent would be delivered and the guilty reap the result of their own malice and their own evil works?

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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