

Intro:

“This is, in more senses than one, a lonely prayer of David, the only poem of his in the third book. Its form is simple, with an opening and closing supplication punctuated by a deliberate act of praise — deliberate, because of the final verses reveal no abatement of the pressure, and no sign, as yet, of an answer.”¹

Notes:

In vv. 1-2, there are two areas on which David bases his appeal to God. What are they?

Need: ‘I am afflicted and needy’

Relationship: ‘I am godly ... my God ... trust’

Note: the word ‘godly’ [NAU] (translated ‘holy’ in KJV) is *hasid* – translated ‘loyal’ in the NET. What concept does this term remind you of?

Hesed – the covenant loyalty of God: hasid = the appropriate human response to God’s covenant keeping.

‘My God – your servant’ = the master-servant bond

‘trust’ = “the link ... between one who trusts and one who is trusted”²

On vv. 4-7: “As so often in the Psalms, the prayer resolutely heads toward clearer skies and firmer ground.”³

What is the essence of the request in v. 4?

That God would gladden his heart.

Three reasons are summoned to support the request, each beginning with the word *for*. What are they? (4-7)

For the single-minded devotion of David to God (4b, compare 24.4 and 25.1)

For the eternal character of God (5)

For the conviction that God answers prayer (7)

¹ Kidner, *Psalms*, vol. 2, p. 311.

² Kidner, *Psalms*, vol. 2, p. 311.

³ Kidner, *Psalms*, vol. 2, p. 311.

Note the word 'Lord' in v. 8. What can we tell about this word from the way it is printed?

It is not Yahweh (Jehovah) because it is not printed in all caps. Instead, it is adonai, which means 'Master' or 'Sovereign'. It is used seven times in this psalm, including three in this stanza: v. 8, 9, 12.

In vv. 8-10, in what realms does David extol the greatness of his Master?

In the realm of heaven – none like you among the god. (8a)

In the realm of nature – no works like yours ['works' = things God has made] (8b)

In the realm of men – all will worship you (9)

In the realm of history – you do wondrous deeds ['deeds' = things God has done] (10)

Compare the statements of 8a and 10b. What should we learn from these statements?

David does not see God as a God among gods, but as the one and only God – this ought to inform us concerning other uses of the term 'gods' in the Scriptures.

What spiritual change is David asking for when he asks God to teach him God's way? (11)

David is looking for not just right choices but right habits (11b)

David is also looking for spiritual stability (11c; compare double-minded man, Jas 1.6ff., or the wretched man of Rm 7.15ff.)

What will be the effect of David's determination for anyone who commits himself to it? (12)

The fears and troubles which are behind prayers like this psalm will vanish away.

What is the reason David (or anyone who knows God) can make the commitment of v. 12? (13)

The fact of eternal salvation based on a covenant relationship with God.

At last David reveals something of his pressing need: men have set themselves against him. In this trial, what is David's ground of hope? (14-15)

The abiding character of God – merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abundant in lovingkindness and truth.

Compare v. 15 with Ex 34.6b and v. 5 – what insight can we glean from David’s use of the Law in this psalm?

The psalms are a meditation on the Law. David can pray because he knows the God of Moses.

What two things is David asking for in vv. 16-17? What do these requests imply?

David wants strength and a sign – he wants God to enable him to overcome, but he also wants an assurance that God would be pleased for him to overcome.

The psalm closes with no resolution to the troubles that prompted it – only faith in the God to whom David prays.

Likewise, we should trust even when we don’t see immediately God’s answers.