

# Psalms for a Summer Evening

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Date: 11 August 2019

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, please turn back with me to the first part of God's Word we read in Psalm 21. Psalm 21, as we continue our little mini-series on what I've called Psalms for a summer evening.

And those of you who were here, if you remember last Lord's Day evening, remember we were looking at Psalm 110, that psalm that tells of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, as King in all His glory and His reign.

Jesus as King and Jesus as our eternal High Priest. The Lord Jesus who continues to intercede for His people. The Lord Jesus who offered Himself up on the cross as a sacrifice for sin.

The Lord Jesus who continues to be our mediator between God and man. And the psalm that we looked at last week, the psalm of victory, the victory of the Lord Jesus.

And I want to continue that theme of looking at the Lord Jesus in His being victor. When we look at Psalm 21, a psalm that I'm sure many of you know, many of you have sung many times.

[ 1 : 13 ] And yet, how often have we sung the psalm, and even other psalms, and have wondered, what is the psalm pointing to? Who are being addressed here?

What have we just sung as when we sang these words from Psalm 21? What has God included in this psalm? This is a divinely inspired word of God.

And I'm sure we were asking ourselves, what were we actually singing? I mean, it was in many ways the practice of psalm singing in our own denomination. We, as a young boy, I just took for granted what I was singing without the words really being explained.

But if that's, you know, just the case, well, aren't we missing something? Aren't we missing so much truth in the Word of God that God has inspired, even as we think of this book of psalms itself, this collection of 150 psalms that God has inspired through various authors, of course, one author being David.

What are we seeing in this psalm? In fact, when we think of the psalms themselves, don't they point to the Lord Jesus? I mean, after all, didn't there isn't Lord Jesus tell the two followers on the Emmaus Road, that all that was contained in the Scriptures, all that was contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, concerned himself?

[ 2 : 40 ] And doesn't the writer to the Hebrews tell us that, you know, what we find in the Old Testament is a shadow of the good things to come? So when we come, generally, to the book of psalms, then surely, you know, we're to probe what God has given us, what God is showing us, what God's purposes are, and where are they and inspiring authors such as King David to write what God intended to reveal?

And yes, of course, we see the experience of God's people under God. We hear and read and sing of God's covenant people in these psalms.

And of course, we read in the psalms the experience of the author, such as David, David, in his experience under God's covenant blessings. But you know, as we start to probe the psalms, don't we see the bigger picture?

That's a prayer we'll see in Psalm 21 this evening. Don't we see the bigger picture? Don't we see, and we do see, the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory, in his majesty, in his victory, and yes, in his ongoing battle against his and against our enemies.

And so in seeing Jesus as King, surely there must be that response from you who hear and read and sing these words. The response of worship.

[ 4 : 05 ] The response of giving glory to our King, our King, the Lord Jesus. And to have that assurance, maybe even reassurance, that his victory is on our behalf.

His victory is our victory. And so give him that unending praise and thanks for that. And when we come to this psalm in particular, I mean, you know, we've already sung these first seven verses and

we see already that, you know, this is a great psalm of joy.

This is a psalm of victory. I mean, verse one, as we saw there, the psalm begins with joy, O Lord, in your strength. The King rejoices. And this psalm ends with joy in verse 13.

Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength. We will sing and praise your power. A psalm that begins with joy and ends with joy, ends with praise. And we know that another psalm encourages you to make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Well, the psalm certainly fulfills that command. But what are we singing? What have we just sung in the psalm? I mean, we read here of the Lord.

[ 5 : 13 ] Well, as we saw last week, we understand that speaks of Yahweh, the covenant name of the God of Israel. So that is certainly straightforward enough. But then there's this focus on the King.

And we have to ask, who is this King? Then as we proceed having answered that question, then we come across the enemies. In verse, from verse 8 down to verse 12, we have to probe and find out who are these enemies or what are these enemies?

And then finally, the we of verse 13. We will sing and praise your power. So the psalm divided into three parts, if you like. Our church Bibles show these three divisions.

So, we've got to identify the main characters of the psalm. And then, of course, there has to be application. We have to apply the psalm to our faith and to our trust in Almighty God.

Then we have to ask, well, how do we apply the psalm to our ongoing daily life, our everyday life in following the Lord? What blessings does the psalm give us as we sing from these words, as we meditate on these words?

[ 6 : 27 ] There's so much in the psalm to consider as we look at these great words, as we sing from these great words, these great words that God breathed out to King David.

