

PSALM 6

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- Unknown historical background
- David—betrayed by close friends and ‘mighty men’—only a small remnant faithful
- ‘All the men of Israel’—opposed to David—and seeking his life

II. TEXT

1 *O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your wrath. 2 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am pining away; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are dismayed. 3 And my soul is greatly dismayed; but You, O Lord —how long?*

4 *Return, O Lord, rescue my soul; save me because of Your lovingkindness. 5 For there is no mention of You in death; in Sheol who will give You thanks?*

6 *I am weary with my sighing; every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears. 7 My eye has wasted away with grief; it has become old because of all my adversaries.*

8 *Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping. 9 The Lord has heard my supplication, the Lord receives my prayer. 10 All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed; they shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed.*

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III. INTRODUCTION

A. TYPE OF PSALM

1. ONE OF THE LAMENTATIONS—[more than 60]
 - o The **third** of five in a row—[Psalms 3-7](#)

2. SPECIAL TYPE OF LAMENTATION

- o First of seven ‘penitential psalms’
- o Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

3. DIRECTION GIVEN TO CHOIR DIRECTOR

a. To be accompanied with ‘Neginoth’

1. Stringed instruments—like lyres and harps
2. Same instruction for Psalm 4

b. Upon ‘Sheminith’

1. Instruction for two Psalms—this one and Psalm 12

2. Hebrew term for ‘eighth’

a. Referring to musical instruments

1. Possibly an 8-stringed instrument
2. Or a deep tone—an octave lower—a bass tone

b. Root word frequently elsewhere—in a non-musical sense

3. Musical term found only once outside the Psalms—I Chr 15:21

a. When David was moving Ark of Covenant from house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem

I Chr 15—19 *So the singers, Heman, Asaph and Ethan were appointed to sound aloud cymbals of bronze; 20 and Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah and Benaiah, with harps tuned to alamoth; 21 and Mattithiah, Eliphlehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel and Azaziah, to lead with lyres tuned to the sheminith.*

b. Probably meaning—‘low-pitched lyres’

c. Contrasted with—v20—‘high-pitched harps’—tuned to ‘alamoth’ (treble)

B. AUTHORSHIP

- PSALM OF DAVID—ATTRIBUTED IN HEADING

C. SUBJECT

1. Central Idea

- o David’s appeal to God—when he is being chastised by God

2. Flow of Thought

- David asks God not to rebuke him—**v1**
- He feels the spiritual and physical effects of God’s rebuke—**vv2-3**
- He appeals to God’s grace—**v2**—and relies on His grace to save him—**v4**
- He feels he is on the brink of death—**v5**
- He languishes in despair—**vv5-7**
- He feels God’s wrath coming through his enemies—**vv7-8**
- David knows God will hear his prayer—**v9**
- Certain that God will answer his prayer—David rebukes his enemies—**v10**

D. STRUCTURE—FOUR STANZAS

1. **STANZA ONE**—COMPLAINT TO THE LORD—**vv 1-3**
2. **STANZA TWO**—PLEA FOR SALVATION FROM DEATH—**vv4-5**
3. **STANZA THREE**—TOTAL MISERY OF THE PSALMIST—**vv6-7**
4. **STANZA FOUR**—FAITH IN GOD AND VICTORY OVER ENEMIES—**vv8-10**

III. EXPOSITION

A. STANZA ONE—COMPLAINT TO THE LORD—**vv1-3**

1 O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your wrath. 2 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am pining away; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are dismayed. 3 And my soul is greatly dismayed; but You, O Lord —how long?

1. VERSE ONE

a. David’s situation

1. God is **angry** with David—apparently because of David’s sin
2. David’s conscience convicts himself

➤ He knows he deserves punishment—**as we all do for our sins**

3. What David does **not** do

- a. He does not—protest his innocence—and oppose God
- b. He does not—challenge God’s anger
 - ✓ Not asking God to go against His character
- c. He does not—challenge the basis of God’s anger

✓ Not asking God to change His standards of right and wrong

4. What David **does**

- a. He appeals to God—to temper *how* He responds in anger

b. Another way to read David's plea:

O Lord, in spite of your anger, do not rebuke me; in spite of your wrath, do not chastise me.

b. David pleads for mercy—in two parallel lines

1. 'Rebuke' and 'chasten'—are similar verbs
2. David makes **one** request—using two similar verbs—to emphasize one point

c. The two verbs

1. **Rebuke**—**yakack**

- a. To judge—reprove—convict
- b. More than just a verbal rebuke—but to **condemn**

