

“God is my Helper: an Analysis of Psalm 54”

Title: For the choir director, on stringed instruments. A Maskil of David, “when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, ‘Is not David hiding himself among us?’”

I. Introduction: For historical background read 1 Samuel 23

- The Psalm is a Proper Psalm for Good Friday
- 1 Sam. 23:19-29 The people of Ziph betray David. They offer to surrender David to Saul. (a second betrayal is recorded in 1 Sam. 26:1).
- Ziph was approx. 40 kms (25 miles) south west of Jerusalem

Alfred Edersheim remarked on 1 Sam. 23 24-27 as follows:

“...but surely it was the wonder-working Providence of God that, just when David seemed [to be] in the power of his enemies, tidings of an incursion by the Philistines reached Saul (see 1 Sam. 23:27), which obliged him hastily to turn against them. And ever afterwards, as David or others passed through that “wilderness,” and looked up the face of that cliff, they would remember that God is “the Helper” of his people – for to all time it bore the name “Cliff of Escape” And so we also may in our wanderings have our “cliff of escape,” to which ever afterwards we attach this precious remembrance, “Behold, God is thine Helper.”

Theme: David's Prayer turns into Praise because of his confidence in God.

II. Outline of the Psalm

A. David's Prayer: He pleads to God for Help (Vv. 1-2)

- Psalm 54 is a prayer for help against enemies.
- Four imperatives expressing the urgent request of the psalmist

“save me...”

“vindicate me...”

“Hear my prayer...”

“Give ear...”

- Note that the term used for “God” in verses 1, 2, 3 & 4 is **Elohim**.
- The motivation behind the plea: Enemies seek to kill the psalmist (v. 3)

B. David's Confidence in God: He Believes God will save him (v. 4-5)

- God is his helper (v. 4a)
- The “Lord” (note the change of title from **God** (Elohim) to **Lord** (*Adonai*) will help him particularly by sustaining his soul (v. 4b)
- God will help him by repaying his enemies (v. 5)

C. David's Praise: David vows to give thanks to God for His help (Vv. 6-7)

- Note that the term for God in v. 6 is **LORD** (YHWH, Yahweh, Jehovah)
- The psalmist will offer his sacrifice willingly, i.e. he will offer a freewill offering (see Lev. 22:18-25; Num. 15:1-16; **Psa. 50:14**)
- He will give thanks because God answered his prayer:
 - The LORD delivered him from all trouble.
 - The psalmist is satisfied with God's triumph over his enemies. This deliverance is a vindication of God's faithfulness.

Lesson: When God is our Helper, deliverance from our enemies is guaranteed!

By God's Grace and for His glory,

Pr. Francis