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The
Songs

4

PSALMS - The SONGS

Four

The LORD Alone Makes Me Dwell in Safety

READ AND OBSERVE

Read through **Psalm 4** and mark every reference to the LORD, including pronouns and synonyms, with a red triangle.

Read through **Psalm 4** and mark every reference to the author, i.e. the godly man, with a green capital "G".

Read through **Psalm 4** and mark every reference to the sons of men with an orange capital "M".

Read through **Psalm 4** and mark every contrast with a pink diagonal line.

Read through **Psalm 4** and mark every comparison with a pink equal sign.

Read through **Psalm 4** and divide the passage into the following segments. Mark and title these segments in your text using brackets in the margin.

1. LORD hear my prayer of distress
2. Godly man is set apart for the LORD by the LORD
3. Trust in the LORD
4. LORD makes the godly man dwell in safety

READ AND ANSWER

Psalm 4:1

This Psalm is attributed to David. To Whom does David call?

What does he ask God to do?

What description does he give to his God?

What does he say God has done in the past?



The Hebrew word for “distress” is *tzar* and means narrow or straits. It has the idea of being boxed in and restrained in a bad place.

The Hebrew word for “relieved” is *rachav* and means to be, or grow, wide or large, to enlarge. It carries the idea of being released.

What does he ask God to do for him this time?

1.

2.

Psalm 4:2-3

Who is addressed in **verse 2**?

What questions are directed at the sons of men?

1.

2.

What have the sons of men done to David, i.e. the godly man?

As a godly man, should he be treated with honor or reproach?

However, as a godly man, how is he being treated?

Why? What do the sons of men revere?

1.

2.

What do the sons of men love?

What is the aim of the sons of men?

What have the sons of men done to the David, i.e. the godly man?

1.

2.

David gives a direct answer to the actions of the sons of men. What does he tell them they need to know and understand?

1.

2.

To Whom does the godly man belong?

What has the LORD done with the godly man?

Apart from what?

Apart for what?

When the godly man calls to the LORD, how does the LORD respond?

Psalm 4:4-5

What advise and admonition are given in **verses 4-5**?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

To whom is this advise given?

Who gives this admonition?

Whether this admonition is from the Lord to David (i.e. the godly man), or from David to those who are with him, or even from David to his enemies, what should be the response of the hearer?

Psalm 4:6-8

What are many saying?

Who are the many?

Instead of dejection, what does David express?

What does he call on the LORD to do?

Who is the “us”?

What has God put in David’s heart?

How much gladness is in David’s heart?

Who is the “their”? (Hint: It can’t be David, otherwise it would say “my”, and it can’t be those with David, otherwise it would say “our”—it says “their”.)



The reference to grain and new wine is referring to the gladness of those who are worshiping a false god by offering grain and fresh wine from their harvest. But don’t think that means people outside of God’s nation, Israel.

Hosea 7:14

***And they do not cry to Me from their heart when they wail on their beds;
For the sake of grain and new wine they assemble themselves,
They turn away from Me.***

Despite many saying that God is not going to help them, what does David determine to do?

1.

2.

How does he have the confidence to both lie down and sleep?

Do circumstances give David peace?

In Whom does he find his peace?

READ AND REASON

Verses 4 and 5 of Psalm 4 present an interesting dilemma.

***Tremble, and do not sin;
Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still.
Selah.
Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
And trust in the LORD.***

The admonition in **verses 4 and 5** could be from the Lord to David (i.e. the godly man), or from David to those who are with him, or even from David to his enemies (as many commentaries suggest)—so how are we to know who is being spoken to?

Sometimes things are not completely clear when we study. So what should we do?

Well, continuing to study the text at hand is always a win/win situation. You will definitely learn more about the passage you are studying and just might possibly find the answer to your problematic question, as well.

After careful, methodical observation of the passage in question, cross-references would be a logical next step. You may, or may not, find the answer, but again, it's a win/win endeavor. In this case, **Ephesians 4:26** comes to mind.

Ephesians 4:26

BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger...

Paul, however, is talking to Christians about their responsibility to speak broad, complete, true doctrine to other believers when they speak falsely concerning doctrine. He actually gives them a command to be angry (*orge*), to have an abiding hatred of unrighteousness with appropriate actions. Inappropriate actions would constitute sin, which is why he warns them not to sin.

He continues and says to not let the sun go down on their anger, which is a different word (*parorgismos*) which is an excited provocation to anger, indignation, and wrath—it manifests itself in bitterness and irritation. Way too many people naively meld these imperatives together and believe Paul is simply talking about making up with people before you go to sleep at night.

In fact, Paul is telling the church to not have *parorgismos* (anger) while commanding them to have *orge* (anger). He tells them that if they have the wrong type of anger when they speak truth to other believers they will give the devil an opportunity, a *topos* (a place from which to operate). Take note of this: if they *do not* have *orge* anger it will give the devil an opportunity! They are commanded to *have orge* anger!

Well, Paul's exhortation is not exactly the same as David's situation and this particular cross-reference does not really help us find the answer to our dilemma.

Here are some other cross-references that do apply to the admonition in **Psalm 4:4-5**. They might help if you ask God to open your eyes to behold wonderful things from His Word. Underline the parts of each passage that relate to our question in **Psalm 4:4-5**.

