

Psalm 20 — "A Prayer for the King Before a Battle!"

In Jesus Christ, we have the perfect Divine-Warrior King!

"The conception of God as a warrior played a fundamental role in the religious and military experiences of Israel... One can only go so far in describing the history of Israel, or its religion, or the theology of the Old Testament without encountering the wars of Yahweh. In prose and poetry, early and later material alike, the view that Yahweh fought for or against his people stands forth prominently. The centrality of that conviction and its historical, cultic, literary and theological ramifications can hardly be overestimated." (P.D. Miller)

Background to Psalm 20

Psalm 20 = prayer before the battle (beg for victory)

Psalm 21 = praise after the battle (praise after victory)

Psalms 22-24 = Messianic Trilogy (suffering // shepherding // sovereignty)

Can You Imagine The Historical Setting of Psalm 20 in the Temple Courts?

- the King stood within the Sanctuary/Temple offering his sacrifice
- The whole assembly of crowd of worshipers in the courts lift up their voices in the prayer (to God, for their king)
- O God - graciously accept our sacrifices, send our king with your help and victory in the battle. They affirm their joy/victory is bound with his.

- Perhaps the main theme in Ps 20 is *Trusting in the *NAME* of the LORD our God...*

- (1) He's **UNIQUE** (*none like him*)
- (2) He's **COVENANTAL** (*makes/keeps covenant/promises*)
- (3) He's **FAITHFUL** (*never lies/fails to fulfill*)
- (4) He's **ETERNAL** (*existing always & forever*)
- (5) He's **PERSONAL**/relational (*a personal, relational God*)

In the Bible, names are important because the name represents the person. When people had life-changing experiences, their names often changed. For example....

*Abram > Abraham

*Sarai > Sarah

*Simon > Peter

*Saul > Paul

THESIS — Ps 20 is a "battle song". how do God's people pray for their King when he goes to battle?
a responsive reading/chant/prayer/affirmation!

I. (The Congregation): GOD WILL STRENGTHEN YOU (1-4)

Some application points:

1. Pray for your governing authorities.
2. Pray for your local church shepherds.
3. Pray for fellow believers engaged in fierce battles/temptation/struggles.
4. Pray for divine strength to assist one another in living the Christian life with the fierce enemy.
5. Pray for settled and singular trust and devotion to Christ (and not worldly resources)
6. Pray for constant, fervent prayers among God's people.

II. (The Choir-Director): GOD WILL SATISFY YOU (5-6)

- ★ See in verses 5-6, there is a change of Pronouns, from the Singular >> to plural: probably show it was chanted by the congregation and the Priest or Levite who led the choir/assembly (or, the Choir Director)

A prophetic proclamation by a single voice not heard earlier in the psalm. Some think it was a Levite in the Temple (see 2 Chronicles 20:14-17), or a choir-master, or a Temple leader/Levite of some sorts.

III. (The Congregation): GOD WILL SAVE US (7-9)

v.7 - we boast/trust in the Name of the LORD.... while others rely on military trappings, God's people REMIND THEMSELVES that their only hope is in Yahweh. It is a bringing to remembrance of God's past dealings to give sufficient strength for the present and hope for the future. Bring to your mind what God has done & boast in Him.

"This [v.7] should be the resolve of every Christian - in the day of battle. In this spiritual war, in which we are all engaged, the first and necessary step to victory is to renounce all confidence in wisdom and strength of nature and the world; and to remember, that we can do nothing, but in the name, by the merits, through the power, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and our God!" (George Horne)

We are in battle — and a part of our vital battle armor (the panoply of God) is PRAYER! (Ephesians 6:18-20)

Ps 20 is a unique *Battle Song — a Psalm for Battle.*

INTERESTING BACKGROUND, SETTING, & CONTEXTUAL FEATURES

- ★ **RELIGIOUS WORSHIP IN THE TEMPLE.** This psalm gives an interesting interaction of kings, people, Levitical priests/choir director in the Temple worship.
- ★ **SACRIFICES.** Kings offered sacrifices on many occasions and sought help from God (Saul (1 Samuel 13); David (2 Samuel 6); Solomon (1 Kings 3); Jeroboam (1 Kings 12); Ahab (1 Kings 22);

Psalm 20 — "A Prayer for the King Before a Battle!"

