

# A Petition for Blessing

By Jeff Noblit

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## **Anchored in Truth Ministries**

1915 Avalon Ave.

Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

**Website:** [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org)

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Go to the Psalms. Psalm 132, a great Psalm of ascent. These were Psalms written as the Jews were bringing themselves or being brought back from captivity into the Promised Land and what a powerful picture we have, a type of Christ in this Psalm. And as you think about what the Psalmist is writing and what he's saying, you cannot but doubt in any way, I mean, there can be no question in your mind, the Spirit of God is the author of sacred Scripture. No man could have thought this up or put these pieces together like this. You know, what they're asking for, they're coming back into the Promised Land, they are asking for the blessings of God. They are making a petition and I've just entitled this whole Psalm in this message, "A Petition for Blessing."

So here they come petitioning God for blessing. What might be living under the blessing of God? I mean, there are a thousand ways, I suppose, you could speak of that but let me give you three thoughts of what it is to live under the blessing of God. Number 1: it's to know the presence of God. You see, God can't just do stuff for you, he is the greatest gift to you. He is the blessing. When Paul talked about he was working for the prize that awaits him, I'm convinced the price was being with Christ. That's the prize and the more you know him, the more you realize that. Now, we do enjoy the common and redemptive grace as he pours on us but the end of all of it and certainly the end of redemptive grace is the presence of God because we're shut out from him as sinners brought back in, of course, by grace. So the presence of God and then flowing from that we live by the provisions of God. That's living under his blessings and then having a heart, thirdly, that overflows with the praises of God. All those linked together: you've got to know the presence of God, then flowing from that are the provisions of God and then you will overflow with the praises of God and that's basically what they're saying. "God, as we come back into the Promise Land," you've got to remember now, historically Israel connected geography with God's presence and primarily the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of Holies was where God manifested his Shekinah glory, his most intimate and vital, if you will, presence was there. So as they come back into Jerusalem, they're talking about entering back into a union and a fellowship with God that they had lacked in Babylonian captivity.

Now, a key phrase that I think, the hinge you might say, that this whole Psalm turns on is verse 10. He says,

10 For the sake of David Your servant, Do not turn away the face of Your anointed.

That's interesting. Here they come back into the Promise Land, this is not David writing obviously, and they say, "For the sake of David Your servant, through the means of, the provision of David our forefather, we want you to bless us." So here these exiles are returning from captivity, are praying for God's new blessing and they are praying for it and petitioning for that blessing based on going through the right person: they are going through David, the provision of King David. Now, we see Christ all in this. First of all, note the devotion they refer to here. They say, "Because of David's devotion, we want you to bless us." It seems kind of cheating, doesn't it? You almost want to say, "Well, wait a minute, why does David have to be the guy who's got all the good stuff done and did all the meritorious work and you get the blessing?" Well, there's one good clear reason for that: that's a perfect picture of Christ. He does the work, we get the blessing. He was the one who had the covenant relationship with God and we get the blessing. By the way, as a side note, I made ramble a little bit but it's pretty good rambling: you've got to anchor into your minds that salvation is at its core, a covenant agreement between God the Father and God the Son, that God had an agreement with his Son, "If you will go and die for the children, be buried for their transgressions, be raised for their justification and ever live to intercede for them, if you will go and do the work required to be a Savior for the children, then I will give you a people, a church." Now listen, so the security of your salvation is based on the Father's guarantee to Christ that he will have a people for all eternity. Get out of it. It's not about you primarily, it's about God the Father and God the Son.

So the Psalmist writing here says, "You made a covenant with David that someone from his seed would sit on the throne of Israel forever," and so there we go again, we're stretched out of David historically and into the true David whom he was a type of and that's Jesus Christ. So he basically starts saying, "Now through David, we know you're going to bless us but ultimately the one that was of the lineage of David, the one that David pointed to, the one that David foreshadowed, the the one that David was a type of, Jesus, he is the one to whom God made the covenants and because God made a covenant with his Son Jesus Christ to give him a people that would know him and and love him and enjoy him and glorify him forever, we get saved." Are you with me, church? It's a God thing primarily and we get in on it. Sure, there's a way to express it differently that we have a covenant with God but our covenant is through Jesus Christ. They're asking for blessings through the provision of David.

