

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Forty-One: God's Guidance And Encouragement While Under Serious Political Attack (Psalm 41:1-13)

I. Introduction

- A. It is not easy to be under political attack by those who wish to topple one from a certain station or level of respect before others. When it comes, the victim is almost at loss to defend himself as efforts to vindicate himself are themselves suspect due to the attack's effect on the victim's credibility.
- B. Psalm forty-one is a divine directive on facing such attacks skillfully, and finding God's encouragement and direction when they arise.

II. God's Guidance And Encouragement While Under Serious Political Attack, Psalm 41:1-13.

- A. David's forty-first psalm describes a personal, political attack aimed to topple him, Ps. 41:5-9:
 1. Apparently, David was ill in part due to divine judgment (41:4) so his enemies had taken the opportunity to use his weakness to annihilate David, Ps. 41:5.
 2. In the process, these enemies worked with political guile to overturn David, Ps. 41:6-9:
 - a. David reported that the enemies would send a representative to see him in his illness as though he was supportive, only to use the conversation as a way of gathering "ammo" from David's words to use against him before others later to turn people against him for his demise, Ps. 41:6.
 - b. The enemies secretly took counsel together to destroy David so that he knew they were making plans, but he had no way of anticipating their next moves, Ps. 41:7-8.
 - c. Even a person who had been trusted by David had turned against him to his harm, Ps. 41:9. Such an event was David's lot when Ahithophel left his side to become Absalom's adviser, 2 Sam. 15:12, 31.
- B. In view of this crisis, David revealed in this psalm divine guidance and provisions for blessings:
 1. The psalm opens with a beatitude on God's showing mercy to those who are merciful to the poor and socially non-influential, Ps. 41:1-2 (Theol. Wordbook of the O.T., v. I, p. 190, 507). God promised to deliver a man who showed kindness and support for such vulnerable people when he himself was vulnerable to the political attacks of his enemies!
 2. When the political attack commenced, David noted by way of encouragement several realities on the unfolding of events that showed God's support for his cause:
 - a. While under political attack, David noted that his opponents never quite defeated him, Ps. 41:11.
 - b. He also noted that under political attack, God supported him from being totally abandoned by other supporters, Ps. 41:12.
 - c. In view of these blessings, David praised God, the God of history from eternity past to eternity future, who controls all his political opponents throughout his earthly sojourn, Ps. 41:14.
- C. Accordingly, David was comfortable asking for divine deliverance from the attack, Ps. 41:4, 10.

Lesson: (1) BEFORE a personal, political attack, we must PREPARE for it by being sensitive to the needs of the materially and socially impoverished around us. God comes to our aid under political attack in direct proportion to how well we support others who face political persecution from thoughtless people, Ps. 41:1-3! (2) DURING the personal political attack, we can ask God for help from our opponents, relying upon Him for a solution, Ps. 41:4, 10. (3) God will ENCOURAGE us in the attack if all is right with Him by (a) never letting our opponents quite get the upper hand over us (Ps. 41:11), by (b) never totally abandoning us, but allowing us to remain stable, 41:12 so that (c) we may rejoice and praise Him DURING the attack as we use these evidences for encouragement, Ps. 41:41!

Application: It always pays to be considerate of others who are not as respected or gifted or financially powerful as we might be! Our attitude and actions toward such vulnerable people directly affects how God relates to us when we become vulnerable to our adversaries! If we have been thoughtless, He will let the sky cave in on us! If we have been merciful and considerate, He will encourage us in similar fashion under attack!