

Psalm 41

"David's Instructive Prayer for Forgiveness, Healing, and Deliverance from His Enemies"

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

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A1 YAHWEH'S BLESSINGS UPON HIM WHO HELPS THE HELPLESS 41:1-3 ¹

B1 Deliverance in Trouble 41:1

C1 The Statement of the Blessing: {1} How blessed is he who considers the helpless;²

C2 The Nature of the Blessing: The LORD will deliver him in a day of trouble.

B2 Physical Preservation 41:2-3

C1 Protection: {2} The LORD will protect him and keep him alive, 41:2

C2 Superlative Blessing: And he shall be called blessed upon the earth;

C3 Preservation from His Enemies: And do not give him over³ to the desire of his enemies.

C4 Restoration from Illness 41:3

D1 {3} The LORD will sustain him upon his sickbed;

D2 In his illness, You restore him to health.

¹ 41:1-3 - These three verses seem to be a prequel to the main section of the psalm (41:4-10), in which David recounts his illness brought about by God's discipline of him for an unnamed sin or sins. When he was helplessly sick, his enemies vindictively circulated false reports of his imminent death. In the final section (41:11-13) David praises God for His deliverance. The opening section (41:1-3) amounts to an after-the-fact introduction to the main body of the psalm. In this introduction David teaches the congregation that those who, like God, help the helpless, will be blessed, because the Lord delivers the helpless from his sickbed and preserves him from the wicked, who wish him dead. (See Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (TBKC), and his introduction to Psalm 41.)

² 41:1 - helpless: David had been helpless (see 41:4-10), and God had helped him. David abstracts the principle that, since God helps the helpless, God will bless the human who also helps the helpless.

³ 41:2 - do not give him over: NASB translates this Qal Imperfect as a jussive (with the force of an imperative), probably because of the *al* (not) that precedes, whereas the Qal and Piel Imperfects at the beginning of the same verse it has translated as statements of fact. KJV and NIV here translate as a statement of fact -- "you will not give him over to the will of his enemies." The NASB translation is to be preferred.

A2 DAVID'S PLEA FOR GRACIOUS FORGIVENESS, FOR HIS SIN HAS CAUSED HIS ENEMIES TO SLANDER AND PLOT AGAINST HIM 41:4-10

B1 His Plea for Yahweh's Gracious Healing Because of His Sin 41:4

C1 For Grace: {4} As for me, I said, "O LORD, be gracious to me;

C2 For Healing: Heal my soul,

C3 Because of His Sin: for I have sinned against You."

B2 His Description of His Enemies' Tactics 41:5-9

C1 Their Evil Advocacy of His Death: {5} My enemies speak evil against me, "When will he die, and his name perish?" 41:5

C2 His Visit under False Pretenses 41:6

D1 His duplicity: {6} And when he comes to see *me*, he speaks falsehood;

D2 His evil intent: His heart gathers wickedness to itself;

D3 His false report: When he goes outside, he tells it.

C3 Their Conspiratorial Rumor Mill 41:7-8

D1 The whispering campaign against him: {7} All who hate me whisper together against me; Against me they devise my hurt, *saying*,

D2 Their prediction of his imminent death 41:8

E1 Their acknowledgment of his illness: ⁴ {8} "A wicked thing is poured out upon him,

E2 Their prediction of his demise: That when he lies down, he will not rise up again."

⁴ 41:8 - illness (in title): David was evidently ill, for he has asked for healing (41:4). He interprets his illness as a Divine judgment designed to restore him to fellowship. His enemies, however, hope for, indeed advocate, his death. (See also Ross, *TBKC*.)

C4 The Betrayal by His Trusted Friend 41:9

D1 His past close and trusted relationship: {9} Even my close friend⁵
in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread,

D2 His subsequent betrayal: Has lifted up his heel against me.

B3 His Prayer for Healing 41:10

C1 His Prayer That Yahweh Might Graciously Restore His Health: {10} But
You, O LORD, be gracious to me and raise me up,

C2 His Intention to Repay His Enemies: That I may repay⁶ them.

A3 DAVID'S PRAISE TO YAHWEH FOR ANSWERING HIS PRAYER 41:11-13

B1 His Gratefulness for Preserving Him from His Enemy 41:11

C1 His Realization of Yahweh's Approval: {11} By this I know that You are
pleased with me,

C2 His Proof of Yahweh's Approval – Preservation from His Enemy:
Because my enemy does not shout in triumph over me.

B2 His Gratefulness for Yahweh's Acceptance of Him 41:12

C1 Upholding His Integrity: {12} As for me, You uphold me in my integrity,

C2 Promoting Eternal Fellowship: And You set me in Your presence forever.

B3 His Eternal Praise of Yahweh 41:13

C1 The Recipient of Praise: {13} Blessed be the LORD,⁷ the God of Israel,

C2 The Time of Praise: From everlasting to everlasting.

C3 The Affirmation of Praise: Amen and Amen.

⁵ 41:9 - friend: Ross (*TBKC*) interprets this as referring to David's turncoat advisor, Ahithophel, who, for a time advised Absalom in his attempt to overthrow his father (2 Sam. 15:31 ff. 2 Sam. 17:1). This is certainly possible, although the setting of this psalm provides no further clues to substantiate that view. Certainly Jesus quoted this passage (John 13:18) referring it to Judas' traitorous behavior. Edwin A. Blum (John, *TBKC*) observes, "As David was betrayed by his trusted table companion Ahithophel, who then hanged himself (2 Sam. 16:20-17:3, 23), so Judas, Jesus' close companion, betrayed Him and then hanged himself."

⁶ 41:10 - repay: If Ahithophel's defection for Absalom is part of the background of this Psalm, David's intention to repay his enemies is to be taken not as a desire for personal revenge, but for a restoration of the Anointed King (David himself) designated by God to lead God's chosen nation, Israel.

⁷ 41:13 - Blessed be the LORD: Personal prayer for personal deliverance is always a cause to end in praise of Yahweh, Israel's God!

Expanded Analysis of Psalm 41

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