And words, I pray, that we'll find have a very present application for you who sing them, for ourselves as we read from them, as we meditate on them, as we give thanks to God for them.

So, I've mentioned three divisions in this psalm, of course, three divisions that unite. We'll look at verses 1 to 7 as one of the units. If you like, the past victory of the King.

And then verses 8 to 12, the ongoing battle of the King. And then verse 13, the rejoicing of God's people in the King.

So, verses 1 to 7, the past victory of the King. As we've noticed already, when the psalm begins, there's much rejoicing. You know, just as when a King returned from battle, a battle in which he was victorious, the King would have led his army into battle.

[ 7 : 36 ] And if he was victorious, or had been victorious, he'd return from the battle. And he'd be greeted by his people. And certainly when David wrote this psalm, he was king over Israel.

And he rejoiced in his victories over the enemies of God and his people. And the people, quite rightly, rejoiced in these victories. His victories, the victories of David, were their victories.

But then notice, notice what's happening there at the start of the psalm. The King has returned. But who has come to meet Him? What are we told here?

It's the Lord. The covenant God of Israel. It's the Lord that the King gives praise to for... Well, the word here is salvation. But the word that can speak of deliverance, of salvation.

His deliverance in battle. And you notice the number of times really throughout the psalm that you, it's referred to you the Lord. You. Your salvation and your strength, the King rejoices.

[ 8 : 43 ] Your salvation, how greatly He exults. You have given Him His heart's desire. And so on. The focus of praise and glory is to our Lord God. It's the strength of the Lord that's given the King His deliverance in battle, His salvation.

It's the Lord who's given the King, the King's heart's desire for victory. It's the Lord who, in this first instance anyway, has met with King David, as you see there in verse 3.

The Lord who's given David the token of His victory, the crown of gold. But as we've said, yes, in the first instance, David is rejoicing in His victory that the Lord has given him.

But there's much more. There's more. There's more beyond a particular victory that David's celebrating. Because, as we know, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we've been permitted to see that the victory that's recorded here, the victory of David, is a shadow of greater things to come.

Because there's a King, or the King, beyond David. Beyond David for whom these words apply. A King who fulfills these words of the psalm as the ultimate King, as the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus.

[10:09] And you might ask, well, how do we work that out? Well, we use Scripture to interpret Scripture. We read the psalms, we read this psalm with the Lord Jesus before us.

And when we do that, the meaning is amplified. Because the person of King David now gives way to the one who's greater than David. To the Son of David, to the Son of God, to the Lord Jesus. He is the King who rejoices in the Lord in the context of battle that we see there in verse 1. He, Jesus, is the one who fulfilled His Father's will and, yes, even to engage the enemy of our souls and that to defeat the enemy or the enemy's sin, Satan, death itself.

We read another part of Hebrews. We read in Hebrews 2 of the Lord Jesus. We read again in Hebrews 12 again of Jesus in that victory.

Hebrews 12, to who for the joy that was set before Him. Notice the psalm is a psalm of rejoicing. Jesus rejoiced too for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

[11:26] That joy, knowing that victory was His. That joy of Jesus, knowing that by His death on the cross, He would win salvation for those who came to give His life.

That joy and the rejoicing in Jesus' deliverance from death itself. By the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead. And the psalm speaks of blessing.

Well, think of the blessings that God has bestowed on Jesus in that victory over sin, over Satan, over death. And that victory seen in Jesus' ascended glory.

Again, as we read in Hebrews 2, that glory that was declared of 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.

And it's that glory and it's that honor that speaks of Jesus' authority as King. As King and as Lord and yes, as we'll see as the psalm progresses, as judge.

[12:40] Judge and as authority. Jesus as judge, as King, judge if you like. Well, John himself, John the Apostle, John the disciple, John as Apostle and his vision of Christ's authority as judge and King.

John spoke of that authority of Jesus. Authority and judgment. You read in Revelation 14, verse 14, Then I looked and behold a white cloud and seated on the cloud one like a son of man with a golden crown on his head.

Look, as exactly as we've seen there in verse 3. A golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. The one like a son of man, of course, being the Lord Jesus. Come as King, of course, symbolized and that crown come as judge, symbolized in the sharp sickle that implement, if you like, to reap the earth, to bring in the harvest of souls into eternal glory.

The King, the Judge, the Lord Jesus. So you see there in verse 3 we've already read of the crown given to the King in victory.

