

Introduction

Like David in this case, if we have not already experienced it, a time will come when we will encounter something which comes exclusively by the will of man. While it may be most often true that many are the earthly conflicts which come about for which we have to take at least the smallest fraction of blame when it comes to how it was incited and inflamed, there is the rare occasion when we are actually completely innocent, but it comes upon us any way. We need to recognize that our faithfulness to God's Word and ways, and to Him personally, is being tested whether we are in the midst of a trial for which we must bear some initiating responsibility, or it originates solely with someone else. In either case, how will we first deal with God before dealing with man?

Read verses 1-2

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

¹O LORD, how my adversaries
have increased!
Many are rising up against me.
²Many are saying of my soul,
"There is no deliverance for him
in God." Selah.

Q: What is the historical context for which David wrote this Psalm?

A: It is a time when his son Absalom, along with his supporters, have taken over David's throne. David and those still with him fled for their life. [See 1 Sam. 15:1-17:29]

Q: What is David the most concerned about in this situation?

A: He is most concerned about his soul—that is, his spiritual condition.

Q: Why was this a literal issue raised directly to David at that time?

A: In the course of his flight, Shimei cursed David, attributing this situation as coming about directly by the hand of God. The popular opinion that David had experienced a falling out with God was a real accusation and not something simply a product of David's imagination.

⁷Thus Shimei said when he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow! ⁸The LORD has returned upon you all the bloodshed of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. And behold, you are taken in your own evil, for you are a man of bloodshed!"

2 Samuel 16:7-8

Q: How does this reveal something special about David's priorities?

A: He is not so much concerned for his present life being delivered, but rather in the end whether he will be *spiritually* delivered—that is, that God will rescue his eternal soul. David is more concerned about the mind of God than the actions of man.

Application: *In every circumstance, the most important outcome has to do with our soul, that we see the completion of the work of God's salvation.*

³But You, O LORD, are a shield
about me,
My glory, and the One who lifts
my head.
⁴I was crying to the LORD with
my voice,
And He answered me from His
holy mountain. Selah.
⁵I lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the LORD sustains
me.
⁶I will not be afraid of ten
thousands of people
Who have set themselves
against me round about.

Read verses 3-6

Q: How do these verses answer the question of David's spiritual state?

A: This is confirmation that he is still in a right relationship with God; it's more about the Lord than about David personally.

Q: List the ways in which David found assurance from God:

1. "...**You...are a shield about me...**" (v.3) Protection from God, in spite of the circumstances.
2. "...**You...are...My glory...**" (v.3) Not relying on one's self and reputation, but still working exclusively for God's glory alone in spite of the circumstances.
3. "...**You...are...the One who lifts my head**". (v.3) Spiritual encouragement sets everything in its right perspective in spite of the circumstances.
4. "...**He answered me...**" (v.4) God's response in contrast to man's accusations which are attempting to define the circumstances.
5. "...**the LORD sustains me**". (v.5) Not rescued yet, but faithful in spite of the circumstances.

Application: How should each of these attributes be applied to any crisis in our own life? How have they occurred in such past situations for you personally?

Q: Why is David's mention of sleep significant where his personal situation is concerned?

A: Absalom was pursuing David with 12,000 men (1 Sam. 17:1) and had even sent David a message concerning this very issue in a threat boasting of his pursuit.

¹⁶"Now therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying, 'Do not spend the night at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means cross over, or else the king and all the people who are with him will be destroyed.'"

2 Samuel 17:16

Application: David's confidence in God is so great that he never takes matters into his own hands, nor takes reciprocal actions based on what man says.

Q: What is the spiritual result David experienced as a result of God's response? How does it contrast with his initial concern?

A: Initially those who have come out publicly against David claim that he is in spiritual trouble where God is concerned. Having been reassured by God, "*I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people*". (v.6) David's faith in God remains unwavering in spite of the opinions of man.

Application: God's first **response** in even the most dire of earthly situations is often **spiritual** in order to reinforce what is most important on our part: **faith** in Him.

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⁷Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God!
For You have smitten all my enemies on the cheek;
You have shattered the teeth of the wicked.
⁸Salvation belongs to the LORD;
Your blessing be upon Your people! Selah.

Read verses 7-8

Q: How does this contrast with the opening of this Psalm?

A: It began with man's accusation, "There is no deliverance for him in God" (v.2), and ends with the reinforcement of David's faith so he can declare, "Salvation belongs to the LORD". (v.8)

Application: *Man's word must never be allowed to undermine the reality of God's Word.*

Q: How does David characterize God's response to the others pursuing him?

A: God has "smitten all my enemies" and "shattered the teeth of the wicked". (v.7)

Q: How is God dealing with the various factions which have come against David?

A: Those who have taken direct action, characterized as "enemies", have been dealt with by God directly; those who have taken spiritual action—that is, "the wicked" who because they attack verbally, have experienced a divine response in direct proportion to their character and actions in having their teeth shattered.

Application: *That which the unaided eye sees is far afield from the reality which is revealed by faith.*

¹⁵Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" ¹⁶So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

2 Kings 6:15-16

Application: *Trusting in God always results in the appropriate resolution because it is a proportional response meted out by Him.*

Overall Application

Although David was literally fleeing from a real, earthly threat to his life, he was even more focused on fleeing to God spiritually. He knew that in spite of the physical circumstances, the resolution would be spiritually determined. His enemies attempted to make additional claims that what David was experiencing was coming about by the hand of God in order to attack his faith when he needed it most.

- What is our first response, even when the earthly circumstances are the most overwhelming?
- How long does it take us before we realize that such is a spiritual issue needing to be addressed spiritually?

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- How well do we recognize that others, especially those aligned against us, do not actually speak for God but would have us falsely believe so?
- How well do our actions and faith affirm that salvation is actually from the Lord and cannot come about by other means, even our own self?

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