

# Psalm 21

Title

December 17, 2023

## 1. Intro

- a. Every year, churches everywhere see an influx of people come through their doors at Christmas and at Easter
  - i. I didn't verify the statistics, but my guess is that this is a worldwide phenomenon
    1. Certainly, here in the United States, it's almost a guarantee that people will come out of the woodwork on these two holidays, even though they haven't entered the doors of a church at all the other fifty weeks of the year
      - a. One of our old pastors had a pretty fitting term for these twice-a-year attenders...
        - i. He called them CEO Christians
          1. Christmas and Easter Only Christians
    - ii. So why has this become the norm for us today?
      1. One could argue that these twice-a-year attenders come on these dates simply because that has become the cultural expectation
        - a. I think that would be an accurate assessment
      2. But I also think, if we dig a little deeper, the motives are quite a bit more selfish than we'd like to acknowledge
        - a. Just think about the typical messages you hear on these holidays...
          - i. On Christmas, the pastor generally puts together an evangelistic message all about how the Son of God left the glories of heaven, and he took on flesh as a helpless little babe in a manger... for ME
            1. That's a true message, right?
              - a. There's nothing wrong with a sermon like that
              - b. There's no error in that word
            - ii. Or on Easter... the pastor generally crafts a sermon all about how Jesus' death on the cross, and his ultimate resurrection, has secured eternal life... for ME
              1. Is there anything wrong with THAT message?
              2. Anything incorrect?
                - a. NO. That is a theologically sound and accurate word for any preacher to preach on Easter Sunday
            - b. And for the twice-a-year Christian, these are perfectly SAFE messages
              - i. It's the other 50 sermons of the year they have to worry about, right?
                1. What sin might the preacher preach about on January 27<sup>th</sup>?
                2. What commandment is going to be the focus on July 12<sup>th</sup>?
          3. And so, these twice-a-year attenders typically find something else to do with their time all those other Sundays out of the year
        - iii. Like I said, there IS NOT anything wrong with those messages that you normally hear on Christmas or Easter, for those ARE great opportunities to share the Gospel with those who do not truly understand it
          1. BUT, the reality is, these messages are not the WHOLE truth about what all the Gospel encompasses
            - a. Yes, the Gospel is about Jesus taking on human flesh, and coming as Emmanuel, God With Us
            - b. And yes, the Gospel is about Jesus living an absolutely perfect, sinless life, dying on the cross to atone for OUR sins, and then being raised from the dead to sit at the right hand of God, FOREVER, securing OUR place in heaven
              - i. These are all TRUE truths
                1. But they are not ALL of the truth
          - iv. The truth is, there is MUCH more going on in the Gospel than what Jesus has done for OUR benefit

1. Psalm 21 shows us that there is a whole other level of interactions going on, between the Father and the Son
  - a. So let's look at this Psalm together
- v. This Psalm is meant to be a companion Psalm to the Psalm we looked at last week, Psalm 20
  1. In Psalm 20, we saw David praying to the Lord for protection and support against his enemies
    - a. We saw the congregation praying on behalf of the king that the Lord would save him and fulfill all his petitions
  2. In Psalm 21, we find the answer to all these prayers
    - a. The king has been delivered
    - b. The king has won the battle
    - c. The king has been saved!
      - i. And so we read Psalm 21 as a Psalm of glorious triumph for King David...

b. Psalm 21

i. To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. <sup>1</sup>O LORD, in your strength the king rejoices, and in your salvation how greatly he exults! <sup>2</sup>You have given him his heart's desire and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah <sup>3</sup>For you meet him with rich blessings; you set a crown of fine gold upon his head. <sup>4</sup>He asked life of you; you gave it to him, length of days forever and ever. <sup>5</sup>His glory is great through your salvation; splendor and majesty you bestow on him. <sup>6</sup>For you make him most blessed forever; you make him glad with the joy of your presence. <sup>7</sup>For the king trusts in the LORD, and through the steadfast love of the Most High he shall not be moved. <sup>8</sup>Your hand will find out all your enemies; your right hand will find out those who hate you. <sup>9</sup>You will make them as a blazing oven when you appear. The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath, and fire will consume them. <sup>10</sup>You will destroy their descendants from the earth, and their offspring from among the children of man. <sup>11</sup>Though they plan evil against you, though they devise mischief, they will not succeed. <sup>12</sup>For you will put them to flight; you will aim at their faces with your bows. <sup>13</sup>Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power.

