

STUDIES IN PSALMS

PSALM 21

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Thanks for the King's Victory, and Confidence
of Further Triumphs.

ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-6, Recent Victory with Joy Acknowledged, vers. 1, 2; traced back to Blessings beginning with Coronation, ver. 3, when Long Life was asked, ver. 4; the Continuance of which Life and Blessings is now Counted upon with Confidence, vers. 5, 6. *Refrain*, ver. 7, The People extol their Monarch's Faith, and Assure Themselves of the Stability of his Reign. Stanza II., vers. 8-12, Coming Conquests Foretold, ver. 8, bringing on Enemies Fearful Punishments, vers. 9, 10, and the Defeat of their Devices, vers. 11, 12. *Refrain*, ver. 13, Jehovah's Power Extolled.

(Lm.) Psalm—By David.

- 1 Jehovah: in thy might rejoiceth the king,
and in thy victory¹ he exulteth greatly!
- 2 The longing of his heart thou hast given him,
and the request of his lips hast thou not withheld.
- 3 For thou camest to meet him with blessings of goodness,
thou didst set on his head a crown of fine gold:
- 4 Life he asked of thee—thou gavest it him.
length of days to the ages and beyond
- 5 Great is his glory in thy victory,¹
majesty and state thou layest upon him;
- 6 For thou dost appoint him blessings evermore,
thou dost cheer him with gladness by thy countenance.
- 7 Yea the king is trusting in Jehovah,
and in the kindness of the Highest he will not be shaken.
- 8 Thy hand will find out all thy foes,
thy right hand will find them who hate thee:
- 9 Thou wilt put them in a furnace of fire,
in the time of the setting of thy face against them.

1. Or: "salvation."

PSALM TWENTY-ONE

- Jehovah in his anger will swallow them up,
and there shall consume them the fire of his wrath;¹
10 Their offspring² out of the earth wilt thou destroy,
and their seed from among the sons of men.
11 Though they have held out over thee a wicked thing,
devised an evil device they shall not prevail;
12 For thou wilt make them turn shoulder in flight,
on thy bow-strings wilt thou make ready against their faces.
13 Be thou exalted Jehovah in thy strength,
We will sing and will harp thy power.

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician. (CMm.) Concerning The Hind
of the Dawn? = The King in his Beauty.

PARAPHRASE

PSALM 21

How the king rejoices in Your strength, O Lord! How he
exults in Your salvation.

2 For You have given him his heart's desire, everything he
asks You for!

3 You welcomed him to the throne with success and pro-
perity. You set a kingly crown of purest gold upon his head.

4 He asked for a long, good life, and You have granted his
request; the days of his life stretch on and on forever!

5 You have given him fame and honor. You have clothed
him with splendor and majesty.

6 You have endowed him with eternal happiness. You have
given him the unquenchable joy of Your presence.

7 And because the king trusts in the Lord, he will never
stumble, never fall; for he depends upon the steadfast love of the
God who is above all gods.

8 Your hand, O Lord, will find Your enemies, all who hate
You.

9, 10 When You appear, they will be destroyed in the fierce
fire of Your presence. The Lord will destroy them and their
children.

11 For these men plot against You, Lord, but they cannot
possibly succeed.

1. Ver. 9 slightly expanded by Br., to make four lines and fill stanza.
2. M.L.: "their fruit."

STUDIES IN PSALMS

12 They will turn and flee when they see Your arrows aimed straight at them.

13 Accept our praise, O Lord, for all Your glorious power! We will write songs to celebrate Your mighty acts!

EXPOSITION

The temptation to declare this psalm to be simply a Coronation Psalm, to which some expositors have yielded, is obvious. On closer examination, however, it will probably be found that a more satisfactory view of the setting and scope of the whole psalm can be obtained by regarding the reference to coronation as incidental to the more general conception of reign. A recent victory restores the lustre of a reign which had become beclouded by the invasion of foes: this very naturally brings up a reminiscence of the high hopes with which the reign was begun. The king then became Jehovah's vicegerent; for Jehovah crowned him. Aspiring to rule well, as every dutiful Son of David must,—he naturally desired to rule long; in which desire his people loyally united, apprehensive of the evils of succession and change. Hence sprang the coronation greeting, *May the King live! How long? Who could think of assigning a limit? Nay, may the king live for ever! as long as ever Jehovah please: loyalty declines to assign a limit.* Besides, who knows when King Messiah shall come? Who can ever tell whether this Heir to the Throne may not be He? and who knows whether the Heir Himself, breathing such an atmosphere, may not have conceived the incipient wish that it might be himself? Dim, visionary, yet withal dazzling,—the wish may have been father to the prayer: *Life he ask of thee, to which he felt no need to assign an end—life, only life!* The spirit of the Messiah, working in the psalmist, carries him out of himself. It has not been revealed to the psalmist who will be the Messiah. But, in language vaguely and benevolently suited to *any* Son of David, yet strictly applicable only to *the* Son of David, he adds:—*thou gavest it him, Length of days, 'olam wa-edh, age-abidingly and beyond.* From this point onward the radiance of a Messianic light rests on the psalm. It is King David or King Jehoshaphat who sits yonder, but on him rests a light from afar, not his own. Through the type, we catch glimpses of the Antitype.

PSALM TWENTY-ONE AND TWENTY TWO

While abiding by the dominant view of authorship appended to the preceding psalm, hearty consent may be accorded to the following judgment:—"When, in after times, the prosperity of Hezekiah was celebrated in the Temple worship, this psalm was singularly appropriate. Whether by adaptation or not, ver. 4 had a special meaning when spoken of him; and vers. 11, 12 tell of the Assyrian army and its destruction"—Thirtle, O.T.P., 314-15.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This is referred to as a Coronation hymn—why?
2. What is meant by the expression—"Long live the King"? i.e. in context.
3. There are three applications to each of these psalms:
 - (1) apply it to David or the writer;
 - (2) apply it to the Messiah;
 - (3) apply it to ourselves.What personal encouragement is found in this psalm?
4. Notice the possible Messianic application of verses 3 through 6. Cf. II Sam. 7.
5. Anticipation of victory instead of defeat is a great source of encouragement—Read verses 8 through 13 with personal applications.

PSALM 22

DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

The Voice of a Forsaken Sufferer—Loudly Lamenting his Lot, Minutely Describing his Pain and Shame, without Reproaching God or Accusing Himself—is Suddenly Silenced (in Death); and then as Suddenly is Heard in a Strain of Triumph, in which Other Voices join, all Celebrating the Praises of Jehovah as Sovereign Lord.

ANALYSIS

This psalm naturally falls into two parts: the *first* part, spoken by One Voice, consisting of six decastich stanzas, One of them Broken Short; and the *second* part, spoken by Other Voices, consisting of four tristich stanzas, each of these including an Appropriate Refrain.