

## Introduction

We are almost always faced with tangible and literal actions which have been brought against us, but the Psalms are overflowing with examples of the need to take up a position in the Lord so as to determine the greater spiritual underpinnings of our antagonists' behavior and goals. God takes such opportunities to address the issue of faith in us as we trust Him (or not), and to appropriately address that which is going on within the opposition. The way we conduct our self is not just for our sake alone, but for both our foes and the greater Body of Christ at large.

A Psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup>To You, O LORD, I call; My rock,  
do not be deaf to me,  
For if You are silent to me,  
I will become like those who go  
down to the pit.

<sup>2</sup>Hear the voice of my  
supplications when I cry to  
You for help,  
When I lift up my hands toward  
Your holy sanctuary.

## Read verses 1-2

### **Q: What is the major contrast spoken of here?**

A: "I call", "I cry", and "I lift up my hands" vs. "do not be deaf", "if You are silent", and "Hear". It is a very dramatic way of requesting help in a desperate situation.

### **Q: What, exactly, are "supplications"?**

A: The underlying Hebrew word carries the meaning of a heartfelt response by someone with something to give to someone in need. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the equivalent term used means to pity or have compassion. It is not just a request to get something one wants, but an appeal to God who has the only thing which will truly save both literally and spiritually, while inferring His mercy and grace will motivate His response.

### **Q: Why would God's unresponsiveness be "like those who go down to the pit"?**

A: This is a Hebraic way of describing a situation which has no hope. If God has the only remedy, and yet remains "deaf" and "silent", then there is no hope.

### **Q: Is there any evidence in this opening that the petitioner has not yet lost hope in God?**

A: He calls God "My rock". This is a common scriptural metaphor meaning fortress and refuge.

**Application:** God is not simply someone to be **acknowledged**, but a trusted **refuge** from which we can appeal to His **mercy** and **grace** for even the most difficult situation.

<sup>3</sup>Do not drag me away with the wicked  
And with those who work iniquity,  
Who speak peace with their neighbors,  
While evil is in their hearts.  
<sup>4</sup>Requite them according to their work and according to the evil of their practices;  
Requite them according to the deeds of their hands;  
Repay them their recompense.  
<sup>5</sup>Because they do not regard the works of the LORD  
Nor the deeds of His hands,  
He will tear them down and not build them up.

### Read verses 3-5

#### **Q: Who are the main antagonists identified?**

A: The “wicked”, who act in a manner which can best be described as the exact opposite of righteousness. They are not merely backslidden or in error, but actively engaged in a lifestyle furthest away from God’s Word and ways. And “those who work iniquity” who twist God’s Word into something to suit their own purposes and agenda.

#### **Q: What are the behaviors betraying these categories of behavior?**

- (v.3) “...who speak peace with their neighbors, while evil is in their hearts”. They consciously and willfully deceive.
- (v.5) “...they do not regard the works of the LORD... nor the deeds of His hands...” “Works” and “deeds” are primarily used to refer to God’s acts in history. The wicked refuse to acknowledge God’s sovereignty.

**Point:** Although these antagonists will take physical actions which are a legitimate cause for concern, they are motivated spiritually against both God and man.

#### **Q: What are the actions God is requested to take against them for their “work”, “practices”, and “deeds”?**

A: “Requite” and “repay”. This is an appeal for God to enact an appropriate return for their behavior.

#### **Q: What is the desired response of God to their dismissal of the Lord’s own “works” and “deeds”?**

A: “He will tear them down and not build them up.” (v.5)

**Application:** We always appeal to **the Lord** to provide the appropriate and proportional **response** to satisfy Him rather than what we might **desire** for ourselves.

<sup>6</sup>Blessed be the Lord,  
Because He has heard the voice  
of my supplication.  
<sup>7</sup>The Lord is my strength and  
my shield;  
My heart trusts in Him, and I am  
helped;  
Therefore my heart exults,  
And with my song I shall thank  
Him.  
<sup>8</sup>The Lord is their strength,  
And He is a saving defense to  
His anointed.  
<sup>9</sup>Save Your people and bless  
Your inheritance;  
Be their shepherd also, and  
carry them forever.

## Read verses 6-9

**Q: How is this closing section dramatically different from the previous two?**

A: It is praise and thanksgiving for God hearing and taking action on the supplication made to Him.

**Q: How are v.6-7 different from v.8-9?**

A: First is individual praise and acknowledgement (“*the LORD is my strength*”), then comes the same from the group (“*The LORD is their strength*”).

**Q: What is the tangible result for the individual?**

A: “...my heart trusts in Him...” and “...my heart exults”. (v.7)

**Q: What are the characteristics of God sought for the group?**

- (v.8) “...their strength...”
- (v.8) “...a saving defense...”
- (v.9) “...bless Your inheritance...”
- (v.9) “...their shepherd...”
- (v.9) “...carry them forever.”

**Point:** Notice that these all express trusting in God for the outcome and not seeking enhanced abilities or material wealth. As with David’s personal appeals throughout the Psalms, he seeks the same for the whole of God’s people corporately.

**Application:** Our personal **victories** of faith should always be **leveraged** on behalf of the entire Body of Christ. We do for others what the **wicked** never would.

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