1. King David absolutely experienced many victories throughout his reign over the Kingdom of Israel
  - a. And therefore, this Psalm serves as a fitting hymn to celebrate the many victories that God had given to His anointed one
    - i. But commentators, almost across the board, acknowledge this...
      1. While this Psalm does apply to David, it's GREATER application is to the King who would come a thousand years later in David's line – the very Son of God, Jesus Christ
  - b. And it is in THIS light that we find our main points for this morning's message:
    - i. The Father's provision for His Son
    - ii. The Son's response
    - iii. And the Father's wrath against all who reject His Son

2. First, the Father's provision for His Son

- a. David writes in verse 2 that, "The Lord gave to the king his heart's desire"
  - i. For David, this meant victories on the battlefield, and success against his enemies in war
- b. So what does this mean if we apply this Psalm to Jesus?
  - i. The first thing we might think of when we think about what Jesus desired is his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane
    1. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we find Jesus praying this prayer...
      - a. "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me"
        - i. There are different ideas about what "this cup" means
          1. Some would say that Jesus was praying that his Father would not have him go through the physical torment and suffering he was about to go through on the cross
          2. But the truth is, other Christians went through the same physical torment, didn't they?

- a. So if THAT was all that Jesus was praying about, we'd honestly have to say that we'd be a little unimpressed, wouldn't we?
    - b. No, when Jesus prayed that this cup would be taken from him, I believe what he was praying is that he would not experience the wrath of His Father
      - i. Jesus, who had ALWAYS been in a loving, united, beautiful relationship with His Father, was about to experience the full weight of His Father's judgment against the sin of the world
        1. And the thought of facing this awful punishment caused Jesus' sweat to become like great drops of blood falling on the ground
2. So what was God's response to Jesus' prayer in the Garden?
  - a. Well, thankfully for you and me, God's answer was "No."
    - i. This was what was necessary to accomplish His plan of redemption, so the Father DID NOT remove the cup of His wrath from His Son
      1. Jesus ultimately said, "Not my will, but yours be done"
        - a. And, according to Isaiah 53:10, "It was the will of the Father to crush His Son"
          - i. The earth trembled
          - ii. Darkness blotted out the sun
          - iii. And the Father put to death His only begotten Son, according to His plan from the foundations of the world
    - b. So if God the Father didn't remove the cup, how did he give to Jesus his heart's desire, according to Psalm 21:2?
- ii. He gave to Jesus his heart's desire, not by answering the prayer in the Garden, but by answering Jesus' EARLIER prayer in the Upper Room
  1. In John 17, Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer," Jesus prays in verses 4-5,
    - a. *<sup>4</sup>I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.*
    - b. Before Jesus prayed for the cup to be taken away from him, he prayed that His Father would glorify him in His presence, just as he was glorified before he came to us in human flesh
      - i. And God the Father answered this prayer, didn't He?
  2. We see this in the great Benedictions of Scripture, as various authors lift high the praises of God and of Christ in their letters
    - a. In Romans 16:25-27, Paul writes
      - i. *<sup>25</sup>Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*
        1. In the wisdom of God, eternal glory comes through His Son, Jesus Christ
    - b. In Jude 1:24-25, Jude writes
      - i. *<sup>24</sup>Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, <sup>25</sup>to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*
        1. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, glory, and majesty, and dominion, and authority are established FOREVER
  3. And in Hebrews 2:9, we read

