

Psalm 30

A Psalm [and] Song [at] the dedication of the house of David.

Psalm 30: The words “house of David” in the superscription are intended to record the occasion of the psalm’s writing, but may point to either the dedication of David’s palace (2 Sam. 5:11), or the dedication of the threshing floor of Araunah (or Ornan), the site of the future temple (2 Sam. 24:18-25; 1 Chron. 21:18-30).

In later Judaism, the psalm was used in the celebration of Hanukkah and also at the presentation of firstfruits.

The main idea of the psalm, in any case, is clearly expressed: “Thou has turned for me my mourning into dancing (verse 11).

The joy and thanks voiced in the final two verses, however, are only the aftermath of David’s thanks (verses 1-5), for the LORD’s chastening hand on a boastful servant (verses 6-10).

A mixture of forms characterizes Psalm 30.

David speaks out of a cycle of life (i.e., lamentation and laud), especially moving through prayer to praise.

In spite of great variety, the psalm is bonded together by praise emphases (compare verses 4, 9, and 12).

And here the psalmist’s beginning and ending pledges to praise provide structure for his prayers and testimonies.

- I. His Beginning Pledge of Praise (30:1a).
- II. His Look Back upon Historic Prayers and Testimonies (30:1b-9).
 - A. His Individual Remembrance (30:1b-3);
 - B. His Public Reminders (30:4-5);
 - C. His Individual Reflections (30:6-9).
- III. His Look Ahead to Continuing Prayers and Testimonies (30:10-12a).
- IV. His Concluding Pledge of Praise (30:12b).

Title:

The first and last parts of this title, i.e., “A Psalm ... of David”, are common notations in the superscriptions of many psalms.

However, the middle words, “and Song at the Dedication of the House”, were probably added later, although they could have referenced David’s temporary tent of the ark erected on Mt. Zion (2 Sam. 6:17), or his own house (2 Sam. 5:11-12).

Psalm 30:1 "I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me."

“Extol” is a word often used in the Old Testament for lifting a bucket up out of a well.

David had sunk to near-death, but God reached down, lifted him up, and gave him back his life. In this psalm, David praises God for hearing him and healing him (6:2; 30:8-10; 86:13; Isa. 53:5).

The word extol in the verse above, means raise or exalt.

We see then, that David is lifting up the LORD in praise.

We know that David, like us, made mistakes and was punished for those mistakes.

The wonderful thing in this, is that God has forgiven David, and then has lifted him up from his pit of despair.

The greatest rejoicing is when we were guilty of sin and are now forgiven.

When David numbered the people without God's permission, God punished David severely.

The people looking on thought that the blessings of God were no longer on David.

The good news is, God forgave David and now David's foes had nothing to laugh about.

Verses 2-3:

Thou hast healed me”:

God alone is the unique healer (compare Exodus 15:26; Deut. 32:39; Psalm 107:20).

David is extolling God for bringing him back from a near-death experience.

Psalm 30:2 "O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me."

"Heal" may be used metaphorically for the removal of mental sufferings (see Psalm 41:4; 147:3).

But David's grief when he saw the sufferings of his people from the plague seems to have wholly prostrated him, both in mind and body.

For the nature of the "cry" spoken of (compare verses 8-10), which are an expansion of the present verse.

In this case, the healing possibly was of a broken heart.

We know God had sent pestilence through the land, because of David's sin.

God lifted the pestilence, because of the prayers of David.

I wonder sometimes how God feels about all the numbering systems in our society.

Thank God we are not a number with Him, as He has a special name for each of us who belong to Him.

We must always pray about the sins in our society.

2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Psalm 30:3 "O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit."

When his life being in danger, was near unto it (Job 33:22).

Otherwise the soul dies not, nor does it lie and sleep in the grave.

Or "thou hast brought up my soul from hell":

That is, delivered him from those horrors of conscience and terrors of mind, by reason of sin, which were as hell itself unto him (see Psalm 116:3).

"Thou hast kept me alive":

Preserved his corporeal life when in danger and maintained his spiritual life.

And quickened him by his word, under all his afflictions, and then has kept him from utter and black despair.

"That I should not go down to the pit":

More literally, "thou hast caused me to live from them which go down to the pit."

That is, Thou hast differentiated between me and them by keeping me alive.

The word "pit" here means the same as the grave (see the notes at Psalm 28:1).

