

PSALM 13

I. BIBLICAL TEXT

Prayer for Help in Trouble.
For the choir director. A Psalm of David

1 How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? 2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? 3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, 4 And my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," And my adversaries will rejoice when I am shaken. 5 But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. 6 I will sing to the Lord, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. TYPE OF PSALM

1. PERSONAL LAMENT

- Follows typical pattern of lament
 - Expresses complaint—**vv1-2**
 - Makes plea for help—**vv3-4**
 - Declares confidence in God—**vv5-6**

2. FOLLOWS GENERAL LAMENT—**Psalm 12**

B. AUTHORSHIP

- HEADING ATTRIBUTES PSALM TO DAVID

C. OCCASION

1. NOT STATED OR IMPLIED
2. PSALMIST IS BESEIGED BY A SINGULAR ENEMY
 - a. Possibly a person—Saul pursuing David—Absalom in rebellion
 - b. Possibly a depressing situation—old age and death approaching

D. STRUCTURE—IN THREE STANZAS

1. STANZA ONE—THE SITUATION—**vv1-2**
 - a. **Five lines**—of Hebrew poetry
 - b. Raises four “How long” questions about three subjects
 1. God’s apparent lack of attentiveness—**v1**

2. His own depression—**v2**
 3. His enemy being exalted—**v2**
2. STANZA TWO—PLEA FOR HELP—**vv3-4**
 - a. **Four lines**—of Hebrew poetry
 - b. Asks God to do three things—**v3**
 - **Consider** [me and my situation]
 - **Answer** me
 - **Enlighten** my eyes
 - c. Three consequences if God does not respond—**vv3-4**
 - I will die
 - My enemy—will be victorious
 - My enemy—will rejoice
3. STANZA THREE—CONFIDENCE IN GOD—**vv5-6**
 - a. **Three lines**—of Hebrew poetry
 - b. Statement of past trust—**v5**
 - c. Declaration of future joy and praise—**vv5-6**
 - d. Basis of trust, joy, and praise—God’s past bounty—**v6**

E. THEMES

1. HUMAN DEPRESSION—DESPAIR IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES
2. CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S MERCY—AND FAITHFULNESS

F. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

1. SIMILAR TO **PSALMS 9-12**
2. SAME AUTHOR
 - David—is identified as psalmist in **Psalms 9, 11, 12**
 - David—the implied author of **Psalm 10**—which is associated with **Psalm 9**
3. SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES
 - Author of **Psalms 9-12**—surrounded by many enemies
 - **Psalm 13**—there is only one enemy

III. EXPOSITION

A. VERSE 1—COMPLAINT

1 *How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?*

1. EXPRESSION OF DESPAIR—HOW LONG?

- a. Expressed in other Psalms

Ps 6:3—by David—*my soul is sore vexed—but You, Lord, how long*

Ps 35:17—by David—*Lord, how long will you look on—as enemies besiege him*

Ps. 74:10—by Asaph—*how long shall the enemy reproach and blaspheme Thy name*

Ps 79:5—by Asaph—*how long will You be angry, forever*

Ps 80:4—by Asaph—*how long will You be angry with the prayer of Your people*

Ps 89:46—by Ethan the Ezrahite—*how long will You hide yourself from me, forever, and be angry*

Ps 90:13—by Moses—*Do return, O Lord; how long will it be? And be sorry for your servants.*

Ps 94:3-4—anonymous—*How long shall the wicked exult?*

- b. Even expressed by the saints in heaven

Rev 6:10—*How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?*

2. TOTAL DESPAIR

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever

3. IRONY

- o The same claim made by the wicked
- o **Ps 10:11**—*God has forgotten and has hidden His face—He will never see it*

4. GOD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN OR HIDDEN HIS FACE

- o Only the perspective of the Psalmist—who is being honest about his feelings

5. THE FACE OF GOD

- a. Sign of divine approval
- b. Assurance of His presence
- c. **Moses** desired to see this the wilderness—evidence that God would go with Israel

- d. **David's** longing to see God's face

Psalms—11:7—17:15—27:4,8

B. VERSE 2—COMPLAINT

2 *How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?*

1. TWO SOURCES OF SORROW

- a. **Apparent** abandonment by God—and the depression it caused
- b. Threat of enemy—who **seems** to be on the threshold of victory