Notice first of all, the devotion of David they petition upon. The devotion of David in verses 1 and 2,

1 Remember, O LORD, on David's behalf, All his affliction; 2 How he swore to the LORD And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob,

David had a heart to secure Jerusalem as God's place, as God's city and secure, in figurative language, a resting place for God. Here David is, he never relaxed, he fought

long and hard and tedious wars and in all of the backsliding of Israel, the Ark of the Covenant which represented the presence of God and which was to be placed in the Holy of Holies in the temple of Jerusalem, where God's Shekinah glory and presence would be manifested, the Ark was taken away by the Philistines. It ended up in Shiloh and it then in Bethel and then in Mizpah and then and 20 years in Jaar and three months it stayed in Obed-edom's house and then David with such devotion, finally got the thing with great difficulty and great terror-filled ordeals to secure it. He brings the Ark back to Jerusalem and then he worked to make sure his son, Solomon, would have everything necessary to build the temple. Here's what they're saying, "God, you know the devotion of David to make sure your presence was among your people." Now again, in figurative understanding, to the Jews, the presence of God was connected with the Ark of the Covenant so when David secured the Ark, brought it back to Israel, secured the funds for his son, Solomon, to build temple, David's devotion brought God's presence. Who does that picture? Only Christ. Only Christ. Christ's devotion secures God's presence for us fallen sinners who ought to be barred and banished from his presence forever.

Is that not a beautiful thing? Who could have just thought this up? God had to of thought this up. What a powerful picture and a beautiful picture of Christ. You see, David was centered on the proper worship of God and the true expansion of God's kingdom. Boy, I'll tell you, one of the things that just really gets in my craw and it just happens over and over, I see it 50 times a day and it just eats me alive and that is: all the man-centered, man-empowered, worldly, clever, pragmatic, goofy stuff that so-called ministers are doing to help God's work progress. Being cool, being relevant, being down-to-earth, being an ordinary guy, being 1,001 things. Quit focusing on that stuff. What we need is the preaching of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit. You will never be cool enough to get somebody so regenerated. You'll never be clever enough to regenerate a lost soul. You'll never be relevant enough to save a lost soul. Only God can do that. Only God can do that.

David new, "I cannot procure God's presence and God's blessing for Israel my way. I can't leave out the truth that God has ordained his presence will center on the Ark of the Covenant. His blessings will center around the Ark of the Covenant." David said, "I cannot exclude or in any way get around or bypass the reality. The pagans may laugh at us and scoff at us and mock us, it doesn't matter. God has ordained that there will be a temple in Jerusalem, the Ark of the Covenant will be in Jerusalem and God's presence and blessings will administer out from that to the people." Now, that dispensation has ended but that's what it was for ancient Israel. What's the point? David did God's work God's way and that's what we must be devoted to as God's people and as a church. Not what works, not what's suspenseful, not what makes "people happy or interested or whatever," but doing God's work God's way.

You know, somebody might have come to David and said, "Why all this toil and strain and war and bother over an Ark? Just a little box?" if you will. Because David said, "That's what God has ordained is the centerpiece of his presence and his blessing to his people." And our Lord Jesus was exactly the same way. Jesus was centered on the proper worship of God and the true expansion of God's kingdom. Satan certainly did it to Jesus

but did not Jesus' own disciples in various and sundry ways try to push and twist and coerce and manipulate and get Jesus to do the things that would keep the crowds following them and supporting them? Yet time after time after time after time, Jesus would refute those suggestions. He would even sometimes openly rebuke even Peter, the spokesman of the 12, and say, "Get behind me, Satan." That's what he said to Peter. "I've got to do my Father's work my Father's way and that's going to a cross. You don't understand it right now. The crowds want to follow me right now. It's not going to work in the pragmatic minds of men but that's doing my Father's work, my Father's way, for my Father's glory." Of course, he did go to the cross and he did "lose all of his followers for a season of time." They all forsook him there at the end. And then, of course, he purchased our souls through that devotion. So we can come and know the presence and the blessings of God because of the devotion of our David, our Jesus Christ.