Here's one indicator of the King, the Lord Jesus, to come in all His glory and power. Then as we read on in verses 4 and 5 we see there the granting of eternal life pointing to the eternity of our Savior.

[14:09] And surely this goes much beyond King David. This is the Lord Jesus, our eternal King, the one whose reign is forever and ever.

Remember when we go back to the Old Testament when David ruled in Israel and David wanted to build a temple for the Lord, a house for the Lord.

And God said to David that a son, not David, but a son would build that house and that the throne of his kingdom would be established forever. Will David die? The son who did the physical building of the temple, Solomon, he died.

But David's descendant in his human nature, the Lord Jesus, he reigns forever. The kingdom of Jesus established forever. His reign is eternal.

And you know, the glory of Jesus is just overflowing in this psalm. You know, again as you see in verses 6 to 7, just full of description of the Lord Jesus. I mean, if King David in his earthly rule, if he knew a particular glorious king of Israel, if he knew a particular splendor in his high position, if he knew a majesty as the royal ruler of his people, if he was blessed, you know, being blessed by God appointing him as king of Israel, and how much the Lord Jesus, how much more the Lord Jesus in all his magnificent glory and his work of salvation, how much more the glory of the Lord Jesus in his exaltation.

[ 15 : 49 ] Certainly he's been exalted after his victory over his and over our enemies. We're seeing here the splendor and the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ as king.

King in his royal position. We're told he is seated at the right hand of the Father, seated in his Father's presence. And then when we come to verse 7, you know, as we close, this first section of our vision of the Lord Jesus and Jesus' glorious majesty, you know, reach this crescendo.

And again, we have to see the words that King David uses here of himself and his trust in the Lord, that assurance that, you know, he has that covenant to love of God, that that will never leave him. We have to see, well, this is magnified in the experience of the Lord Jesus. Jesus in his life on earth. He trusted in his Father. He trusted him wholly and completely.

And of course, we see that trust supremely on the cross. Remember the dying breath of Jesus when Jesus cried out, Father, into your hands I come out my spirit. So, what do we say to all these verses?

[ 17 : 01 ] How do we apply these verses that point us to the Lord Jesus? I think there are a number of applications. I think, first of all, they help you to grow in your understanding of who Jesus is in his great majesty, in his great victory.

And they give you that assurance that, yes, he is the victor. He has triumphed in his battle over sin. He has defeated the power of sin on the cross.

He has been victorious over Satan. That victory when he bore the sins of his people on the cross. The psalm points to the victory of Jesus over death when Jesus rose from the dead.

And that victory, Jesus, the victor that we see here in the psalm, assures you, you who are his. That Jesus has won his victory for you.

Sin will not have its power over you. Satan cannot snatch you from the grip of Jesus' hands. Death cannot hold you in its grip.

[ 18 : 12 ] And so the relationship that we see here in the psalm between the Lord and the King and these first seven verses, we're assured that our God reigns. We're assured that God's kingdom will never be overthrown.

That's exactly what the second part of verse seven tells us. The reign of King Jesus shall not be moved. His kingdom is fixed, it's secure, it's impregnable.

And surely that has to give each one of us that sure hope in the Lord that yes, there are these continual battles of faith, there's that continual spiritual warfare that exists, yes, between the forces of the evil one and God's people.

We're assured that our Lord reigns. We're assured that He's sovereign. He's won the victory. All the futile attempts of Satan to disrupt and to spoil God's church are just that, attempts.

Satan will not have the victory. God has won the victory for us. And this ongoing battle we see developed in verses 8 to 12, the ongoing battle of the king.

[ 19 : 24 ] I mean, as we see in the psalm here, the king has won a glorious victory. But there are still enemies who are hostile to him. He can continually be opposed and attacked as will his people by his enemies.

And you know in King David's history, King David as king of Israel, certainly that happened. There were the continual battle between Israel and the enemies of Israel.

But move forward to the greater reign of Jesus. And these words of verse 8 to 12 reveal that truth of the ongoing battle of the king, of the Lord Jesus against his enemies.

And you know, it's interesting, often in the psalms we see the word enemies. And sometimes I think we're almost hesitant to sing of enemies in the psalms. But the reality is there.

We have that spiritual warfare, warfare between the Lord and Satan and the enemies of Jesus. The enemies of Jesus are the enemies of his people.

[ 20 : 29 ] And so we do have to recognize and acknowledge that spiritual conflict that exists and will exist until the Lord returns. And to emphasize that truth, these verses before us, they help us to see the work of the Lord Jesus and identifying who these enemies are.