- a. <sup>9</sup>*But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*
  - i. Jesus prayed in the upper room that he would be glorified in the Father's presence
    - 1. And the Father delighted to crown His Son with glory, because of the suffering he endured in death
  - ii. As Psalm 21:5 says, Jesus' glory is GREAT through the Father's salvation
- c. But this is not all the Father did for His Son
  - i. Psalm 21:3 says that *"You meet him with rich blessings..."*
    - 1. So what are all these blessings?
  - ii. Verse 3 goes on to say that *"you have set a crown of fine gold upon his head"*
    - 1. We saw in Hebrews 2 that this crown was a crown of glory and honor
      - a. There is no more magnificent crown in all of God's creation than that
        - i. The Father blessed the Son with the crown of glory
  - iii. And the Father blessed His Son with life
    - 1. Psalm 21:4 says, *"He asked life of you; you gave it to him, length of days forever and ever"*
      - a. In Acts chapter 2, when Peter got up in front of the crowds on the Day of Pentecost, he quoted Psalm 16 in reference to Jesus, saying
        - i. <sup>27</sup>*For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. <sup>28</sup>You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'*
          - 1. Yes, Jesus died upon the cross – there is no doubt whatsoever of that fact
          - 2. But he was not abandoned by the Father
            - a. His body did not fall into corruption
        - ii. But instead, as Peter would go on to say in verses 31 and 32, David foresaw the resurrection of the Christ, and *"this Jesus, GOD raised up from the dead"*
      - b. The Father gave to the Son LIFE, and length of days for all eternity
      - c. He crowned him with glory
  - iv. And as Psalm 21:5 says, *"splendor and majesty you bestow on him"*
    - 1. In the Hebrew, these words used for splendor and majesty are two different words, "hod" and "hadar," but they are very similar in their definitions
      - a. It's almost as if David is saying
        - i. Splendor upon splendor you have given to him
        - ii. Majesty upon majesty you have bestowed on him
        - iii. Beauty upon beauty you have proclaimed over him
          - 1. This is how the Father exults in His Son!
            - a. Is it any wonder that Paul says in Colossians 1:19-20
              - i. <sup>19</sup>*For in him ALL the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*
    - iv. In Christ, God is pleased to dwell in ALL His fullness
      - 1. There is no better explanation of "splendor upon splendor!"
  - v. And in Psalm 21:6, we read that *"you make him MOST BLESSED, forever"*
    - 1. In the original text, this actually reads, *"you make him BLESSINGS forever"*
      - a. Christ is not only MOST blessed in that the fullness of the Father dwells in him
      - b. But he is also the fount from which all of the blessings of God flow
        - i. In the great promise that He made to Abraham in Genesis 12, God said to him,
          - 1. <sup>1</sup>*Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>And I will make of you a great nation,*

*and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

- ii. How would Abraham, a man who lived and died over 4000 years ago, be the one through whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed?
  - 1. It is ONLY through the one who would come 2000 years later in the line of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ!
    - a. Through CHRIST, the nations shall know the blessing of God
    - b. For God has made Jesus blessings FOREVER!
- vi. The Father gave to the Son his heart's desire by crowning him with glory
- vii. The Father met the Son with rich blessings of life and splendor and majesty
  - 1. And all of this is sealed with this wonderful promise of Psalm 21:7
    - a. Through the steadfast love of the Most High, the King shall not be moved
      - i. Isn't that a beautiful statement?
        - 1. We talk often about God's will and God's plan, and how in His wisdom He has ordained Christ to be our King
        - 2. But David reminds us here that ultimately, it is because of the Father's unwavering LOVE for His Son that Christ shall NEVER be moved
          - a. We do not serve a cold, or an unfeeling or impassionate God
          - b. We serve a God whose love for His Son is unparalleled in all of Creation
      - b. And this love overflows into ALL who have placed their trust in His Son
        - i. This is what John wrote as he said in 1 John 4:7-10,
          - 1. *<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
          - 2. My friends, until we begin to understand the love of God in THESE terms, we will not truly understand love at all
        - ii. God's love for His Son is steadfast... unwavering... never-changing
          - 1. And it is because of this love, that His Son will FOREVER be King!
- viii. Well, we could go on for days upon days speaking of the wonders of all that the Father has done for the Son, but we need to move on to our second point this morning...

