

# Psalm 20

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 29 December 2019

Preacher: Chris Trousdale

[ 0 : 00 ] And so this morning we're going to turn into scriptures in Psalm 20.

! And we're going to look here so that our eyes might be more fully set upon Jesus Himself. So if you would stand to your feet as we read all nine verses of Psalm 20.

It begins with an inscription to the choir master, a psalm of David. And then he writes, May Yahweh answer you in the day of trouble.

May the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May He send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Zion. May He remember all your offerings and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices.

Selah. May He grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your plans. May we shout for joy over your salvation. And in the name of our God set up our banners.

[ 1 : 07 ] May Yahweh fulfill all your petitions. Now I know that Yahweh saves His anointed. He will answer Him from His holy heaven with the saving might of His right hand.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses. But we trust in the name of Yahweh our God. They collapse and fall. But we rise and stand upright.

Oh Yahweh save the King. May He answer us when we call. Answer us now as we call upon you. And answer us through the truth of your word.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. You guys take a seat. In its original setting this psalm appears to have been written as a form of encouragement for the people of Israel and probably in all likelihood for the armies of Israel as they were preparing for some sort of battle and some sort of engagement led by King David himself standing out most often facing far superior armies.

That would not have been new to the people of Israel. As they entered into the promised land they faced superior armies over and over again. And through faith in God and His promises they were able with a few hiccups here and there because of their own sin they were able to conquer the promised land and to take possession of it only to enter into a period of great turmoil because they failed to continue to trust in God Himself.

[ 2 : 47 ] In fact the writer of the book of Judges which tells us about the time period between the conquering of the land and the establishment of the throne of David tells us over and over that there was no king in those days and all of the people did what was right in their own eyes.

And that doesn't tend to work out too well for sinners. It doesn't work out for me when I do what is right in my own eyes rather than consulting God's word to find out what's right according to Him.

But that's what Israel did for a long time. And so they went through this long period of turmoil after having experienced God's deliverance as He brought them into the land. But now they sit under the king the one who has been anointed by God Himself.

And they have this trust in God restored and a sense of security that comes to them as they recognize not only the power of their king but the power that stands behind their king the Lord Himself.

And so this psalm is very much written from the perspective of those Israelites those men prepared to go into battle against what must have been a superior armed force as they trust in both their king and their God.

[ 4 : 04 ] Now it's important to know that that's what's happening here and we know that from the context of the psalm itself. But it's important to know that because otherwise it's very easy to tear certain verses out of the context of Psalm 20 and to read them as if they are directed right at you and me.

In fact, if you were to do that with the first few verses of this psalm then this psalm would become a prosperity preacher's dream text. Right? Read through it. Just listen to some of these things.

May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble. May the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May He send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Zion. May He remember all your offerings and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices.

May He grant you all your heart's desire and fulfill all your plans. If these stand as promises to all of us that God will, for instance, grant us all of our heart's desire that would be a bad thing.

We would find ourselves in the place of Israel during the period of the judges before they had a king on the throne doing what was right and expecting God to supply all the things that we deem to be right for ourselves.

[ 5 : 16 ] This would be dangerous if this were directed toward you and me. If God were to grant us our heart's desire, we would gain a lot of things that are harmful to us.

Not things that we would immediately see as harmful, things that we would immediately see as good, but would ultimately turn out to be bad for us, to be harmful to those around us and those whom we most love.

And it may be that as you're looking back upon 2019, you are thinking, God, if you had given me what I asked for, if you had given me the things that I longed for, I would not be in this place where I am now.

Of fear, of anxiety, of frustration, of longing to go back to different days when things were not so hard. If you had given me what I asked for, and yet, He has something far better for us than the things we ask for.

So this psalm is not a psalm written to encourage us to believe that everything that we want and everything that we dream of might be ours. No, instead, this psalm is written in its original context.

[ 6 : 27 ] It is written of the people singing praise to God and declaring their trust in the King and the fact that God will give to King David His own heart's desire.

That God will show up in the day of trouble on the battlefield. And God will deliver David and David's army. He will give David His heart's desire in that moment.

