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## Psalm 41

(2019)

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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 41.

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### Topics.

- Blessed are those who consider the poor they will be blessed
- LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you.
- David's closest friend Ahipathel.
- God has upheld me and set me in his presence forever.

**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.

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### INTRODUCTION

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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 ONE (PSALM 1-41)

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### PSALM 41:1-3

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To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

### **Blessed are those who Consider the Poor they will be Blessed.**

- **Psalm 41:1-3:** Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him; <sup>2</sup>the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land; you do not give him up to the will of his enemies. <sup>3</sup>The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness you restore him to full health.

A re-occurring theme throughout David's writings is God's care for the poor and His disdain toward those who oppress them for their own gain or pervert justice to cheat them out of what rightfully belongs to them (i.e., their homes, possessions and land). David's words, "In the day of trouble the LORD delivers those who help the poor," can refer to their personal troubles and to the Day of God's Judgment. Helping the poor and the helpless is one of the greatest and fastest ways to bring joy to the heart of God and rejoicing to all the angels in heaven.

**Those who help the poor are called blessed in the land:** the land primarily refers to the land of Israel, but the principal can apply to any land or nation. This is because the heart of both those in the Kingdom of God and those in the secular world admire and hold in high esteem those who sacrifice their life to help those in need.

**On their sickbed God restores him to full health:** sadly, there have been many faithful men and women who have done wonderful acts of charity for others who have suffered illness that ended in their death. Certainly, God has restored many charitable people from terrible illnesses, but the words, "God will restore them to full health," primarily refers to the resurrection, it means God will raise them to immortality, eternal life and everlasting happiness (health in its fullest sense).

**O LORD, Heal Me, For I have Sinned Against You.**

- **Psalm 41:4-9:** As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you!" <sup>5</sup>My enemies say of me in malice, "When will he die and his name perish?" <sup>6</sup>And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad. <sup>7</sup>All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me. <sup>8</sup>They say, "A deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies." <sup>9</sup>Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

David is lying on his bed with some illness that is so serious he and those around him expect it to take his life, he confesses that he has sinned against the Lord and asks Him to heal him. These verses shine a brilliant light on the truth no one needs a priest to pray over them just prior to their death. Those who know that Lord have by faith his Spirit and love dwelling in their hearts and mind every minute of every day, he is with them as they approach death and will comfort them as they pass through it. Those who believe they must have a human priest pray for them clearly do not know the love of Christ and his comfort dwelling in their own hearts and are certainly not trusting in him to carry them through the darkness of death. Those who know the Lord have the faith and heart of David, he did not need a human priest to be in union with God and know His steadfast love and know Him as his comforter. Whoever today trusts in human priests is not only denying Christ, but also making his death count for nothing. Not only is David suffering extreme illnesses, but those who have malice in their hearts toward him are hoping he will die and those who do come to visit him on his sick bed, say words of sympathy and compassion while they are with him, but are only there to gloat over him and gather information that can advantage their own cause and certainly have no interest in him recovering from his illness. Rather than encourage him they go about telling everyone he will die. Even worse than this his close friend in who he trusted and who ate at his table is also against him.

**David's closest friend:** could be Ahithophel who was the father of Eliam (2 Sam. 23:34) and Eliam was the father of Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:3) so Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba and Uriah was Ahithophel's grandson by marriage because he was Bathsheba's husband. Ahithophel was a cherished companion of David and his esteemed and wise counsellor (2 Sam. 16:23). David's son Absalom desired to overthrow David and take his seat on the throne of Israel. When Absalom thought he had adequate support, he declared himself king in Hebron forcing David to flee from Jerusalem. Absalom summoned Ahithophel to him and he advised Absalom to immediately pursue and attack David which may have resulted in David's defeat, but Absalom followed the counsel of Hushai (left by David as his spy in Jerusalem) and waited. Ahithophel being aware that David's would defeat Absalom, because his counsel was not followed went home and hanged himself, and he died. (2 Sam. 17:23). Absalom's delay gave David time to plan his strategy and gather together an army, and David was victorious. Absalom, when riding through the forest, was caught by his head in an oak tree and was slain by Joab one of David's generals, who was indifferent to David's order to, "Deal gently with his son Absalom." (2 Sam. 18:5).

(The full story is in 2 Samuel chapters 15, 16, 17).

Ahithophel was a trusted friend of David, so what would cause him to turn against the king? Following are the two most common thoughts why Ahithophel turned against David.

1. Nathan the prophet confronted David and told him the parable of the poor man's "one little ewe lamb," then rebuked the king saying, "Thou art the man." (2 Sam. 12:7). Bathsheba was Ahithophel's darling granddaughter, the "one little ewe lamb" of whom Nathan had spoken.

It is suggested that Ahithophel had bitterness against David because David had seduced his grand-daughter Bathsheba and later murdered Uriah his grandson by marriage in an attempt to hide his sin (2 Sam 11 & 12) and therefore he could not remain in David's court to be constantly reminded of Bathsheba's shame.