And when they're identified, then the revelation of what Jesus will do against his enemies and his righteous justice. And as we see verses 8 to 12, as we probe these verses, certainly we see the power of the Lord Jesus in his war against evil.

And again, the response that we have to show in our part in that warfare, excuse me, if we, if you are on the Lord's side.

Well, look at the identification of the enemies in verse 8. Your hand will find out all your enemies. Your right hand will find out those who hate you.

Look at the key verb here. Find out. Your hand will find out all your enemies. Your right hand will find out those who hate you. Find out.

[ 21 : 48 ] It's not always obvious who the enemies of Jesus are. The devil masquerades as an angel of light. But Jesus finds out who his enemies are.

How are we told? How does he do this? We're told here by his right hand. In other words, the symbolism of power, of power. And I think again we have to use our imagination here.

Think of ancient times. Kings, we said that kings went into battle. Kings would carry swords. They would carry their sword into battle. The sword in their right hand.

It was rare for anyone to have left hand. You probably know. But the sword, the right hand, the hand of power, that sword that would winnow out the enemy. And that right hand emphasized power.

It emphasized the power of victory. Now bring this to Jesus. His finding out is by his power. The power he wields, as it were, by his right hand, if you like, his sword hand.

[ 22 : 51 ] But where is that sword? Where is that power? Where does scripture tell us that power lies? Scripture tells us that power lies in his mouth.

Back to the book of Revelation. You read in Revelation 1 of that truth. Revelation 1.16 From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword. Revelation 2.16 Repent, if not I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

One more reference. Revelation 19.15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. So the sword hand of Jesus, the right hand of power, is his mouth.

What comes from the mouth of Jesus, what comes is his word. His word of power, that word that searches hearts, that word that reveals who truly are the enemies of God.

Because it's his word, his word that reveals sin, that reveals the enemy of the soul. His word exposes that darkness that lurks deep within the heart of man.

[ 23 : 57 ] that's whether the person who pretends to be a Christian, the person who might fool others by fine sounding spiritual platitudes, the person who might even convince others of his credentials as a Christian, and yet when the word of God, when the word of Jesus probes his heart, it reveals a heart that's far from God, far from saving grace.

But then there's the work of the word in the heart of the believer. The word of Jesus that delves deep into the heart. The word that delves deep into the heart where there's indwelling sin that's been allowed to take root.

And Jesus by his word probes that heart and reveals where that deep-seated sin lies. For the enemy of sin has been so embedded in our hearts. The sin of pride.

The sin of greed. The sin of the love of money. The sin of unfaithfulness. The sin of the eyes. The sin that others know nothing of and yet Jesus knows because his word exposes that sin.

And so how much more do we need the Lord Jesus to find us out? The word of God to expose yes the sins in my heart, your heart, so that we might be rid of these sins.

[ 25 : 19 ] Rid of the enemies of Jesus, the enemies of our soul. How much we need to be under the sword of the word and be prepared for that sword to wield its power because the sin that lies deep within our hearts that prevents you and prevents me from that closer walk with the Savior.

How much more do we need that word of Jesus to help you to discern truth from lies, to discern who are the faithful men of God from the false teachers.

And it's the word, it's the power of the word that's the arbiter of true faith. We're surrounded by so many who claim to possess the truth.

The truth is made clear by the word. And that surely means that we have to be in the word and allow the word of Jesus to, yes, to be as that sword, to penetrate even to the very core of our hearts and to do it for the sake of truth, for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of the church, for the sake of the glory of the name of the Lord Jesus.

Be under the word, be under it constantly, whether it's, yes, importantly, in church, at home, in fellowship one with another, because isn't it the case that the neglect of the word of Jesus is one of the great tragedies of our modern church.

[ 26 : 48 ] We're all culpable in that neglect. We need so much of his word, and yet we neglect so often the ministry of the word of God, the word of Jesus.

Nobody can live as a faithful Christian without the word. And then, what we find in the psalm, as we move on, we find the verdict of Jesus' work as judge against his enemies.

We've mentioned enemies before, well, let's focus on these enemies. What's the verdict of Jesus in his work as judge? It's judgment.

In fact, really, verse 9 to verse 12, you can read them quietly to yourself, but notice the reality of the judgment of Jesus. We're told in verse 9, you will make them as a blazing oven when you appear. when you appear. This is the language of judgment. This is God speaking through King David, telling of the return of one who will be the judge, the ultimate judge, the return of Jesus as judge, yes, when he appears in all his glory.