The one thing that David had really dreaded was his dying before God forgave him of the sin he had committed.

It is a dreadful thing to die in sin.

To die in sin would mean that the person would wind up in hell.

The pit spoken of here is hell.

David had been near death because of his sin, but God spared him.

David is fully aware that God saved him.

He deserved death but God saved him.

This is the very condition of all of us.

We all deserve to die for our sin, but Jesus became our substitute on the cross so that we might be saved.

Just as in the verse above David believed that God saved him, so we must believe that Jesus saved us.

Psalm 30:4 "Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

Such to whom he has been gracious and merciful, and has blessed with pardoning grace, and justifying righteousness, adoption, and a right to eternal life.

And who are holy, godly persons; in whose hearts principles of grace and holiness are formed.

And who are kind and bountiful to others: all which the word here used signifies.

And these are the LORD's.

They are set apart for him, and they are sanctified by him.

And therefore, should sing his praises, both vocally, and with melody in their hearts.

"And give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness":

Which is essential to him, and in which he is glorious.

And which appears in all his ways and works of providence and grace, and both in the redemption and sanctification of his people.

And besides this, there is the holiness of Christ, which is imputed to his saints.

And the sanctification of the Spirit, which is wrought in them.

And at the remembrance of each of these it highly becomes them to give thanks to the LORD, since hereby they are meant to be partakers of his kingdom and glory.

Notice this verse lets us know that the statements David has been making apply to us, as well.

We have so much to praise God for.

It was not just the followers of God then, who were saints of His, but all believers now are saints of His.

We are His, because He bought us with His precious blood.

We are cautioned to be holy, for He is holy.

We are not holy, but we must desire to be holy and work toward that goal.

We are however, in right standing with God for we have taken on the righteousness of Christ.

Psalm 30:5 "For his anger [endureth but] a moment; in his favor [is] life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy [cometh] in the morning."

This stark contrast constitutes one of the most worshipful testimonies from the Scriptures (compare the principle in Isa. 54:7-8; John 16:20-22; 2 Cor. 4:17).

The psalmist contrasts the momentary difficulties of this life with God's lasting favor.

A similar sentiment is expressed by Paul, although on a much larger scale, when he compares the afflictions that believers face in this life with the glory they will experience in the next (2 Corinthians 4:17).

To me one of the most beautiful acts of forgiveness that God did, is when He forgave the children of Israel for making the golden calf and worshipping it.

Moses pleaded for the people, and God forgave them.

We see here, that David pleaded with God and God forgave him.

When we sin, we should follow this example and plead for forgiveness. God is longsuffering.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

When trials in this life come (and they do to all of us), remember joy cometh in the morning.

At the darkest point of night, the dawn is beginning to come.

Psalm 30:6 " And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved."

David recalls his previous independent attitude and arrogant talk; God had warned the nation and its leaders about such sinfully nearsighted outlooks (compare Deut. 8:11-20; note sample failures in Deut. 32:15; 2 Chron. 32:25; Jer. 22:21; Hosea 13:6; Dan. 4:28-37).

By the grace of God, David woke up to the fact that he was acting like his arrogant adversaries (compare Psalm 10:6).

This problem of David's is the problem of the whole world.

When times are going good, we are not seeking the face of God.

It is in our time of sorrow that we cry out to God.

Really this is a vain statement by David, but a statement that all too many of us make as well.

When there is no temptation, we feel that we are sitting pretty with God.

Let temptation come, and we may fall like David did.

We grow very little on the mountain top. It is in the valleys that we grow.

Psalm 30:7 "LORD, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, [and] I was troubled."

It was thy favor which had given me the "prosperity" whereby I was exalted.

And which I thought rooted in myself, which had made Zion strong, and enabled me to triumph over my enemies.

But, lo! suddenly all was changed.

"Thou didst hide thy face":

That is, at the time when I was so confident, and when I thought my mountain stood so strong, and that I was so secure.

Then I was shown how insecure and uncertain was all that I relied on.

And how absolutely, after all that I had done, I was dependent for safety on God.

To "hide the face" is synonymous in the sacred writings with the withdrawing of favor.

Or with displeasure (see the notes at Psalm 13:1; compare Psalm 104:29).

“And I was troubled”:

I was confounded, perplexed, agitated, and terrified.

I was thrown into sudden fear.