2. **Chasten**—**yacar**

➤ To discipline—chastise—correct

d. Rising emphasis on God's anger

1. With 'rebuke'—he refers simply to God's 'anger'
 - **aph** = simple anger—[manifested in one's face/appearance]
2. But with 'chastise'—he escalates it to 'wrath'
 - **chemah** = heated rage—burning anger—[deep within]
 - KJV = 'hot displeasure'

e. David's is aware of two aspects of God's character

1. God's justice—His anger against sin—result in punishments
2. God's mercy—His love for the sinner—can forgive and mitigate punishment

f. So—David appeals to God's grace [mercy]—in **verses 2 and 4**

2. **VERSES TWO AND THREE**

a. David appeals to God's grace [mercy]

1. His sheer grace—**chanan**
2. His innate character of compassion and pity—for all persons
3. Compared to verse 4—His mercy related to His faithfulness—as covenant God

b. Reasons for his appeal—three effects of sin

- I am **pinning** away

- My **bones** are dismayed
- My **soul** is greatly dismayed

c. Structure of **verses 2-3**

1. Begins with—general condition—‘pining away’
2. Plea for healing—applies to following two problems
3. First complaint—‘bones’ are dismayed = physical problem
4. Second complaint—‘soul greatly dismayed = spiritual/emotional problem

d. General condition—‘I am pining away’

1. Meaning

- I am languishing
- I am fading away
- KJV = I am weak

2. Like a land that has been laid waste—**Is 24:4; 33:9**

Ex: drooping plants or flowers

Ex: withering plant—lack of moisture

e. Plea for healing

- Heb = **rapha** = restore my health—cure me
- Other translations—make me strong—make me healthy again

f. Healing of ‘bones’ and ‘soul’

1. Two aspects together—make the whole person
2. David is asking for complete delivery
3. Hoping for situation he describes in **Psalm 35**

Ps 35:9-10—*And my soul shall rejoice in the LORD; it shall exult in His salvation. All my bones will say, “LORD, who is like You, Who delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him, And the afflicted and the needy from him who robs him?”*

g. Physical healing—‘my bones are dismayed’

1. Meaning—‘my bones are disturbed’

- a. Bones—represent the whole bodily framework
- b. Other translations

- ✓ My bones shake with terror
- ✓ My whole body is completely exhausted

4 Return, O Lord, rescue my soul; save me because of Your lovingkindness. 5 For there is no mention of You in death; in Sheol who will give You thanks?

1. VERSE FOUR

a. **Return**—can mean two things—for God

1. To turn His mind

- Change His decision/attitude
- Relent
- Quit being angry

2. Return toward David

a. Return to David's presence

b. David's only hope is in God's actual presence

- ✓ Not only God's *action* of rescue
- ✓ But in God's *person* first—and His gracious character—[lovingkindness]
- ✓ God's presence and character are the basis of David's hope for rescue

b. **Rescue** and **save**

1. Near synonyms—but slightly different

2. **Rescue**—**chalats**—withdraw—remove

- KJV = deliver

3. **Save**—**yasha**—liberate—give victory

4. Both pleas—are based on God's mercy

a. Here it is God's lovingkindness—**cheded**—as faithfulness

b. God's goodness to His people—as covenant God

c. **Rescue my soul**

1. Remove my soul from these circumstances

2. **Nephesh**—save my whole life

- Addresses both the soul and the body

3. Meaning: rescue me from death—don't let me die

d. **Save me**

1. Liberate me—give me victory

2. Goes beyond removal from danger—to safety of salvation

e. Summary meaning

Because you love me, Lord, remove me from these circumstances and give me victory

2. VERSE FIVE

5 *For there is no mention of You in death; in Sheol who will give You thanks?*

For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?
KJV

a. Here is the ultimate reason for David's despair

1. He faces the reality of death—and what lies beyond
2. Death = the general state of being after life
3. Sheol = the concrete expression of that state

b. **Mention** = remembrance

- More than just mental recollection
- But recounting God's faithfulness and great deeds
- An act of worship

c. **No mention of you in death**

1. In death—nobody remembers God
2. In death—there is no worship of God

d. **Sheol**

1. OT concept—shadowy abode of the dead

- Gloomy gathering place of departed spirits
- For everyone who has died—Jew and Gentile—good and bad
- Place with no vitality, no joy, no life—only a hollow existence

2. Pictured several ways

- Huge sepulcher-type cavern—Ezek 32
- Stronghold—Ps 9 and 107
- Dark wasteland—Job 10
- Beast of prey—Is 5; Jon 2; Hab 2

3. A place where

- Worship will be silenced—**Ps 30:9; 88:10ff; 115:17**
- All plans are shattered—**Ps 146:4**
- Persons are cut off from God and man—**Ps 88:5**

- Persons come to an end—**Ps 39:13**
- No thanksgiving is given to God—**here**

4. Yet David hints here—there might be the possibility of delivery from Sheol
5. Other glimmers of hope in the OT

- a. Translations of Enoch and Elijah
- b. Psalmists affirm hope beyond Sheol

1. David

Ps 16:10—*For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor will you allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.*

2. The Sons of Korah

49:15—*But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, for He will receive me.*

3. Hope of deliverance—clearly explained

Is 26:19—*Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn. And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.*