We know that the Lord remembered Noah when Noah cried out to him and brought an end to the flood. We know that he remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of Sodom. He remembered Rachel and Hannah and gave them children. He remembered his mercy to the house of Israel and delivered his people. Now the Psalmist says, "Bring us blessings based on the devotion of the covenant head of our family, David." And so we the same way, come to God looking to and expecting his presence and his blessing based on the devotion of the true David, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's go a little bit further. Tied in with this, not only devotion but notice determination. Determination. Look at verse 3, we see it just jumping out at us. David said,

3 "Surely I will not enter my house, Nor lie on my bed; 4 I will not give sleep to my eyes Or slumber to my eyelids, 5 Until I find a place for the LORD,

That's figurative language again finding the proper place for the Ark of the covenant,

A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

Of course, the parallel for that would be that our Lord Jesus would not be deterred. There was a divine determination in his soul, now listen to me, that he would make it to the cross. He would become the guilt offering for his children. He would take the wrath of God for them in their place. He would fully extinguish the burning wrath of God that ought to fall on them. He would completely satisfy that wrath. He would be buried in the grave. He would rise again for their justification. He would secure their soul. He would appear at the great eternal mercy seat in heaven and there sprinkle not the blood of a lamb or a bullock or a goat but his own precious blood, sealing our salvation and now ever lives to make intercession for his own children. His determination could not be, if you will, deterred. This is Christ. This is Christ. Oh, what a picture we have here.

But as we think just on a practical note about David lying sleepless until things were right in the house of God, oh that we had men today that would lie sleepless until God's churches got right. Until God's pulpits were preaching the truth of God again. That God's

men were thundering the true Gospel again. That God's churches had true and meaningful membership in their churches and biblical and honest and loving accountability and discipline in the churches for the glory of God. Oh, that God would give us some more men of God who would have some sleepless nights until things are right with God and the church. You just don't see much of that anymore but boy, what a picture of Jesus we see here as he is our determined Mediator. I just want that to sink into your soul that Jesus would not be deterred from securing your salvation. Just think on that for a moment. "Yeah, but..." There is no "yeah, but" to it. This is between God the Father and God the Son. Look, they both knew the depth of your depravity. They knew the great sinking tendency of your unfaithfulness. They knew in ways you can't comprehend, the vile offensiveness of your very character and nature before a true and holy God and yet in love we can't comprehend, God the Father and God the Son made a divine covenant, "Son, go and redeem them, upholding all justice and I will give you a people for all eternity." And Jesus would not sleep. He would not rest. He went to the Garden of Gethsemane, wouldn't sleep. He said, "I've got to make it to that cross for my sheep." What a picture of our Lord and his determination.

Well, then there's a decision. There was a decision here. It's all over lapping, I understand that, but I do like the devotion, the determination and the decision here. David in verse 6 said about the Ark of the Covenant which, of course, represents the presence and the blessing of God,

6 Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah, We found it in the field of Jaar.

Then notice the quick decision,

7 Let us go into His dwelling place; Let us worship at His footstool. 8  
Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength.

The point is: when David finally in all of his toil and all of his trouble and all of his workings finally found the Ark of the Covenant, he acted. He fulfilled the task. And I can see our Lord there the night before he's betrayed, the night he was betrayed and the night before his crucifixion, in the Garden of Gethsemane and in a sense, he had found the way to redeem his children. There he was praying, sweat drops of blood coming off of his brow and he made the resolute decision, "Not my will, but Thy will be done. That's my decision. I'm going to secure the presence and the blessings of God on the children that God has given me may from the foundation of the world."

Don't you wish and I don't mean to be braggadocios toward me, don't you wish every pulpit in the world thundered these truths? Are not the people of God robbed by not understanding the God-centeredness of what God does for us in salvation? How do I know I'm saved? Because God the Father is not going to break his covenant with God the Son. Wooo! That's good stuff. God the Father is not going to violate the covenant he has with God the Son to secure for his Son a people. It's just not going to happen. I mean, I can't be lost. I can't get lost. I can't lose my salvation. I can't get unregenerate. It

can't happen because my Lord was so devoted and my Lord was so determined and my Lord was so decisive and went to the cross. Wow. What a Savior we have.

