

PSALM 55

A PRAYER AGAINST BETRAYERS

This Psalm is a prayer against betrayers. It seems that David most likely penned this composition when his most trusted counsellor Ahithophel turned against him and supported his rebellious son Absalom in his act of usurpation (2 Sam. 16 and 17). And yet, in the 12th and 13th verses, we may hear the words of Christ Himself, speaking of His own betrayer, Judas. "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have born it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance." But it is clear that it is also a general prayer of the people of God against all the craft of sneaky and deceitful men, and against the cunning flattery of persons who are friends as far as their tongue goes, but who have one thing on their tongue and another in their heart. Such persons act as if they consider craft and dissimulation to be the highest wisdom, as if they could deceive God Himself!

In the opening verses, we find David engaged in praying to the Lord. Prayer is a salve for every sore, and a relief to the spirit under every burden. But in addition to praying, he was also weeping. In this way, some griefs are somewhat lessened. Naturally, the Psalmist was in great alarm because of Absalom's conspiracy, which influenced the majority of his subjects. Even strong believers have times when they are filled with horror. But none was ever so overwhelmed as the Lord Jesus, when it pleased His Father to put Him to grief and to make His soul an offering for our sins. In His agony, He prayed even more earnestly, and He was heard and delivered. By trusting in Him and following Him, we shall be supported under and carried through all our trials.

See how David was weary of the treachery and ingratitude of men, and of the cares and disappointments of his high position; he longed to hide himself in some desert, far away from the fury and fickleness of his own people. He did

Overview of the Psalm, adapted from Charles Spurgeon:

This composition reads like a song of the time of Absalom and Ahithophel. It was after David had enjoyed peaceful worship (verse 14), when he was or had just been a dweller in a city (verses 9-11), and when he remembered his former roamings in the wilderness. Altogether, it seems to us to relate to that mournful era when the king was betrayed by his trusted counsellor; but the spiritual eye always and forever sees the Greater Son of David, Judas, and the chief priests appearing and disappearing upon the glowing canvas of the Psalm.

From verses 1-8, the suppliant spreads his case in general before his God. In verses 9-11, he portrays his enemies; in verses 12-14, he mentions one special traitor, and cries for vengeance, or foretells it in verse 15. He consoles himself by prayer and faith in verses 16-19; and in 20 and 21, he again mentions the deceitful covenant-breaker. He closes with a cheering exhortation to the saints (verse 22), and a denunciation of destruction upon the wicked and deceitful (verse 23).

not aim at victory, but only rest in a barren wilderness, so that he might be quiet. The wisest and best of men most earnestly covet peace and quietness, especially when they are vexed and wearied with noise and clamor.

No wickedness so distresses the believer as that which he witnesses in those who profess to be of the Church of God (verses 9-15). Alas! There are indeed many corruptions and disorders among the people of God on earth. But when we see these things, let us not be surprised; rather, let us long to see the New Jerusalem above! David here complains of one who had been very busy in his works of malice against him. The true Christian must expect trials even from



professed friends, and this will be very painful; but by looking unto Jesus, we shall be enabled to bear it. Even our Savior Himself was betrayed by His own companion, who resembled Ahithophel in both his crimes and his doom. Both of them were speedily overtaken by Divine vengeance. This prayer is also a prophecy of the utter and everlasting ruin of all who oppose and rebel against the Messiah, even in our own modern times.

In every trial, let us call upon the Lord, and He will save us! (verses 16-23) He shall hear us, and He will never blame us for coming too often. In fact, the oftener we come, the more welcome we are! David had thought all men were rising up against him; but now, by the time he comes to the end of this Psalm, he sees that there were many more on his side than he supposed. And for this assurance, He gives the glory to God; for it is He Who raises up friends for us, and it is He Who makes them faithful to us. Believers have more real friends in their gloomy hours than they suppose. And best of all, they have Jesus – the Best Friend of all – on their side!

Whatever it is that you desire God to give you, leave it to Him to give it in His own way and time. Care and anxiety are burdens which make the heart stoop. Let us commit our ways and works to the Lord; let Him do what He deems to be best, and let us be satisfied therein. To cast our burden upon the Lord is to rest upon His Providence and promise. If we do so, He will carry us in the arms of His power, just as a mother carries her little child. He will strengthen our spirits by His own Holy Spirit, so that they shall be able to sustain the trial. He will never allow the righteous to be moved or shaken by any troubles, so as to quit their duty to God or their comfort in Him. He will not permit them to be utterly cast down. He Who endured the burden of our sins desires us to leave it to Him to bear the burden of our sorrows as well. Why do not we trust Jesus to govern all things for the blessing and benefit of His children whom He has redeemed?

Thank You, Jesus, that we may cast all our burdens upon You! We also give thanks to You for Your promise that You will carry us in the arms of Your power. Amen.