For all that I had so confidently relied on, and all that I thought was so firm, then was suddenly swept away.

We do not know what this was in the case of the psalmist.

It may have been the strength of his own fortifications, or it may have been the number and discipline of his army

It may have been his own conscious power and skill as a warrior.

It may have been his wealth, or it may have been his bodily health.

In reference to any of which he may have felt as if none of these things could fail.

When that on which he so confidently relied on was swept away, he was agitated, troubled, and also anxious.

The same thing may occur now, and often does occur, when people rely on their own strength; their health; or their wealth.

Suddenly any of these may be swept away.

Suddenly they are often swept away, to teach such men, even good men, their dependence on God, and to show them how vain is every other refuge.

At least David gives God the credit for his mountain standing strong.

When we get to feeling as if we have won and we are on the top of our mountain, sometimes the mountain begins to shake, and we must go back into the valley to be taught a lesson.

The worst feeling any believer can experience is the feeling that God has turned His face away from him.

We too are troubled when we feel that God has turned away.

It is time to repent when this happens.

We may not realize that we have offended God, but that would be the only reason He would remove His presence.

I have said before that I refuse to go to a church where the presence of God is not evident.

I go to church to fellowship with the LORD, if He is not there, I cannot fellowship with Him.

Verses 8-10: What happened with the ark (2 Sam. 6:9-11) made David fearful, even ill.

If David was arguing with the LORD here, he drops it to seek God's "mercy" and help.

Psalm 30:8 "I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication."

In his trouble, when the LORD had hidden his face from him, and he sensed that he had departed from him.

He was not stupid and unaffected with it; nor did he turn his back upon God and seek others.

But he cried after a departing God, which showed love to him.

And some degree of faith in him, by looking again towards his holy temple, and waiting upon him until he returned.

"And unto the LORD I made supplication":

In the humblest manner; entreating his grace and mercy, and that he would again show him his face and favor.

A familiar argument for preservation of life (compare Psalms 6:5; 28:1; 88:10-12; 115:17; and Isaiah 38:18-19).

The only place to go in time of trouble is to the LORD.

David did not go around whining to his friends, he went to the LORD.

My help cometh from the LORD.

To cry to the LORD is much more than just a little quickie prayer.

This is a very serious seeking of the LORD.

Psalm 30:9 "What profit [is there] in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?"

That is, What profit or advantage would there be to thee if I should die?

What would be "gained" by it?

The argument which the psalmist uses here is that he could better serve God by his life than by his death.

That his death, by removing him from the earth, would prevent his rendering the service which he might by his life.

The same argument is presented in (Psalm 6:5; see the notes there) and is found again in (Psalm 88:10-12; and in the hymn of Hezekiah; Isa. 38:18-19).

"When I go down to the pit!":

Though the grave seems rather to be meant.

"Shall the dust praise thee?":

That is, men whose origin is dust, being reduced to dust again, as the body at death.

When laid in the grave, and corrupted there, this lifeless dust cannot praise the LORD.

The soul indeed dies not with the body; nor does it sleep in the grave with it.

Or is it unemployed in heaven; but is continually engaged in the high praises of God.

But the sense of the psalmist is that should he die and be buried and be reduced to dust, he should no more praise the LORD in the land of the living.

Among men, to the glory of divine grace and goodness; so that this acknowledgment of His glory would be lost.

"Shall it declare thy truth?":

Either the truth of the Gospel, which lies in the word of God.

Or rather the faithfulness of God in the performance of his promises (see Psalm 40:10).

David says here, If I die and go to hell, I can't praise you.

What will that profit?

David knows that God loved him and made him what he was.

Even the name David, means (beloved of God).

I believe in this David is saying, LORD if you let me live, I will ever praise your name.

I will declare to all who you are and your truth.

Have you ever made such a deal with God?

You know that you are alive and breathing your next breath by His permission.

Are you spreading the wonderful truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Psalm 30:10 "Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper."

By lifting up the light of his countenance again upon him.

By manifesting and applying his pardoning grace to him, and then by delivering him out of all his afflictions.

"LORD, be thou my helper":

In this time of trouble; for he knew that vain was the help of man.

And he was entirely in the right to take himself to the LORD, who was able to help him, when none else could.

I have cried so many times, LORD help me for I am weak.

I really think David has it in reverse.

God is not our helper; we are His helper.

God is the Boss; we are His workers on this earth.