Joshua 1:8

***This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth,
but you shall meditate on it day and night,
so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it;
for then you will make your way prosperous,
and then you will have success.***

Psalm 2:11

Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling.

Psalm 3:2-4

***Many are saying of my soul, "There is no deliverance for him in God." Selah.
But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head.
I was crying to the LORD with my voice,
And He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah.***

Psalm 63:6

When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches,

Psalm 51:15-19

***O Lord, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise.
For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it;
You are not pleased with burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.
By Your favor do good to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem.
Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices,
In burnt offering and whole burnt offering;
Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.***

Psalm 84:11-12

***For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
The LORD gives grace and glory;***

***No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.
O LORD of hosts, how blessed is the man who trusts in You!***

Isaiah 26:3-4

***The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.
Trust in the LORD forever, for in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock.***

Malachi 3:3

***He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver,
and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver,
so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.***

1 Peter 4:19

***Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their
souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.***

Doing a word study might also help in some cases. Let's try it here.

The Hebrew word for tremble is *ragaz* and means to tremble, be agitated, quiver, quake, be excited or perturbed.

The Hebrew word for sin is *chata* and means to miss or go wrong.

The Hebrew word for meditate is *amar* and means to say or utter.

The Hebrew word for be still is *damam* and means to be or grow dumb, silent, or still.

The Hebrew word *Selah* means to lift up or exalt, make light of, or toss aside.

The Hebrew word for sacrifice is *zevach* and means sacrifice, slaughter, offer.

The Hebrew word for righteousness is *tzedec* and means to be just, rightness.

The Hebrew word for trust is *batach* and means to trust or rely.

The Hebrew word for LORD is *YHWH* and is the proper name of the God of Israel.

Do any of these word meanings help to determine who is speaking or who is being spoken to?

One more step we can take is to look at various commentaries. Sometimes an author can give us an idea that we had not considered ourselves. In this case, most commentaries (but not all) teach that David is speaking to his enemies.

In almost every situation where I find the bulk of commentaries in agreement with one another, I can see their point, and usually agree. However, this time, I question their

supposition. Why? Context. It doesn't give me a reason to go that route over what seems much more obvious.

Context is always the most important interpreter of any passage. Cross-references and word studies can only colorize the drawing that is already sketched out for us in the passage—they can never change the main and plain meaning of the text itself. In this case, the text leaves us without a clear direction, but several options. The cross-references and word studies do not give us any further clarity so we must rest on the context alone. What is the context? One thing, but two parts: David calls on God in his distress because of the reproach of deceptive men against him, and God answers him.

Because of the flow of the context of the Psalm, itself, I do not find the most logical answer to be that David is calling his enemies to repentance—it just doesn't fit well. David is in distress and calling on God to be gracious to him. When he does talk to the sons of men who are against him, it is to speak persuasive truth about his God and his confidence in Him. There is no reason to believe that David is worried about them at this point. He has one directive—and that is to obtain relief from His God.

David calls for God to answer in the very first line of the Psalm—obviously the most important thing to him. And he declares to his adversaries that God answers him when he calls to Him—in the very line preceding the verses in doubt. They can be seen as God's answer to David's call—the very thing David is after. And what an answer it is! Such advice is undeniable as to its helpfulness in a situation such as David's.

God tells David to tremble (be agitated, quiver, quake, be excited or perturbed) with anger or fear but to not sin (miss righteousness or do something wrong). David is told to meditate in his heart (to say the truth about God and His protection) and be still (grow dumb, silent, or still). David is to speak the truth and then stop listening to his fears (lies). In other words, he is to put his mind (heart) on God and His ways—and then put his mouth where his heart is.

David takes a “selah” or pause, and lifts himself up by exalting God and making light of his own problems and sort of tossing them aside (not to say his problems weren't real—they were, but in the light of God they would necessarily pale in comparison).

God directs David to offer sacrifices of righteousness—“slaughter” the idea of not trusting in God because of his circumstance, and instead, offer just, rightness in the form of faith and trust—by relying on the LORD (the One, True, Living God—the God of Israel) instead of his own impotent power to change it.

I am not saying that I know for certain my interpretation above is the answer to this dilemma, but I hope you can see the need for reasoning through the Scriptures for yourself in order to learn truth for yourself. Don't just take someone else's word for it (and that includes mine) but instead, dig as deeply as you can into the Bible for yourself, and most importantly—ask God to open your eyes to behold wonderful things from His Word... Then listen to His answer—not in your mind—but in His Word.

If we never figure out who is being spoken to for sure, we can still know with certainty that this set of admonitions is valid, and profitable to each of the groups in question. And we can know without a doubt it is an admonition to which we would do well to adhere.

Even the very process of Bible study can result in our own sanctification... And our sanctification will always result in His Glory being seen... And that, my friends, is a very good thing!

Segment by Segment

**Try titling these segments yourself.
Ask God to help you.**

Verse 1

Verses 2-3

Verses 4-5

Verses 6-8

Purpose of Psalm 4

**Try to identify the purpose of Psalm 4.
The purpose simply states “why the Psalmist wrote the Psalm”.**

Theme of Psalm 4

**Try giving Psalm 4 a title by identifying its theme.
The theme simply states “what the Psalm is about”.**