[ 28 : 02 ] And, you know, in these verses, certainly, see, from verse 8 down to verse 12, as we said, this is the language of judgment. This is the language of the destruction of Christ's enemies.

The apostle Paul wrote of that destruction. Again, as I read these words from 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, listen to them as they echo, if you like, the latter words of verse 21.

When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction.

And listen to these words, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, away, that's the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord.

Now, in the Old Testament, where we hear that expression, the presence of the Lord, Lord, it's away from the face of the Lord. Remember what's said in Revelation 6.16, of those who are condemned by the Lord Jesus, the judge, those who are condemned will call on the mountains and rocks fall on us, hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne from the wrath of the Lamb.

[ 29 : 30 ] And this is where it all ties together. Verse 9, Psalm 21, the King coming in judgment when you appear. You know what these words are literally in the original language?

These words when you appear, the words literally are at the time of your face. We've just been looking at in terms of judgment, the face, the face of God. I mean, fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

At the time of Christ's appearing, literally, as we've seen this Old Testament passage here, at the time of his face, when he will look upon his enemies with vengeance, with that righteous fury, his face will be directed in judgment against all whose faces in life have been turned away from Jesus. So we've got here, even here in the psalm, that future warning of Jesus' face being turned against his enemies. The final victory will be Jesus.

as king, yes, as king, he'll have restrained and conquered all his enemies. That's what our catechism teaches us from scripture. His enemies, as we see in the psalm here, that had planned Christ's downfall.

[ 30 : 50 ] The downfall will not be Christ's. The downfall will be his enemies. So what's your response to this knowledge that we have here in the psalm of king and his victory of the one who will come as judge when we see the final victory of the Lord Jesus?

What's our response? What's your response? Well, it has to be praise. As we see here in verse 13, the third of our three units of the psalm, we see here the people's rejoicing in the king.

Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength. we will sing and praise your power. So if the king rejoiced, the king, as we see here, David initially pointing to the Lord Jesus, if the king rejoiced in the strength and power of the Lord here at the start of the psalm, well, it's for the people to praise the Lord for that same strength and power.

That's going to be your response, my response when we sing this psalm. What are you thinking this psalm? Praise God for the victories of Jesus over his and our enemies.

The victory of Jesus in what we call his act of obedience when he obeyed God, his Father fully in his life of perfect obedience. And then that victory on the cross, that victory as we said over sin and Satan, that victory then over death in his resurrection, past victories with present consequences.

[ 32 : 20 ] surely you and I were to praise God for these victories. And yes, praise God for the promise of victories still to be in that final victory over Satan when Jesus returns.

So I pray that in this psalm that we have sung, we'll sing at the end of our service, this psalm has encouraged you to see Jesus in all his glory.

glory. And I pray that this psalm has given you a fuller understanding of who our Savior is and what he has done for his people. So give him the glory.

Give God the Father, give God the glory for sending, yes, his Son to be that victor. Because without that victory, no one would know eternal life.

Praise him, yes, bless him for his might, for his power. Give glory to God. Yes, and give thanks to God that God has given us this psalm.

[ 33 : 21 ] That we can sing this psalm, we can sing these God-breathed words of joy and confidence in our God, in our King, our King who reigns.

Amen. Let us pray. Our Lord, our God, our Heavenly Father, we give you thanks that you have so breathed out these words to David so that we might sing them.

So that we might sing them with understanding, so that we might sing them, yes, of the victory of the Lord Jesus in his might, in his power. And may it be that as we acknowledge the Lord Jesus as King, that we will know that we must submit to his rule and his reign.

And that he be Lord over us, King over us, and that we submit to all that he commands us in love. Lord, help us then to see our King, to see Jesus in all his might and all his glory.

And yes, Lord, that we might serve him, serve him with gladness, serve him with joy, serve him knowing that we serve a living Saviour, a living King, the one who is King and Judge.

[ 34 : 36 ] Continue, Lord, with us now as we sing again from that psalm. May you have the praise and glory in that singing. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, let's conclude our service singing in Psalm 21 from verse 8 to the end of the psalm. As we were thinking, so we sing, Thine hand shall all those men find out that enemies are to thee.

Even thy right hand shall find out those of thee that haters be. 8 to 13, Psalm 21 to God's praise. Amen. Amen.