2. PERSISTENT DEPRESSION

All the day long = round the clock—implying without any sleep

3. I TAKE COUNSEL IN MY SOUL

- a. Futility of human plans—***I take counsel***
 - Trying to solve problems only from a **human** perspective only
- b. Futility of trying to bear the problem alone—***in my own soul***
 - When we feel alone—abandoned by God
 - Loneliness compounds depression—downward cycle of despair
 - Need for others to come alongside—and encourage
 - Need to be reminded—God is present and cares

NOTE—TWO CONCERNS IN MANY OF DAVID'S PSALMS

- 1. APPARENT ABSENCE OF GOD—AND DESIRE FOR HIS PRESENCE**
- 2. IMPENDING VICTORY OF THE ENEMY—AND A CALL FOR HELP**

C. VERSE 3—PLEA

3 *Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,*

1. THREE REQUESTS

- o **Consider—me**
- o **Answer—me**
- o **Enlighten—my eyes**

2. CONSIDER—[ME]

- o Look upon me—look this way
- o Acknowledge—that I exist

3. ANSWER ME

- a. KJV = “hear” me—not the full meaning—“answer” is better translation
- b. Anticipation of this answer—does two things
 - 1. Gives evidence that God is aware—has ‘considered’ me
 - 2. Gives Psalmist hope—God has a solution in mind
- c. Risk—in asking for God’s answer
 - It may not be what the Psalmist desires
 - But David puts no conditions on the request
 - He does not say—answer me favorably!

4. ENLIGHTEN MY EYES

- a. Illumine me
 - 1. Maybe—an allusion to God’s presence—revealing His glory—and salvation

Ps 31:16—*Make Your face to shine upon Your servant; save me in Your mercy*
 - 2. Maybe—God enlightening us with His answer
- b. Make my eyes shine
 - 1. Maybe—take away this depression
 - The eye is dimmed by tears of grief—see **Ps 6:7**
 - 2. Enemy could be approaching death—and dimming of eyes that goes with it
 - a. Dim eyes—represent failing strength in old age—**Ps 38:10**
 - Could be a request—for restoration of health
 - b. Sleep—[closing of eyes]—often used as an analogy for death
 - 1. Old Testament
 - **Job 14:12**
 - **Jer 51:39,57**
 - **Dan 12:2**
 - 2. New Testament

- Jn 11:11-13—Jesus—speaking of Lazarus
- I Cor 11:30; 15:51
- I Th 4:14-15

D. VERSE 4—PLEA

4 *And my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” And my adversaries will rejoice when I am shaken.*

1. PSALMIST CONCERNED ABOUT TWO THINGS
 - a. Defeat at hands of enemy
 - b. Long-term residual effect—gloating by enemy
2. WHEN I AM SHAKEN
 - a. Concern is **not** just **personal**—about David’s personal safety
 - b. ‘Shaken’ = overthrown
 - Implied—overthrow of David as king
 - c. Contrasted with boast of David’s [and God’s] enemies
 - The wicked—who claim they will **not** be ‘shaken’—**Ps 10:6**
 - d. Concern—about defeat of God’s anointed
 - And the godless enemy’s ability to claim victory against God!

E. VERSE 5—CONFIDENCE

5 *But I have trusted in Your lovingkindness; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.*

1. CONTRAST—WITH THE ENEMY
 - a. **“I”**—is emphatic—continued personal trust
 - The enemy—[who trusts himself]—wants to rejoice [boast]—in my defeat
 - But **I**—on the other hand—will still trust in God’s mercy
 - b. God’s steadfast mercy—is always strong and reliable
 - In contrast to—the temporary threat of the enemy
2. CONTRAST—WITH DAVID’S EMOTIONAL STATE
 - a. God’s steadfast love—is always dependable and reassuring—for the believer
 - b. Despite—David’s roller-coaster emotions

3. DURATIVE EFFECT OF GOD'S MERCY

- o *I have trusted*—continuative effect of the perfect tense
- o **Trusted n the past**—with continuing and abiding results today

F. VERSE 6—CONFIDENCE

6 *I will sing to the Lord, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.*

1. DEALING BOUNTIFULLY = COMPLETENESS

- o God answers all our pleas/prayers
- o God provides every need

2. RESULT

- a. *Inward* rejoicing—**v5**—turns to *outward* expression—singing
 - Visible testimony—witness—to others
- b. Contrasted with—cry of despair—in **vv1-2**

3. LXX AMPLIFIES THIS PRAISE

Yea, I will praise the name of the Lord Most High.

- Found in Vulgate and English Prayer Book
- But not in Masoretic text