

April 12, 2026

Psalm 21 NIV 1984

O LORD, the king rejoices in your strength. How great is his joy in the victories you give!

² You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah

³ You welcomed him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.

⁴ He asked you for life, and you gave it to him— length of days, for ever and ever.

⁵ Through the victories you gave, his glory is great; you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty. ⁶ Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence. ⁷ For the king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken. ⁸ Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies; your right hand will seize your foes. ⁹ At the time of your appearing you will make them like a fiery furnace. In his wrath the LORD will swallow them up, and his fire will consume them.

¹⁰ You will destroy their descendants from the earth, their posterity from mankind.

¹¹ Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed;

¹² for you will make them turn their backs when you aim at them with drawn bow. ¹³ Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might.



God's Yes and God's No Psalm 21

BIG IDEA: We rejoice in all God's blessings and most importantly God's "Yes" in Jesus the King, but we are soberly reminded of God's "No" to those who reject him. By the grace of God we must choose to trust in the Lord.

OUTLINE

1 Introduction

I. God's Yes (vv. 1-6)

1. Count your blessings
2. The greatest blessing of all

II. God's No (vv. 8-12)

III. Your Response (v. 7)

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. Make a list of all the blessings and actions God provides or performs for the king in verses 1–7. What aspects of these blessings stand out to you regarding their nature and extent?
2. Verse 7 serves as the theological turning point of the entire section. What two attributes of God does it emphasize, and how do they relate to the king’s security?
3. The New Testament consistently interprets the Davidic psalms as ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ (see Acts 2:29–36, Hebrews 1:8–9). How does each gift mentioned in verses 2–6 attain its fullest significance in Christ, particularly focusing on verse 4’s “life...forever and ever” and verse 6’s “joy of your presence”?
4. During his first coming, Jesus endured the hostility of enemies, including betrayal, mockery, and crucifixion. How does the latter part of Psalm 21 speak to his second coming and the ultimate reversal of that apparent defeat? What does it signify that the one who was consumed by his enemies will ultimately consume his own?
5. Since believers are united to Christ, the King of this psalm, his blessings become ours by grace. How should this reality transform your approach to prayer, suffering, or uncertainty this week?
6. The psalm begins with the king’s joy (v. 1) and concludes with the congregation’s praise (v. 13). What does it convey that the appropriate response to both God’s saving mercies and his righteous judgments is the same—exaltation and song?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The psalms, especially those written by King David, can be understood in three ways. First, David sang them in his historical context and experiences. Second, successive kings would sing them and apply them to their experiences. Third, and climactically, Messiah Jesus will sing them as the final fulfillment of their themes. This is especially true of Psalm 21, a royal psalm of praise of which John Calvin says, "Above all, it was the design of the Holy Spirit here to direct the minds of the faithful to Christ. . . . What is here stated was only fully accomplished in Christ, who was appointed by the heavenly Father to be King over us, and who is at the same time God manifest in the flesh. We cannot be certain of David's historical context, but the battle on the horizon is clearly eschatological and resonates with the second coming of King Jesus in the book of Revelation, especially 19:11-21."

- adapted from ESV Study Bible and Exalting Christ in the Psalms: Psalm 1-51

Praise to Jesus – We praise you for your strength and salvation, which are true sources of joy. We praise you for the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and greater King that this psalm could only anticipate. You withheld nothing from him. You gave him life from the dead, granting him an eternal and everlasting life, and crowned him with glory and honor at your right hand.

Repent through Jesus – You are the God who meets your king with rich blessings, who answers the requests of his lips, who crowns and honors and gladdens with your very presence. And yet we confess that we have treated these mercies as ordinary things. We have received your gifts and forgotten the Giver. We have enjoyed your blessings and neglected your face. We have wanted the crown without the King. We confess that we have lived as though our security rested in our own strength rather than in your steadfast love.

Consecration for Jesus – We rejoice in all God's blessings and most importantly God's "Yes" in Jesus the King; and we are soberly reminded of God's "No" to those who reject him. By the grace of God, we choose to trust in the Lord now and forever.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. Talk with your children about how Psalm 21 thanks God for answering David's request in Psalm 20. It is a psalm of thanksgiving.
2. What does it mean to give thanks? (We are thankful when we realize that we got something that we did not deserve. If we feel like we earned it, then it is owed to us. Therefore, we are not thankful. But when we get something that we don't deserve, then we appreciate it.)
3. Read verse 4. How long a life did God grant King David? (The verse says, "forever and ever", but we know that King David did not live forever. Some suggest that this is a blessing of a long life and not literally eternal life. That could be how David meant it, as he used poetic language. But make sure to tell your children that Jesus ultimately fulfilled this promise, as He does have eternal life.)
4. Read verses 8-12. What is the imagery that David writes about in this part of the psalm? (David wrote about God appearing and conquering all of His enemies. This can be somewhat uncomfortable to discuss with your children. Use your judgment on the maturity of each of your children to direct you on how deep to go in the study of these verses. It is meant to be comforting to us that those who are enemies of God will be judged and defeated.)
5. Read verse 13. What does it mean to pray for the Lord "to be exalted"? (To be exalted is to have a high honor bestowed upon you and to be held above others. This is a great picture of our worship of God. He certainly deserves to be highly exalted. The second part of the verse shows us a way to exalt God by singing and praising Him.)
6. How has this psalm taught you to pray with grateful and thankful hearts?