Dan 12:1-3—*Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.*

6. What is the motive of the Psalmist?
 - a. Could David be bargaining with God?
 - If you let me die—you know you won't get any more praise from these lips!
 - b. Alternatively—consider David's 'perfect heart'
 - The reason he wants to live is for this very purpose—to praise God
 - David's whole life—his purpose of living—is set on pleasing God

C. STANZA THREE—TOTAL MISERY OF THE PSALMIST—vv6-7

6 *I am weary with my sighing; every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears.* **7** *My eye has wasted away with grief; it has become old because of all my adversaries.*

1. VERSE SIX

a. **Weary with my sighing**

1. Reason

- David is physically and emotionally at the end of his rope
- Completely depressed and in despair

2. Result = incessant *sighing*

a. Moaning—groaning—expression of deep grief

- ✓ Sounds that accompany great pain—involuntary?—uncontrollable?
- ✓ As groans in hospital?

b. This continual moaning has worn him out

c. Described in the two following pictures of weeping—both hyperboles

3. *Make my bed swim*

- I make my bed a flood of tears
- My tears soak my bed
- I make my bed flow away

4. *Dissolve my couch with my tears*

- I water my couch with my tears
- My couch [bed/pillow] is drenched with my tears

5. Parallel passage

Ps 31:9-10—*Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also. For my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing; my strength has failed because of my iniquity, and my body has wasted away.*

2. VERSE SEVEN

a. [NOTE: The eye is the window of the soul!]

- This idea connects **verses 6 and 7**

The weeping eye—**v6**
The weakened eye—**v7**

b. *My eye has wasted away with grief*

1. **Wasted away** = consumed—has failed—has grown dim
2. This is a sign of aging—and approaching death

Ps 13:3—*Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death.*

Ps 38:10—*My heart throbs, my strength fails me; and the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me.*

3. Connected with the idea that he is totally worn out
4. *In grief*
 - *indignation* and ill-will
 - particularly with respect to another's folly and unfaithfulness
5. David is *completely* worn out
 - a. Not just because of physical and emotional strain—**vv 2-3**
 - b. Not just because of depression and crying—**v6**
 - c. But also because of strain of adversaries
 - ✓ Grief = indignation at my enemies.”
 - ✓ These enemies have caused him much grief in Psalms 3-5

D. STANZA FOUR—FAITH IN GOD AND VICTORY OVER ENEMIES—vv 8-10

8 *Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping.*

9 *The Lord has heard my supplication, the Lord receives my prayer.* **10** *All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed; they shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed.*

SUMMARY:

- David assures himself of God's help
- Denounces his enemies and predicts their punishment
- This shift in tone is found in every penitential Psalm
- Sudden awareness and confidence in God's ability and certainty to deliver

1. VERSES EIGHT AND NINE

- a. Verse 8a—quoted by Jesus in Sermon on Mount
 - **Mt 7:23**—*Depart from me, you who practice iniquity.*
 - [Those professing to prophesy in His name, cast out demons, perform miracles]
- b. *Depart* = go away—and stay away—you are banished!
- c. *All you who do iniquity*
 - Evil-doers—same term for those who 'do iniquity'—**Ps 5:5**
- d. Is this just a personal statement?
 - Or a royal proclamation by the king—on behalf of God
 - Banishing evil from the realm

e. David speaks the same way—in more detail—**Ps 101:6-8**

Ps 101:8—*Every morning I will destroy the wicked of the land, so as to cut off from the city all those who do iniquity.*

f. David's Confidence

1. Not based on David's power as earthly king
2. But based on God—[the divine king]—because
 - a. He has heard David crying—David has gotten God's attention
 - b. God is concerned about David's state/condition
 - c. God has heard David's supplication
 - ✓ Not only David's weeping
 - ✓ But specifically David's 'cry for help'
 - d. He has *received* David's prayer
 1. Implies God's favorable response to the plea
 2. Leads psalmist to believe God will answer positively

2. VERSE TEN

KJV = *Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be a shamed suddenly.*

SUMMARY

- Better translated not as optative—but future—**certainty**
 - They **will** be ashamed
 - They **will** be greatly dismayed
 - They **will** return
 - They **will** be shamed suddenly
- a. *Ashamed*
 1. They will suffer the humiliation of defeat
 2. Confounded—confused
 3. The attitude and atmosphere among those defeated in battle
 - b. *Greatly dismayed* = troubled
 1. Sore vexed—as the Psalmist has been in **verses 2-3**
 2. Again—as in **Ps 2:5**—they will be 'terrified'

3. Their hearts will be filled with fear

c. **Return** = turn back

1. Not return to the psalmist—not in repentance

2. But return to their place—after their defeat and humiliation

3. They will retreat

4. God has driven them away

5. And David has commanded them to ‘depart’

6. Ultimately—this is a victory for God over enemies of His anointed