So that at the end of the battle, verse 5, may we shout for joy over your salvation and the name of our God set up our banners. And then again, may the Lord fulfill all your petitions.

And then this vote of confidence almost in verse 6. Now I know, I know that the Lord, or Yahweh, saves His anointed. That's another way of referring to the King, specifically here to David.

I know He will save His anointed. He will answer Him from His holy heaven. He will, with the saving might of His right hand, He will come and He will do this.

[ 7 : 30 ] And it won't matter the superior might of the army around us. They can trust in their weaponry. Some trust in chariots and horses. Those are the premier weapons of the day.

If you're doing battle in a place where the vast majority of battles take place in these large flat plains and valleys between the mountains and the sea, if that's where all the battles take place, then what you need is something that can advance you across the field faster than your enemy, bigger than your enemy, taller than your enemy, with more power than your enemy.

And that's what the chariots were for. They were the premier weaponry of the day. If your army had more chariots and more horsemen, you were likely to win the battle. But over and over, Israel was facing armies that had been forged in that kind of place.

armies that were loaded down with these weapons. And yet, throughout their history, when they had trusted in God over and over with spear and sword in hand, they had run onto the field and come away with victory.

And under David, this had happened over and over again. David even having to face off at times against his own people as they turned upon him. David somehow gaining the upper hand, winning the victory.

[ 8 : 52 ] They have confidence because of who their king is and who their king worships. So never mind the superior might of the other armies.

And then finally, a last petition. Oh Lord, oh Yahweh, save the king. It's the final cry as they go into battle.

Because if the king is saved, then they are saved. If the king is rescued, then the nation is rescued. If the king wins the battle, they win the battle. They understand how much hinges upon the victory of David himself, the anointed of God.

Now, as we take a step back and we look at this psalm, we think, okay, that's interesting. Understanding that context may prevent me from misreading some of those opening verses and that's a good thing, but I'm still not quite sure what this psalm has to do with me or with my life.

I know that the Bible says all scripture is breathed out by God and it's profitable, it's good, it's useful for us, not just to teach us, but also to equip us and train us for righteousness and I'm not sure how this text does that for me.

[ 10 : 09 ] I'm not sure what the connection is between David and his armies as they're about to enter into battle and me as I wake up to go to work or as I get my kids ready for the day.

What does this have to do with me? And the connection as it almost always is is Christ himself. Christ is the connection between this text and your life.

You see, when you're reading through many of the psalms, the psalms that are associated with David and with the king, you have to understand that while that psalm had an immediate meaning and an immediate impact for those who were living at that time and that it was indeed addressed to people or sung by people who were under King David's rule, it has something beyond David in mind.

When David is called the anointed, the Hebrew word there is the Messiah, the Mashiach. That's Jesus as you come to the New Testament. Jesus the Christ, the Messiah.

Jesus, the one who is called the root of Jesse, Jesse being David's father. The one who is called the branch of David. The one about whom the New Testament opens by declaring him to be the son of David.

[ 11 : 33 ] In fact, the New Testament writers will frequently take the psalms that are written either by or about David and apply them directly to Jesus because ultimately these psalms are not about David.

They are immediately but not ultimately. They are pointing beyond David to a greater David. They are pointing beyond the anointed one to a greater anointed one. Beyond this king to a greater king, Jesus himself.

So Jesus becomes the connection between us and this particular psalm. And that's also good news for us. I mean, as you read about the life of David, you might think to yourself, if this is only about David, it might get a little bit dangerous if God were to grant him all of his heart's desire.

Because if this is written to the David who we're told he had a heart after God, then fine. But if this is written about the David who stood on his rooftop and lusted after Bathsheba and took her to be his wife and had her husband killed, those are bad desires, right?

This has to be about more than just David. Because David does not deserve to have all of his heart's desire, all of his plans fulfilled by God himself. He does not.

[ 12 : 48 ] He's sinful like you and I are. But not so with Jesus. Jesus, who was made like us in every way but without sin.

This Jesus is the one ultimately that this psalm is addressed to. And so as we read through this psalm, we have to read it in light of the coming of the true King, the Messiah, the Anointed One.