### 3. The Son's Response

- a. In verse 1, we read, "*O Lord, in your strength the King rejoices*"
  - i. I love this
    - 1. Think about our main passage from last week's Psalm
      - a. Psalm 20, verse 7 said,
        - i. *<sup>7</sup>Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God*
          - 1. The trust of the King and the trust of his people were not in the size of their army, or the might of their weapons
          - 2. Their trust was in the name of their God
        - ii. And now, in Psalm 21, we see the outcome of their trust
          - 1. After the victory, it isn't in the strength of the horses that the king rejoices
          - 2. It isn't in the speed of his chariots
            - a. It is in the strength of the Lord!

2. Now think about this in terms of the Father and the Son
  - a. Can you imagine, as Christ ascended to the Father to sit at His right hand in the throne room of heaven?
    - i. We talk a lot about how much we look forward to that Day when we hear from Jesus, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"
      1. But what must have it been like when the Father said to the Son, "Well done, my Son in whom I am GREATLY pleased!"
        - a. And then the Son looks to the Father and says, "In YOUR strength I rejoice"
      - ii. What an extraordinary picture of a Son's devotion to his Father!
    3. In the strength of his Father, Jesus rejoiced
  - b. And as Psalm 21:1 continues, "In your salvation, how greatly he exults!"
    - i. This word used for exult can mean, "being joyful," or "rejoicing in," but its not just a quiet, peaceful kind of joy
      1. In the definition for this word, the idea is of one spinning round and round, under the influence of extreme emotion
        - a. That is how our Lord Jesus GREATLY exults in the salvation of His Father!
        - b. The picture we get in our head is of a child dancing and spinning with great joy and glee as his Father rescues Him from some awful terror or experience
          - i. But this isn't some child, is it?
            1. This is the Son of God, the Messiah, the one who will return again riding on a white horse, with his robe dipped in blood, and his eyes aflame
            2. THIS Jesus exults with GREAT joy in his Father's salvation
      2. Just an aside here...
        - a. I wonder, when was the last time YOU exulted in the Lord's salvation with such joy and passion and exuberance?
          - i. I'll be honest and say that this is a hard one for me
            1. By nature, I am not an emotionally expressive person
            2. I have trouble even raising my hands when we're singing hymns together on a Sunday morning
              - a. But my goodness, do we understand what the Father's salvation TRULY means to us?!
                - i. How is it that me making a mistake on a cabinet project can throw my emotions off for an entire day, if not more?
                - ii. How is it that someone not being nice to us in the workplace can bring us such offense?
                - iii. How is it that watching the news for ten minutes can send us into an attitude of utter helplessness and despair?
            - ii. My friends, we have been SAVED!!
              1. For those of us who are in Christ, death has been defeated!
              2. Our sin has been forgiven!
              3. Our relationship with our Father has been restored!
                - a. Why in the world are we not an abundantly more JOYFUL people?!
          - ii. Jesus exulted GREATLY in His Father's salvation
        - c. For he understood that his Father's salvation, meant his Father's PRESENCE
          - i. And in Psalm 21:6, we read, "You make him glad with the joy of your presence"
            1. This word that David uses for "glad with joy" is an interesting one

