

Psalm 40:-

Again, this Psalm moves from praise and trust in the Lord God (verses 1 – 10) on to prayer for deliverance (verses 11 – 15) and then a declaration of trust and deliverance (verses 16 – 17). Note that it is used as a description of the Lord Jesus Christ the supreme sacrifice and deliverer. Verses 6 – 8 are quoted in Hebrews chapter 10, verses 5 – 9 and then commented on in verses 10 – 14. Verses 13 – 17 are repeated in Psalm 70 which may be an indication of their use in the Liturgy of the Temple. The title of Psalm 70 states that it is “*For the Memorial Offering*”.

Psalm 40, verses 1 – 3:- An experience of answered prayer.

After a period of waiting, the psalmist was rescued from a period of great trouble. The problem may have been illness, depression or another situation where death seemed imminent. This experience has given him a new song which will inspire trust in God.

Verses 4 – 5:- The theme of the song:

This begins with a benediction on the man who trusts in God and does not stray after the false gods (verse 4). Note the reference to “*the proud*” - maybe those who ‘know they are right’ and arrogant with it! The reason for praise is thankfulness for what the Lord God has done.

Verses 6 – 10:- The response to the song:

“*I delight to do thy will*”. It is the ‘new song’ and the experience behind it that leads the psalmist to look beyond the sacrificial system. The basic sacrifices and offerings of verse 6 are unable to present the true gratitude and praise of the psalmist. The depth of the writer’s experience is shown in his open proclamation of the nature and works of the Lord. As noted above, the writer of Hebrews quotes these words as applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 11 – 12:- Confession of past sins:

The psalmist recognises that past wrong doing has led to his present troubles. Everything has become too much as so often happens! The cry is ‘I can’t cope any-more!’

Verses 13 - 15:- The petition for deliverance:

The plea is for immediate help. Remember the versicle and response in Prayer Book Morning and Evening Prayer - “*O God make speed to save us.*” - “*O Lord make haste to help us.*”

The psalmist requests that his enemies be “*put to shame and confusion*”, “*turned back and brought to dishonour*”, “*appalled at their shame*”. When his enemies are proved to be in the wrong (on the wrong side of history!) then thankfulness to the Lord will follow.

Verses 16 – 17:- Praise and plea for haste: Y

es “*We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him . . .*” (Romans chapter 8, verse 28) The problem is we do not always see it or understand why.

These verses are recorded as “*A Psalm of David*”. Apparently even that famous king and psalmist had his moments too!

1. *In loving kindness Jesus came
My soul in mercy to reclaim,
And from the depths of sin and shame
Thro' grace He lifted me.
chorus
From sinking sand He lifted me,
With tender hand He lifted me,
From shades of night to plains of light,
O praise His name, He lifted me!*

2. *He called me long before I heard,
Before my sinful heart was stirred,
But when I took Him at His word,
Forgiv'n, He lifted me.
chorus*

3. *His brow was pierced with many a thorn,
His hands by cruel nails were torn,
When from my guilt and grief, forlorn,
In love He lifted me.
chorus*

4. *Now on a higher plane I dwell,
And with my soul I know 'tis well;
Yet how or why I cannot tell
He should have lifted me.
chorus*

Charles H. Gabriel 1905