So that we hear the phrases like, May He grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your plans. May the Lord fulfill all your petitions.

Or, I know that the Lord will answer Him, the Anointed One, the King, from His holy heaven. We read those as ultimately in reference to Jesus.

The same Jesus who in John chapter 11, as He prays aloud for the people to hear it, then follows it up by saying, Father, I've said this not because I don't think that you hear me but for the sake of the people around me because I know that you always hear me.

[ 14 : 09 ] That's what Jesus says when He prays. I know that you always hear me. There is not a petition of Jesus that goes unanswered. There is not a prayer of Jesus that is ignored by His Father.

Jesus is always answered by His Father. And so it can be said in truth without qualification that all His heart's desire are brought about and granted to Him by His Father.

All of His plans are fulfilled. All His petitions answered. The sinless King of Israel.

All His prayers answered all the time. And the reason that that's good news for you is because Jesus prays on your behalf.

God. It is good news for you to know that all His desires are fulfilled by His Father. That all His petitions are answered by God because He prays for you.

[ 15 : 18 ] He is the mediator, the go-between between us and God. He is the one who intercedes on our behalf. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2.5 that there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

He mediates for us. The writer of the book of Hebrews says in Hebrews 7 that He lives, He always lives to make intercession for us.

Which is a way of saying that He never stops praying for His people. He never stops. He's always petitioning His Father on behalf of His people.

Always. All the time. He's the mediator. He's the intercessor. Are His desires fulfilled? Yes. Is that good news for you? Yes, because He's praying for you.

You want the petitions of King Jesus answered because so many of them are about you. So many of them are about what you need this next year.

[ 16 : 24 ] Whatever hardship you faced in 2019, before it came, if you belonged to Jesus, He was already interceding for you. The things that you might need would be there for you.

And that as you climbed up out of the pit, the people who needed to be there to grab a hold of your hand, they would be there. He was already interceding for you. In 2018, He was praying for what would come upon you in 2019.

And now, He prays for you about what will come upon you next year. He's always interceding for His people. It's good news to know that all His petitions are answered by His Father.

But, His work of mediation is not limited to His prayer on our behalf. In all the passages in the New Testament where we see Jesus hailed as the mediator or as the intercessor, there is always an immediate connection to Christ's death in the place of sinners.

We see that all the time. So, quoted a moment ago from 1 Timothy 2.5, there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. And the next verse says, who gave His life as a ransom.

[ 17 : 47 ] He gave His life as a ransom. With the writer of Hebrews, in speaking about Christ, always living to make intercession for His people, both before and after that, the context is Jesus coming as the high priest, as the new high priest, a better high priest from the line of Melchizedek, coming and making an offering.

Not offering a bull or a goat like the priests of the Old Testament, but offering up Himself. And now He stands forever pleading His own sacrifice, His own blood before His Father on behalf of His people.

Now, you begin to understand verse 2. May He send you help from the sanctuary, the place of offering and sacrifice, and give you support from Zion, the hill upon which the tabernacle and later the temple where the sacrifices were made would stand.

May He remember all your offerings and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices. It is good news for you to know that the Father regards with favor the sacrifice of the Son on the cross.

it is good news for you because you have no other hope in this world for the forgiveness of your sins than that He paid the penalty in your place.

[ 19 : 17 ] And He stands as your mediator, He stands as your intercessor, as the eternal offering forever satisfying the Father's wrath and justice on your behalf.

and He's the one who prays for you. At the very end of this psalm in verse 9 we read we read of one of three places in which we, the reader or the soldiers themselves who are saying this are actually drawn into the action of the psalm.

It's mostly just about the King and ultimately about Jesus. but we see three key places where we're drawn in and one of them is at the end of verse 9 May He answer us when we call.

And you might scratch your head and think where does that come from in all of this? This is all about the King and God answering the King's prayers and then suddenly at the end there's this intrusion of oh and by the way answer us as well.

Except that it's not an intrusion it's tied to the first half of verse 9 oh Lord save the King. It is God's determination to hear the prayers of His Son accept the offering the sacrifice of His Son and because of those things to answer us when we call.

