

# David's Cry for Deliverance

## Psalm 140:1-13

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

April 13, 2022 p.m.

Introduction: We come tonight to another of the imprecatory psalms. "Imprecatory" comes from the word "to invoke evil upon, to curse; to invoke judgment, calamity or curses upon one's enemies or those perceived as the enemies of God." Ryrie identifies 11 such psalms: 7, 35, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 109, 137, 139, & 140. Last week we looked at Psalm 137, which I entitled "Remorse, Remembrance, & Recompense." This psalm has the superscription "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David." Though there is uncertainty as to when David wrote this psalm, it seems to fit the time of his fleeing for his life from the hand of Saul. The word "*Selah*" occurs 3 times, perhaps giving us divisions of the psalm. I outline the psalm this way as David cries out: Deliver me (:1-3), Keep me (:4-5); Hear me (:6-8); & Vindicate me (:9-13).

### I. "Deliver me, O LORD" (:1-3)

[The word *deliver* carries the idea of rescue; *preserve* is defense by power (both military terms).]

#### A. Who? (:1) >

1. "Evil man" – the wicked.
2. "Violent man" – "man of violences." [both terms are collective plurals]

#### B. What? (:2) >

1. They imagine mischiefs – secretly & deliberately plan evil things. "Bad men are fruitful in plots against the righteous" (Plumer).
2. They initiate war – stir up war; constantly seek to "pick a fight."

#### C. Why? (:3) >

1. They have "*sharpened tongues*" – speaks of lying (cf. 52:2; 55:21; 57:4; 59:7; & 64:3).
2. They have "*poison under their lips*" – speaks of the deadly wound of slander (cf. Psalm 58: 3-4 & Romans 3:13).

Application: "The old serpent has not only inoculated us with his venom, but he has caused us to be ourselves producers of the like poison: it lies under our lips, ready for use, &, alas, it is all too freely used when we grow angry, & desire to take vengeance upon any who have caused us vexation" (Spurgeon).

Summary: "Saul was but a sample of the manner in which human nature acts out its venomous depravity (Rom. 3:13)" (Plumer).

"*Selah*" > "This is heavy work. Go up, go up, my heart! Sink not too low. Fall not into the lowest key. Lift up thyself to God" (Spurgeon).

### II. "Keep me, O LORD" (:4-5)

#### A. Who? (:4a) >

1. "The wicked" – parallel to the "evil man" of verse 1.
2. "The violent man" – again, the "man of violences."

#### B. What? (:4b-5) >

1. Their purpose – "*to overthrow my goings*" – an Oriental expression, "to subvert plans & to destroy prospects."
2. Their practices – "*snare, net, gins*" – means to trap, ensnare, entice – "One instrument of destruction is not enough; they are so afraid of missing their prey that they multiply their traps, using different devices, so that one way or another they may take their victim" (Spurgeon).

"*Selah*" – "The harp needs tuning after such a strain, & the heart needs lifting up towards God."

### III. “Hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD” (:6-8)

- A. David asks the Lord to hear the desires of the supplicant (:6-7) >
    - 1. Note the names of God: “LORD” – covenant name, Yahweh; “God the Lord” – sovereign ruler.
    - 2. Note the protection from God: “covered my head...” – like a helmet (cf. Eph. 6:17).
  - B. David asks the Lord to hinder the desires of the wicked (:8) >
    - 1. “Grant not” – thwart – “The wickedness of the desires & plans of the *ungodly* is utterly repugnant to the holiness of God. His whole nature pledges Him to oppose & not to *further* the schemes of His enemies” (Plumer).
    - 2. “Lest they exalt themselves” – “Proud men, when they prosper, are made prouder, grow more impudent against God, & insolent against His people” (Henry).
- “Selah” – “Here let us exalt our thoughts & praises high over the heads of self-exalting sinners. The more they rise in conceit the higher let us rise in confidence” (Spurgeon).

### IV. “Vindicate me, O LORD” (:9-13)

- A. Vengeance upon the wicked (:9-11) >
  - 1. David prays for Divine vengeance – poetic justice – so that they reap what they sow.
  - 2. David prays in verse 10 – “Let their fall be final & irremediable” (Kirkpatrick).
  - 3. David prays that the “*evil speaker*” (“man of tongue” – lawless speech that slanders men & blasphemes God) be stopped.
- B. Vindication for the righteous (:12-13) >
  - 1. The assurance of the saints – “The manifestation of God which is destruction to the wicked (cf. 9:3) is security & happiness to the upright” (Kirkpatrick).
  - 2. The acclamation of the saints – “On earth ere long, & in heaven for ever, the pure heart shall sing unto the Lord. How loud & sweet will be the songs of the redeemed in the millennial age, when the meek shall inherit the earth, & delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Spurgeon).

Conclusion: What lessons can we learn from this Psalm? We know that as believers, we live in an evil world & we should expect opposition from the enemy. Christ warned us that in this world we would have “*tribulation,*” but He also promised, “*be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33). Spurgeon concludes, “How high have we climbed in this Psalm - from being hunted by the evil man to dwelling in the divine presence; so doth faith upraise the saint from the lowest depths to heights of peaceful repose. Well might the song be studded with Selahs, or uplifters.” Believers can therefore be optimistic, yet we must remain vigilant – dependent upon God when under attack.

We are also reminded that sinful speech is an early indicator of human depravity (cf. Psalm 58:3). In the N.T., “Christ taught that our speech reveals our heart, & God will judge our spiritual condition in part by the patterns of our talk (Mat. 12:34-37). Examine how you talk to people, praying that God will reveal to you any pride, sexual lust, greed, sinful anger, hatred, & lying” (Reformation Study Bible).

And David’s prayer for his enemies in verse 8 suggests “our prayers for godless people must focus on changing their character, & not just stopping their persecution of believers. David obeyed Matthew 5:44” (Wiersbe). As we meditate on these imprecatory psalms, might we consider the implications of what is going on in today’s world in Ukraine & China & what ought to be our response.