The cry for mercy from God is as old as man himself.

Man cannot live a successful life without God.

When we allow Jesus to be Lord of our life as well as our Savior, we do it His way and it works.

Lord Jesus, take up your abode in me.

Let the Holy Spirit be my teacher and my Guide.

As I live this life, let me no longer live for self, but Jesus, You live in me and through me, and I cannot fail.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Psalm 30:11 "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;"

This, and with what follows, expresses the success he had in seeking the LORD by both prayer and supplication.

There was a sudden change of things, as it often is with the people of God.

Sometimes they are mourning by reason of sin, their own and others.

Or on account of afflictions.

Or because of spiritual decays; or through the temptations of Satan.

Or as was the case of the psalmist now, because of the hidings of God's face.

But this mourning is exchanged for joy and gladness when the LORD shows his pardoning love.

Revives his work in their souls and takes off his afflicting hand from them.

And then rebukes the tempter and delivers from his temptations.

"Thou hast put off my sackcloth":

Which was used in mourning, and in times of calamity and distress.

And as a token of humiliation and repentance (Gen. 37:34).

"And girded me with gladness":

By these phrases the same thing is signified as before (see Isa. 61:3).

Just one touch of the LORD, and the mourning is gone.

God turned David's mourning into dancing.

The power of God has come upon him with such joy that it has overwhelmed David in the Spirit of God.

The Jews put on sackcloth when they were mourning and poured ashes over their head.

We see that David's earnest desire to reach the very throne room of God, had caused him to even wear sackcloth.

Notice where the overwhelming gladness came from.

It was from God.

In my opinion, it is alright to dance in the Spirit “after the power of god comes upon you”, and not before.

We should not plan to dance before the LORD.

This dance, spoken of here, is after God touched David.

Psalm 30:12 To the end that [my] glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

Meaning either his soul, the more noble and glorious part of him.

Or the members of his body, his tongue, which is the glory of it, and with which he glorified God (see Psalm 16:9; compared with Acts 2:26).

This was the end that was to be answered by the changing of the scene of things; and which was now answered.

“My glory”:

Now with renewed perspective (verse 6), he recognizes that all he is and has is due to God’s unmerited grace (contrast verse 7a).

"And not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever”:

Great mercies deserve perpetual remembrance.

David regarded the mercy at this time benefitting him as one which, that acknowledged Hezekiah, requiring him to be commemorated "all the days of his life" (Isa. 38:20).

So many of us forget to praise God for the things He has already done for us.

David promises God in this verse, that He will praise Him forever.

Possibly the words (my glory), means David's lips speaking praise that comes from David's innermost being.

Let us not forget to praise God in song and in word from our innermost being for all He has done for us.

Psalm 30 Questions

1. This Psalm of David or song was at the dedication of what?
2. What does extol in verse 1 mean?
3. What is the wonderful thing, in verse 1, since David had sinned?
4. When is the greatest time of rejoicing?
5. What was the sin David had committed?
6. The healing, David is speaking of in verse 2, is possibly of the _____.
7. Why had God lifted the pestilence through the land?
8. What do you think God thinks about all the numbering in our society today?
9. With God we are not a number, He has given us a special _____.
10. What was the one thing David really dreaded?
11. The pit, in verse 3, is what?
12. We deserve to die for the sin in our life, but Jesus became our _____.
13. What statement, in verse 4, leaves no doubt that this was not just for David's time, but for ours, as well?
14. Why do we belong to Jesus if we are a Christian?
15. What put us in right standing with God?
16. What does the author believe is the most beautiful example of God's forgiveness in the Bible?
17. Who petitioned God on their behalf?
18. Where do we find, in the Scriptures, that God is not willing that any should perish?
19. What is the problem in verse 6 of the lesson, that is really the problem of the whole world?
20. Where does the Christian grow with God the most?
21. What should we do, if we feel that God has turned away from us?
22. Why does the author refuse to go to a church where the presence of the LORD is not evident?

23. Where is the only place to go in time of trouble?
24. What is David saying, really, in verse 9?
25. What does the name, David, mean?
26. Are you spreading the wonderful news of the gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere you go?
27. Who is the Boss of the entire universe?
28. Man can not live a successful life without _____.
29. What had God turned David's mourning to?
30. When did the Jews put on sackcloth?
31. What does, my glory, in verse 12 possibly mean?