So the Psalmist says, "O God, we want your presence and we want your blessings in the Promised Land and, God, we're coming through David and we're coming on the basis of that devotion David showed, that determination he showed and that decisiveness," which are all pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, real quick, I'm going to close with this, look at verses 7-9, notice their purpose was right here. They're not asking for God's blessings primarily, they're asking for God primarily. By the way, that's how you know you're saved. Are you listening, you pastor? Look, it's not wrong, it's not unspiritual to want God to bless you even with stuff. That's not necessarily wrong. You know, I'm getting older. I feel older. I'm more tired on Sunday night than I used to be. If I exercised a little bit more, I'd feel a little bit better, right Joyce? Amen? Amen. She's the exercise lady. She knows. And I've asked the Lord, "Lord, I'd like to grow old and be effective for you. If I can just be effective for you, amen. But Lord, if it's okay, I'd like to have a good car to drive too. Is that okay? I'd like to have a nice home to live in until I die. I'd like to have the home I've got now." I got a new truck, by the way. I've been moaning about my old truck for years now and I got a new truck. Me and the bank got one. But there's nothing wrong with asking God, "God, if you've got some blessings and provisions but, Lord, I want you to know something, in my heart of hearts, it's not what you give me, it's you." That's got to be there if you're really going to enjoy God being a blessing.

That's exactly what these folks say here. Look at verse 7,

7 Let us go into His dwelling place; Let us worship at His footstool.

Then he says in verse 9,

9 Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, And let Your godly ones sing for joy.

They are not talking about mighty armies at this point or great households. What are they saying? "God, we want you. We want righteousness. We want to be clean. We want to be true." They had the right purpose in mind when they came to God asking for blessings. You see, our desire should be the presence of God. You see, the only true way to be blessed of God is to be in God's presence because listen, that's what you were created for; you were created for intimacy with God. You see, the most abnormal and perverse event of all history is when man sinned and was shut out from the presence of God. That seems normal because that's all we see in this world is men who don't know God but that's actually abnormal, that's perverse. It's normal and right for men to know him and be with him. Genesis 3:8 after Adam and Eve sinned the Bible says, "They hid themselves from the presence of the Lord," and ever since then man has been without the blessings of God because he's been without the presence of God.

Quickly, in God's presence, Psalm 42 says there's help. In Psalm 44, the Bible says in his presence there is guidance. In Isaiah 9, the Bible says that in his presence is gladness. In Psalm 16, in his presence there is joy. In Isaiah 63:9, the Bible talks about the angel of his presence save them. There is even rescue when we're in God's presence but listen, God provides what we need when we're in his presence. You need God and everything else works out. Make sure that's your goal. Make sure that's your orders. Is it wrong to ask for provisions? No, "Give us this day our daily bread." But that comes from someone who loves God first, not God's provisions first. Isn't it a blessing when your children grow up a little bit and more than wanting what you can buy them and what you can give them, they just want to be with you? So it blesses God. So it blesses God.

Well, as we look to God for blessings and provisions, let's always make sure we're scriptural and that's what he says in 11 and 12 and I'm going to be through,

11 The LORD has sworn to David A truth from which He will not turn back: "Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne. 12 If your sons will keep My covenant."

That's basically saying, "Keep my word."

"And My testimony which I will teach them, Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever."

Let's be scriptural in the things we look to God for. Let's not violate Scripture. One man says, "God, I want you to give me a new job," and God says, "You're not working for the guy you're working for now like working unto the Lord. Why don't you get biblical about the job you've got now and then we might talk about another job." Be biblical. Be biblical.

Well, there are so many things we could say there. I told you we were going to get out a little early because I know the choir and orchestra has worked long and hard but what a beautiful picture of the greatness of our Savior and the greatness of our salvation and the security of our salvation in Psalm 132.

Let's stand together in prayer, alright?