

MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Psalm 31

God Is My Rock

Quote

“Adversity does not make us frail; it only shows us how frail we are.”

Anonymous

I. Introduction

Every human weakness is an opportunity to trust in God’s strength. The awareness of personal impotence should always lead the believer to cast himself on divine omnipotence. This was David’s experience as recorded in Psalm 31. He found himself in yet another painful experience of life, and this ordeal drove him to trust God and his power more fully. In this sense, when he was weak, then he was strong.

On this particular occasion David was confronted with a conspiracy so powerful that even his closest friends and most ardent supporters had abandoned him. Alone and forsaken, he found himself emotionally distressed and physically drained, with no one to turn to but God. Filled with deep anxiety, David had to trust in the Lord. His anguish was transformed into assurance.

This psalm conveys an unwavering trust in God as the psalmist rejoiced in the all-sufficient resources of God. This “psalm of David” was probably to be used by “the director of music” in temple worship, either spoken by the worship leader or by the choir (1 Chr. 23:5, 30).

II. Commentary

MAIN IDEA

David expresses his trust in God to deliver him, although he is surrounded by problems and filled with pain.

A David’s Plea (31:1–5)

31:1–2. This psalm begins with David’s urgent plea to God, asking that he listen to his cry and rescue him from his enemies: In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge (Heb. *hasa*, “to flee for protection,” “to take shelter in”). For David, God was his protection from the assault of his enemies. Turn your ear to me was a bold request that God would pay attention to him. David declared, Be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. The repetition of these strong synonyms for God conveys the intensity of the psalmist’s trust in him. In asking God to be “a strong fortress” (literally “a house of fortification”), David was trusting in him as his ultimate defense. Although David had often taken refuge among the rocks of the wilderness (1 Sam. 23:25; 24:2), his true security was found in the Lord.

31:3–4. The phrase “Since you are my rock and my fortress” is a restatement of the previous verse. God would guide David after setting him free from the trap set for him. David asked this so he might pursue God’s will. It was to this mighty God that David cried out for deliverance. The grounds of this appeal were not his own goodness, but God’s righteousness. He asked this not for his own reputation but for the sake of your name.

31:5. In an expression of total trust in God, David prayed, Into your hands I commit my spirit, a passage later quoted by One greater than David, the Lord Jesus, as he hung on the cross (Luke 23:46). The psalmist had chosen, literally, to deposit his life into the Lord’s hands. This is a picture of total reliance on God. Redeem me, he cried out, O Lord, the God of truth. God has promised to help his people, and he cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

B David’s Passion (31:6–8)

31:6–8. David next revealed the driving passion behind his prayer, a zeal and jealousy for the honor of God’s holy name. He declared, I hate those who cling to worthless idols. He rejected those who rejected God. In this sense he refused to be associated with the evil lifestyles and wicked beliefs of the godless (cp. Ps. 1:1). He vowed to be glad and rejoice in God’s love. This he did because he knew that God saw his affliction and knew his anguish. He believed that God would set his feet in a spacious place, meaning a large place of firm footing where he could escape the threats and dangers that had hemmed him in.

C David’s Pain (31:9–13)

31:9–10. In his troubles David was devastated and drained emotionally, physically, and mentally. His eyes were weak with sorrow, implying tears; his soul and body were filled with grief and drained of vitality; his life was consumed with anguish.

All strength had left him. His feeling of confidence had temporarily left him.

31:11–13. What is more, David declared, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors, even a dread, a reproach to his friends and enemies alike. His friends had abandoned him like a piece of broken pottery; that is, he was cast aside by them. Downcast and disgraced, he stated that the slander by his enemies, as well as their attempts to conspire and plot to take his life, were strong. The most frequent weapon used against the psalmist was the tongue.

D David's Petition (31:14–18)

31:14–16. In spite of this persecution, David's trust in the Lord was unwavering. He relied on God to deliver him from his enemies. He prayed, My times are in your hands, recognizing that all the events and circumstances of his life were under God's sovereign control, which is tempered by his unfailing love. Therefore, let your face shine on your servant is a request for divine favor (cf. Pss. 4:6; 44:3; 67:1; 80:3, 7, 9; 119:35).

31:17–18. The phrase Let me not be put to shame indicates the dishonor that would result if David's enemies should succeed in their conspiracy against him. David wanted the wicked to be put to shame and to lie silent in the grave rather than allowing him to be silenced in death. Their lying lips, which had slandered him, must be silenced because they had spoken arrogantly against one of the righteous, namely himself. Rather than taking vengeance into his own hands, he left the dispensing of wrath to God.

E David's Praise (31:19–22)

31:19–20. As David waited for divine deliverance, his heart was filled with praise for God's goodness, a great, all-sufficient supply of grace stored up, freely shared with those who fear him. He was confident that God himself, in the shelter of his presence, would hide him from the plots of evil men.

31:21–22. On the basis of God's goodness, David exclaimed, Praise be to the Lord, for he showed his wonderful love to me. When he was under great danger, during

his threatening trial pictured as a besieged city, God remained faithful. At times David panicked and cried out to God, “I am cut off from your sight!”, fearing he would be put to death. Nevertheless, his heart would rally, and he would say, Yet you heard my cry for mercy. Thus, David gave praise to God in anticipation of his help and deliverance.

F David’s Proclamation (31:23–24)

31:23–24. Having offered praise to God, David next preached to others, calling all his saints to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and strength (Deut. 6:5). All God’s people should adore God because he preserves the faithful when they are abandoned and attacked. But the proud, referring to those who rise up in arrogance and harm the godly, refuse to submit themselves to the Lord. But God will pay back those who are proud. Vengeance belongs to the Lord. Therefore, we should be strong and take heart in the Lord because he will defend those who hope in him.

III. Conclusion

All believers to some degree will be surrounded by evil people who work against them. So we must continually remind ourselves that all the events of his life are being orchestrated and executed in the perfect timing of God. Likewise, we must recall the great goodness of God which is stored up for his elect. The Lord himself will preserve the faithful so they can weather the storm in which they find themselves. The Lord delights in showing his preserving power to the weakest vessels. The believer must not be downcast, but he should take courage, knowing that his infinite God is much larger than the finite people who threaten him.¹

¹ Steven Lawson, [*Psalms 1–75*](#), ed. Max Anders, vol. 11, Holman Old Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2004), 165–169.