

Adam Clarke:**Introduction**

The benefit of confidence in God, Psalm 40:1-3. The blessedness of those who trust in God, Psalm 40:4, Psalm 40:5. The termination of the Jewish sacrifices in that of Christ, Psalm 40:6-8. The psalmist's resolution to publish God's goodness, Psalm 40:9, Psalm 40:10: he prays to be delivered from evils, Psalm 40:11-13; against his enemies, Psalm 40:14, Psalm 40:15; and in behalf of those who are destitute, Psalm 40:16, Psalm 40:17.

The Title, "To the chief Musician," we have already seen, and it contains nothing worthy of particular remark. Concerning the occasion and author of this Psalm there has been a strange and numerous diversity of opinions. I shall not trouble the reader with sentiments which I believe to be ill founded; as I am satisfied the Psalm was composed by David and about the same time and on the same occasion as the two preceding; with this difference, that here he magnifies God for having bestowed the mercy which he sought there. It is, therefore, a thanksgiving for his recovery from the sore disease by which he was afflicted in his body, and for his restoration to the Divine favor. The sixth, seventh, and eighth verses contain a remarkable prophecy of the incarnation and sacrificial offering of Jesus Christ. From the eleventh to the end contains a new subject and appears to have belonged to another Psalm. It is the same as the seventieth Psalm; only it wants the two first verses.

Verse 1

I waited patiently for the Lord - The two preceding Psalms are proofs of the patience and resignation with which David waited for the mercy of God. The reader is requested to consult the notes on them.

And heard my cry - The two preceding Psalms show how he prayed and waited; this shows how he succeeded.

Verse 2

A horrible pit - Literally, the sounding pit; where nothing was heard except the howlings of wild beasts, or the hollow sounds of winds reverberated and broken from the craggy sides and roof.

The miry clay - Where the longer I stayed the deeper I sank, and was utterly unable to save myself. The Syriac and Arabic translate "The pit of perdition, and the mud of corruption." These are figurative expressions to point out the dreary, dismal, ruinous state of sin and guilt, and the utter inability of a condemned sinner to save himself either from the guilt of his conscience, or the corruption of his heart.

Set my feet upon a rock - Thou hast changed my state from guilt to pardon; from corruption to holiness; in consequence of which my goings are established. I have now power over all sin, and can walk steadily in the way that leads to God's kingdom.

Verse 3

A new song - Cheerfulness and joy had long been strangers to him. He seemed to live to utter the most doleful complaints, and be a prey to suffering and wretchedness. Praise for a sense of God's favor was a new song to him. The word is often used to signify excellence: I will sing a most excellent and eminent song.

Many shalt see it - I will publish it abroad and fear-to sin against the Lord, knowing by my example what a grievous and bitter thing it is.

And shall trust in the Lord - Even the worst of sinners shall not despair of mercy, being penitent, when they see that I have found favor in his sight.

Verse 4

Blessed is that man - The man must be blessed and happy who casts his soul with all its burden of sin and wretchedness, at the footstool of God's mercy; for he will save all who come to him through the Son of his love.

Verse 5

Many - are thy wonderful works - The psalmist seems here astonished and confounded at the counsels, loving-kindnesses, and marvellous works of the Lord, not in nature, but in grace; for it was the mercy of God towards himself that he had now particularly in view.

should be offered for the redemption of mankind. That there might be such a victim, a body was prepared for the eternal Logos, and in that body he came to do the will of God; that is, to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

1.Hence we see that the sovereign Will of God is that Jesus should be incarnated; that he should suffer and die; or, in the apostle's words, taste death for every man; that all should believe on him, and be saved from their sins; for this is the Will of God, our sanctification.

2.And as the apostle grounds this on the words of the Psalm, we see that it is the Will of God that that system shall end; for as the essence of it is contained in its sacrifices, and God says he will not have these, and has appointed the Messiah to do his will, i.e., to die for men, hence it necessarily follows, from the psalmist himself, that the introduction of the Messiah into the world is the abolition of the law; and that his sacrifice is that which shall last for ever.

Verse 9

I have preached righteousness - I think it best to refer these words to Christ and his apostles. In consequence of his having become a sacrifice for sin, the Jewish sacrificial system being ended, the middle wall of partition was broken down, and the door of faith, the doctrine of justification by faith, opened to the Gentiles. Hence the Gospel was preached in all the world, and the mercy of God made known to the Gentiles; and thus righteousness - justification by faith, was preached in the great congregation - to Jews and Gentiles, throughout the Roman empire.

The great congregation, both in this and the following verse, I think, means the Gentiles, contradistinguished from the Jews.

The word righteousness means the plan or method of salvation by Jesus Christ - God's method of justifying sinners by faith, without the deeds of the law. See Romans 3:25-26 (note), and the notes there.

Verse 10

Thy faithfulness - This means the exact fulfillment of the promises made by the prophets relative to the incarnation of Christ, and the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Loving-kindness - Shows the gift itself of Jesus Christ, the highest proof that God could give to a lost world of his mercy, kindness, and loving-kindness.

Verse 11

Thy tender mercies - *רחמי* (*rachameycha*), such propensities and feelings as a mother bears to her child; or animals in general to their young.

Let thy loving-kindness - *חסדך* (*chasdecha*), thy overflowing and superabundant mercy.

And thy truth - What is revealed in thy word: continually preserve me. Mercy to help me, truth to direct me; and, by the operation of both, I shall be continually preserved from sin and evil.

Verse 12

Innumerable evils have compassed me about - This part does not comport with the preceding; and either argues a former experience, or must be considered a part of another Psalm, written at a different time, and on another occasion, and, were we to prefix the two first verses of the seventieth Psalm to it we should find it to be a Psalm as complete in itself as that is.

They are more than the hairs of mine head - This could not be said by any person who was exulting in the pardoning mercy of God, as David was at the time he penned the commencement of this Psalm.

Verse 15

That say unto me, Aha, aha - *אֵלֵינוּ אָמֵן* - See on Psalm 35:21 (note).

Verse 16

Let all those that seek thee - be glad - In making prayer and supplication to thee, let them ever find thee, that they may magnify thee for the blessings they receive.

Love thy salvation - Who earnestly desire to be saved from sin: saved in thy own way, and on thy own terms.

The Lord be magnified - Let God be praised continually for the continual blessings he pours down.

Verse 17

But I am poor - אָנִי אֲנִי (ani), afflicted, greatly depressed.

And needy - אֲנִי אֲנִי (ebyon), a beggar. One utterly destitute, and seeking help.

The Lord thinketh upon me - The words are very emphatic; אֲדֹנָי אֲדֹנָי (Adonai), my prop, my support, thinketh, אֲדֹנָי אֲדֹנָי (yachshab), meditateth, upon me. On which he concludes: אֲדֹנָי אֲדֹנָי Thou art my help and deliverer. Seeing that my miserable state occupies thy heart, it will soon employ thy hand. Thou, who meditatest upon me, wilt deliver me.

Make no tarrying - Seeing thou art disposed to help, and I am in such great necessity, delay not, but come speedily to my assistance. The old Psalter speaks to this effect: אֲדֹנָי אֲדֹנָי Let us not be so long under distress and misery that we lose our patience, or our love to thee.