[ 20 : 46 ] When our prayers are offered up they are taken to the Father by the Mediator filtered by His righteous desires and brought before the Father and they are answered.

The hope of your prayers being answered hinges entirely upon the certainty of the prayers of Jesus always being answered. And it is good news that He stands between us and the Father not just to take the Father's wrath but to filter the foolishness out of our own requests and then take them purified to His Father.

There's another intrusion I mentioned that there were three places where we or us the reader or the soldiers intrude into the language there. Second one is in verse 7 and we're going backwards from back to front sorry.

Verse 7 some trust in chariots and some in horses and here's the we again but we trust in the name of Yahweh our God.

Some will trust in the power and might and wisdom of the world. Some will trust in the things that to everyone else look like the very kinds of support that you need to make it in this world.

[ 22 : 11 ] Here to win the battle. At work to advance in your career. At home to make your kids do what you want your stinking kids to do. Whatever it might be. There are all sorts of props around us that we could take hold of.

I need them today but you could take hold of them and everyone around you is saying this will work. This will do it.

This will get you the promotion. This will make your kids stop doing what it keeps doing. This will help you prepare for retirement. This will make the pain go away. This will make your marriage easier.

There are all sorts of props standing around us. Some of them are good and some of them are bad. Some of them are helpful and some of them are harmful.

But none of them can replace or stand alongside of trust in the name of the Lord. knowing that Jesus stands in our place constantly interceding for us does not only encourage us to lift up our prayers to him but it moves us to greater trust in him.

[ 23 : 27 ] And that's that's the goal right? When you pray you're not praying just to get what you want you're praying because you want God to do something intervene in some way and as a result of that intervention you'll come away with an increased faith and an increased trust in him.

We've been walking through the gospel of John for the last year and we've seen over and over John is showing us these signs these miracles that Jesus did and he tells us at the end of the book of John that he wrote about these signs so that you might believe right?

The intervention of God into the world for his people results in increased trust in him and so we pray and we want him to intervene so that our trust might be increased in him but that will require many times that you let go of the props around you and some of them won't be harmful some of them will be good things but you're trusting in all these things and you're not trusting in the Lord you're trusting that if you will just behave in this way at work say these things to these people be at this place at this time that everything will go well for you and that does not require faith in God and when things get rocky and difficult none of those props will help you anymore they may advance you in the places that you want to go in this world they may get out of others the reactions that you would like to get out of them but when life turns down dark alleyways they will not help you only faith in the Lord will help you on that day and the psalmist says look we must trust in the name of the

Lord our God all those who trust in horses and chariots and the things of this world they collapse and fall but those who trust rise and stand upright and as you rise and you stand upright because of your faith and trust in the Lord with the rubble behind you as you rise and continue to trust in Him it carries you on to the third place where we are brought into the text it carries you somewhere it's aiming at something that's indescribably good look up in verse 5 here's the third place where we see we in the text may we shout for joy over your salvation and in the name of our God set up our banners this is a this is a victory parade before the victory has been won this is a shout and an acclamation of satisfaction in Christ in the midst of a world that would drain us and weary us this is not at the end of the day the battle's been won foes have been defeated the seas are calm the wind has died down and everything is okay and in that moment we're shouting this is on the cusp of the battle that's why we work from back to front because I don't want us at the end of it all because we're not just at the end of 2019 we're at the beginning of 2020 and we need to see where can these things carry us in the midst of stuff where can they carry us they can carry us to genuine joy and delight in the Lord in the midst of the troubles of this world to know to be convinced that Christ is always interceding for you he whose prayers never go answered is praying for you and to trust that he can supply all that you need in your day of trouble to know those things leads to and produces joy delight and a treasuring of Jesus that you will not know if you do not turn to the king to the anointed one to the

Messiah it may be the case that you are approaching a new year as the same old you still burdened by the weight of your sin still without hope in this world or the next and the scriptures say to us that all we must do is repent and believe all those who call upon the name of the Lord this Lord will be saved you could enter into 2020 as a new creation you could enter in to a new year as a new person born again sins forgiven spirit living within you empowering you to do all this stuff that seems so foreign to you if you would repent turn away from your sin and put your faith in Christ even now let's pray continue