

# Bible Study on Psalm 21

## Royal Psalms – Follow Your King

Living in a nation without kings, it is hard for us to understand the pleas of the psalmist that the Lord bless the king. Yet, these pleas simply remind us that as the king went, so went the nation. The kings of Judah did not live up to the ideals portrayed in the in the psalms. In fact, David's descendants abandoned God completely at times. Only Jesus would fulfill all the hopes the psalmists express. (LL)

It is our joy as members of Christ's kingdom by faith to have blessings of spiritual prosperity, the true justice and mercy that King Jesus has brought to the lives of His subjects. While we live in an imperfect world, we also are members of the perfect kingdom under Christ. He rules the world (Eph. 1:21-22) on our behalf. We do not, of course, live under an earthly king, but the royal psalms apply to us as members of Christ's kingdom – on earth and one day soon, in heaven. (LL)

A few psalms that fit into this category are Psalms 21, 45, 72, and 132.

The royal psalms include prayers by kings which ask God for victory over enemies and for wisdom to rule according to God's will. They include prayers by God's people for their ruler and they also give us a portrait of Christ, our perfect, eternal king.

Psalm 21 is the response of King David when God answered his prayer for a victorious battle. We don't know which battle is meant here. As we have seen so often, the psalms most often remain somewhat general so that we can read into them our own circumstances and needs. (LL)

Psalm 21 is psalm of praise for victories granted to the king. It is thus linked with Ps 20, but whether both were occasioned by the same events is unknown. Here the people's praise follows that of the king (see v. 1); there (Ps 20) the people's prayer was added to the king's.

1. With what words in verses 1 and 7, does the king – David – credit the Lord for this victory?
2. How do verses 1 and 7 apply to Christ and His kingdom?
3. Read verse 20:3. Compare it to 21:7. How do both emphasize a statement of faith?
4. Besides victory in this particular battle, what other blessings has God granted David? (vv. 2-6)

5. How do verses 3-6 show that Jesus is king forever in the church and that He rules there in honor and majesty?
6. How does verse 2 echo 20:4?
7. After verse 2 we see the word "Selah." What do you think that means?

Note that the verb tense changes in verse 8. In the next section of the psalm (vv. 8-12), the people hail the future victories their kings will enjoy because of God's power. These verses also point to the ultimate victory Jesus, our King, will have on Judgment Day.

8. How does verse 8 announce the theme?
9. How do verses 9-11 develop the theme?
10. How does verse 12 summarize the theme?
11. What images in these verses point to Jesus' ultimate victory over evil?
12. As you think about the evils that threaten the church of our Savior, His believers, how do the words of verses 8-12 give you comfort?
13. How do verses 1 and 13 connect?
14. In light of the dangers faced by leaders of our nation in today's world, why is it so important that we remember to include our leaders in our prayers?

This psalm not only offers thanks to God for Israel's king (vv 1-7) but also encourages him with promises of the Lord's blessing (vv 8-12). Part of our Christian responsibility, as this psalm and St Paul remind us, is to offer thanksgiving and petitions on behalf of our ruling authorities. Failing to do so is an act of ingratitude. The Scriptures testify throughout that God establishes and uses the various governments of the world not only to serve His people's earthly needs, but even to further the spread of the Gospel. • "God bless our native land; Firm may she ever stand Through storm and night.... Thou who art ever nigh, Guarding with watchful eye, To Thee aloud we cry: God save the state!" Amen. (*LSB* 965:1-2) (*TLSB*)