2. Others believe it is more likely that there were two men named Eliam and that Ahithophel's motivation was for his own personal gain for power since Absalom appeared to the stronger force at this time.

They feel that the idea of Ahithophel turning against David because of his sin with his grand-daughter Bathsheba has the following two problems, firstly, because it is unlikely that Ahithophel would have been old enough to have a married grand-daughter (Bathsheba) at the time of David's great sin with her and secondly, they feel it is unlikely that Ahithophel motivation would be to jeopardise the future of his grand-daughter as Queen. (Her first son died; her second son was Solomon). Whatever the motivation Ahithophel did turn against David and when Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your counsel, what shall we do?" Ahithophel said to Absalom:

- Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened." <sup>22</sup>So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. (2 Sam. 16:20-22).

**Repentance and consequences:** honest repentance and the acceptance of God's provision for sin results in forgiveness. David acknowledged and repented of his sin (Psalm 51). So did Bathsheba and Jewish tradition assert that she is the virtuous woman of (Proverbs 31.10-31). Though all maybe forgiven where true repentance exists consequences of sin remain. Bathsheba's first child died and caused both David and Bathsheba great grief. Eventually Bathsheba had a second child and named him Solomon. Our testimony as believers is etched deep in time and memory upon the earth. Footprints on the path we walk are irreversibly set and affect others. The lesson we learn as believers from David's sin with Bathsheba is that though their maybe forgiveness the manner of our sin has consequences and is permanently written in our testimony on earth.

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## PSALM 41:10-13

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### God has upheld Me and Set me in His Presence Forever.

- **Psalm 41:10-13:** But you, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them! <sup>11</sup>By this I know that you delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me. <sup>12</sup>But you have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in your presence forever. <sup>13</sup>Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.

As the reader travels through the Psalms it becomes very clear that David cared about others especially those who belonged to God's Kingdom and the poor. This no doubt is one of the reasons God said:

- He has sought out David a man after his own heart, and commanded him to be prince over his people. (1 Sam. 13:14).

Paul after the reading from the Law and the Prophets said:

- God raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, "I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will." <sup>23</sup>Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus, as he promised. (Acts 13:22-23).

**O LORD, raise me up, that I may repay them:** (v10) at face value seem to contradict the following verses:

- You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD. (Lev. 19:18).
- Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (Rom. 12:19).

In contrast to David caring for those in his kingdom his enemies sought their own glory power and fame they had malice in their hearts, there integrity and compassion was so lacking they would visit David on his sickbed and pretend to feel compassion and sympathy all the time being there to gloat. With this insight into the heart of David's enemies who wanted to overthrow his kingdom and take his place on the throne it is easy to see why David would want the LORD to raise him up so that he could repay them for their evil. Certainly the Scriptures tell us not to seek revenge, but leave judgment up to God, but since God choose David because he was a man after His own heart is safe for us to suppose that David would not take revenge on his enemies and friends who were visiting his bedside by vigilante means, but through God's law of justice.

**By this I know that you delight in me:** (v11) if God healed David, he would know that God delights in him, but even if God allowed him to suffer David trusted in God's faithfulness and His steadfast love and knew he would be raised to eternal glory. Sometimes in the life of the faithful circumstances may cause us to feel God has forsaken us, but this is a lie of the enemy and certainly not the faith David had. He trusted God's goodness in the good and the bad and regardless of whether he was in despair and depression or riding the wave of great joy and triumphant victory. His faith was based on God's word, God's holy character, God's love and God's promise and not upon his feelings, emotions or his circumstances which could all change at any time.

**My enemy will not shout in triumph over me:** (v11) it would be safe for us to suppose that David not only desired that his enemies would not triumph over him for his own personal well-being, but also desired they would not bring him and his kingdom to ruin because it would give reason for those who believe in other gods to speak against the God he so passionately exalted. It could be likened to the heart attitude of the faithful who love Christ. Within their heart is the desire that they would not give the secular world reason to speak against the Lord they so deeply love.

**You have upheld me because of my integrity:** (v12) integrity embraces honesty, truthfulness, faithfulness and loyalty these are all pillars of God's throne the minister and every brother and sister in Christ who walks before God with these dwelling in their heart will at the resurrection hear the following words of their master:

- Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. (Matt. 25:21).

**You have set me in your presence forever:** (v12) again David's great faith is expressed in these words, from the day God called David to be the king of the people he slipped into some terrible sins, face death in many battles and suffered depression, despair, anxiety, was betrayed by his close friends, suffered illness that brought him enormous pain and close to death but all the while never doubted God's love or that He has set him in His presence forever. David knew that he would be raised to eternal life to be with the promised Messiah the Christ that he so deeply loved to dwell with him forever in everlasting happiness.

**Great faith:** David's great love, devotion and faith is manifested in the words that he ends this prayer with: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen" (v13). It matters not how David begins his prayer, whether he is in despair or depression or surrounded by his enemies or lying on his bed suffering the pain of sickness or facing death itself he always ends his Psalms, his prayers and his petitions with praising the name of the LORD, the Most High God.

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*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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