Scriptures for further study:

Psalm 34

Psalm 104

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

FOR STUDENTS

1. Read verses 1–2. David celebrates that the king rejoices in the Lord's strength and that God answered his prayers. Why do you think it is important not only to ask God for help, but also to stop and thank Him when He answers?
2. Look at verses 3–6. David describes the king receiving blessings, honor, and joy from God. How do these verses show that the king's success comes from God rather than from his own strength?
3. Read verse 7. David says, "For the king trusts in the LORD." Why is trust in God the foundation for real confidence? How is that different from the kind of confidence our culture often promotes?
4. In verses 8–12, the psalm speaks about God defeating His enemies. Why would this be comforting to God's people? What does it teach us about God's justice in a world where evil often seems to win?
5. Psalm 21 originally celebrated God's blessings on King David, but the language of eternal blessing and victory ultimately points forward to Jesus, the greater King. How does Jesus fulfill this psalm in a deeper way than David ever could?
6. The psalm ends with praise: "Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power." (v.13) How should knowing that Jesus is the victorious King shape the way we worship, trust God, and live our lives this week?

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. In the original context, this is a Psalm of David the king thanking God for the war victories God has granted him through God's strength. In this way, God has answered his prayers.

Question: In what ways have you seen God answer your prayers? Would you spend some time thanking God for all the ways he has blessed you?

2. In verse 2, David expresses gratitude that God has "granted him the desire of his heart."

Question: How might we be tempted to misuse our prayers to serve our own desires? Why is it important that we endeavor to pray only with hearts that are in alignment with God's desires?

3. Given the rather superlative language of verses 3-6, why would we be right in seeing these verses as pointing to (and fulfilled in) Jesus, the greater King?

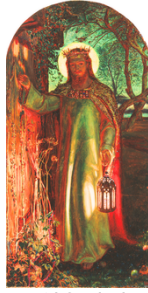
4. If we want to share in the victories of Jesus Christ, which result in "rich blessings" (v.3) and "eternal blessings" (v.6), then we must believe in him.

Question: King David "trusted in the Lord" (v.7). Are you prepared to do the same?

5. This Psalm underscores both God's love and favor, as well as his fierce wrath and judgment against all sin and evil. This was meant to be a comfort to God's people, but also a serious warning to those who are against God. But the Bible says that Jesus came to die for us so that he himself might take on the wrath of God for us. This is the good news: when we believe in Jesus, we are saved from God's wrath and instead given all of his richest blessings and eternal life.

Question: Again, have you trusted in Jesus Christ? Would you do so today? What are you waiting for?!

The Blessed Life: A Study of the Psalms



"The Light of the World" (1851-1853) by William Holman Hunt

Psalms Introduction

The Book of Psalms is the sacred place where the living God meets His people in the most intimate and personal of ways. He invites them to know Him not merely as an idea, but as their refuge, portion, shepherd, and King. From the opening doorway of blessedness in Psalm 1 to the climactic Hallelujahs of Psalm 150, the Psalter reveals that the truly happy life is one rooted in the person and work of Almighty God, whose steadfast love holds His people through every season of the soul. As the Psalter moves from anguish to adoration, from darkness to dawn, it becomes a mirror of the Christian life itself. It teaches us to pray honestly, to hope stubbornly, and to sing faithfully, even when night seems long. In the deepest valleys, the Psalms give voice to the church's groan; on the highest heights, they train the church's doxology. And in every line, every cry, and every hallelujah, Christ Himself comes near, revealing the light of the world in the dark night of the soul and leading His people into the blessedness that only His grace can give.

– Pastor Bill

About the artwork and artist.

The Light of the World, 1851-1853, is an iconic allegorical painting by William Holman Hunt. The painting depicts Jesus Christ as a regal figure in flowing robes, wearing a crown of thorns, holding a glowing lantern, and preparing to knock on a weed-overgrown wooden door with no external handle. This illustrates Revelation 3:20 from the Bible: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." The artist William Holman Hunt is showing us that Jesus is the divine door to the living God who meets His people in the most intimate and personal ways. The closed, overgrown door → representing the human soul or "obstinately shut mind" that has long ignored spiritual calling. There is no handle on the outside → the door can only be opened from within, emphasizing free will and personal invitation to faith. The lantern → Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12), illuminating darkness and offering salvation. The work marked Hunt's deepening Christian faith (from earlier agnosticism) and became one of the most reproduced and devotional images of the Victorian era, inspiring oratorios, hymns, and widespread popular piety. It's often called a visual sermon on personal salvation.