- a. While the other words that David used for rejoicing, and exulting, and blessing are all fairly common words, this word for “glad with joy” is found in only two other places in the Scriptures
    - i. One of these is after Moses has led the Israelites out of Egypt, and he meets back up with his father-in-law, Jethro
      - 1. After Moses tells Jethro all that God had done in Egypt on their behalf, Exodus 18:9 says,
        - a. <sup>9</sup>And Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the LORD had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians.
      - 2. And Jethro then went on to say in his rejoicing,
        - a. <sup>10</sup>*“Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. <sup>11</sup>Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods...”*
      - 3. And then Jethro, a pagan priest of the land of Midian, brought forward burnt offerings and sacrifices
        - a. For he realized that he was now in the presence of the One TRUE God
    - 2. If this was the case with Jethro, how much more so must it have been for Jesus, who for the first time in all eternity, had experienced NOT being in the presence of his Father as he hung upon the cross?!
      - a. And how greatly must he have rejoiced to once again have that presence restored?
      - b. I’m guessing that “glad with joy” doesn’t even begin to describe how Jesus felt then, and how he continues to feel today!
- d. And I love how David ends this section of the Psalm with these simple words in verse 7, “The King trusts in the Lord”
  - i. This was the story of Jesus’ life, wasn’t it?
    - 1. Why did the Son leave all the glories and riches of heaven to come to this earth as a frail human being?
      - a. Because he trusted in his Father
    - 2. Why did Jesus walk in faithful and humble and resolute obedience all the days of his life?
      - a. Because he trusted in his Father
    - 3. Why did Jesus willingly endure the scorn of his own people, the torment of the Roman soldiers, and a painful and bloody and humiliating death upon the cross?
      - a. Because he trusted in his Father
        - i. Think about one of the last things that Jesus said before his breath gave out...
          - 1. “Into YOUR hands, I commit my spirit”
        - ii. Jesus trusted his Father, all the way to the very end
          - 1. And his trust was rewarded, wasn’t it?
            - a. God the Father must have been absolutely beaming with pride, as Jesus said the words, “It is finished”
            - b. I can just picture God in heaven saying, “Yes it is, Son. Yes it is”
    - b. The King trusted in his Father
      - i. And his Father has met that trust with RICH blessings!
  - ii. My friends, I pray that we see through Psalm 21 that yes, God did love the world so much that He sent his one and only Son to die for us, but there is SO MUCH MORE to the story!!
    - 1. God provided richly for His Son
    - 2. And the Son rejoices greatly in His Father
- e. But that’s not where Psalm 21 ends, is it?

- i. For, verses 8-12 give us a sobering warning as we look at our final point this morning,
- 4. The Father's wrath against all who reject His Son
  - a. Think about all that we have heard this morning
    - i. Think about the riches God has poured out upon His Son for his obedience
      - 1. Christ was crowned with glory
      - 2. He was given life eternal
      - 3. He was robed in splendor upon splendor
      - 4. All the nations of the earth will be blessed through the Son's humble obedience to the Father
    - ii. And, in light of this, the Scriptures tell us that MANY will look at all that the Son has accomplished, and they will turn away as if they had no need for the work that he did upon the cross
      - 1. But they won't just turn away
        - a. They will laugh
        - b. They will mock
        - c. They will ridicule
          - i. In their hearts, they will hate the Son, and they will hate all claim to bear his name
      - 2. This is the power that sin has over our hearts, my friends
        - a. We don't just make a bad decision now and then
          - i. We are slaves to our sinful desires
          - ii. We love our flesh FAR more than we love anything or anyone else
            - 1. And because of the sin that we ALL have in our hearts, we are enemies of God
    - iii. And Psalm 21:8-12 show us what it means to be His enemy
      - 1. He will find us out
      - 2. He will judge us in the fires when He returns
      - 3. He will swallow us up in His wrath
      - 4. He will destroy all who have followed in our way
      - 5. He will aim His bow at our faces
        - a. And He is RIGHT and JUST to do so
    - iv. For we have looked upon His grace and mercy and love in sending His Son to die on our behalf, and we have rejected it all
  - b. My friends, examine your hearts this morning
    - i. Have you TRULY surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ?
    - ii. Have you TRULY counted the cost of following him, and come to the realization that he is of far more worth than any loss you might encounter in this life?
    - iii. Have you TRULY cast down the old man or old woman of your flesh, and said to the Lord God Almighty, "Today, I DIE to myself?"
      - 1. The amazing promise of the Scriptures is this – if you have TRULY come to Christ in this way, fully surrendering to him with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, then all the riches that the Father has given to His Son, are now YOURS as well!
        - a. That sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?
          - i. ALL the riches of heaven, are OURS?!
          - ii. If you feel a sense of unworthiness of such a treasure, then you have understood the Gospel rightly
        - b. For, as Paul writes in Ephesians 1:3,
          - i. *<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us IN CHRIST with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...*
  - c. Friends, may we be filled with joy and reverence and awe this morning
    - i. For ALL of this has come through the obedience of the one TRUE King, our Lord Jesus Christ
    - ii. ALL of it has come through the gracious wisdom of the Father
      - 1. *Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength! We will sing and praise YOUR power!*