- ★ **MESSIANIC OVERTONES.** — it has historical reference to David (as the author) and his time, but certain parallels and types of the future Greater David, the Son of David, the Messiah himself (v.6, 8)!

SOME LESSONS GLEANED FROM PSALM 20:

1. **Trust in the NAME OF YAHWEH.** - trust the name of the LORD (v.7). This provides confidence to his people and reveals His character. To trust the NAME of God is to accept and rely fully on the character of God revealed in his attributes, his relationship of covenant with his people.
2. **Help from ZION.** Help from the sanctuary probably refers to the ark of the covenant. Thus: help from the sanctuary is God Himself coming to the aid of his people and giving help, deliverance, protection, provision against enemies.
3. **Sacrifices in worship.** This is fulfilling the covenant obligations in worship to God. Do we offer our spiritual sacrifices of thanksgiving and pure worship? Do we come to Christ with clean, pure hearts? (Heb 13.15)
4. **Intercessory Prayer for leaders.** Praying much and fully and constantly (with heart and mind and soul) asking for God's protection & deliverance for the leaders.

STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS!

Stand up, stand up for Jesus
 ye soldiers of the cross;
 lift high his royal banner,
 it must not suffer loss.
 From vict'ry unto vict'ry
 his army he shall lead
 till ev'ry foe is vanquished
 and Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
 the trumpet call obey;
 forth to the mighty conflict
 in this his glorious day.
 Ye that are men now serve him
 against unnumbered foes;
 let courage rise with danger
 and strength to strength oppose.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
 stand in his strength alone;
 the arm of flesh will fail you,
 ye dare not trust your own.
 Put on the gospel armor,
 each piece put on with prayer;
 where duty calls or danger,
 be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
 the strife will not be long;
 this day the noise of battle,
 the next, the victor's song.
 To him that overcometh
 a crown of life shall be;
 he with the King of glory
 shall reign eternally.

PSALM 20: *The Psalter (Isaac Watts)*To the tune of: *“In Christ Alone*

Now may the God of power and grace
Attend his people’s humble cry!
Jehovah hears when Isr’el prays,
And brings deliverance from on high.
The name of Jacob’s God defends
Better than shields or brazen walls;
He from his sanctuary sends
Sufficient strength, when Zion calls.

O may the memory of thy name
Inspire our armies for the fight!
Our foes shall fall and die with shame,
Or quit the field with shameful flight.
Now save us, Lord, from slavish fear,
Now let our hopes be firm and strong,
Till the salvation shall appear,
And joy and triumph raise the song.

In his salvation is our hope,
And, in the name of Isr’el’s God,
Our troops shall lift their banners up,
Our navies spread their flags abroad.
Some trust in horses trained for war,
And some of chariots make their boasts:
Our surest expectations are
From thee, the Lord of heav’nly hosts.

PSALM 20 = LITURGICAL, RESPONSIVE READING as indicated in the Psalm (NASB)

A Psalm of David.

Congregation >>>**Psa. 20:1 May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high!****Psa. 20:2 May He send you help from the sanctuary And support you from Zion!****Psa. 20:3 May He remember all your meal offerings And find your burnt offering acceptable! Selah.****Psa. 20:4 May He grant you your heart’s desire And fulfill all your counsel!****Psa. 20:5 We will sing for joy over your victory, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.**Choir-Director, Levite, Priest Leading the Congregation >>>*Psa. 20:6 Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand.**Psa. 20:7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.**Psa. 20:8 They have bowed down and fallen, But we have risen and stood upright.*Congregation >>>**Psa. 20:9 Save, O LORD; May the King answer us in the day we call.**

For the choir director.