

SONGS FOR ALL SEASONS FROM THE PSALMS

The Significance of Songs Selected Scriptures



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Who hasn't felt alone and abandoned? Who cannot remember times when God seemed far away? Who doesn't understand when a friend suffers a "panic attack"? Who hasn't asked, "O Lord, how long?" If those four questions strike a note of relevance, you'll have no difficulty identifying with David's feelings as he composed Psalm 13. Appropriately identified by serious students of the Psalms as a psalm of lament, it was conceived in the womb of woe. But, as we shall see, all was not lost. The psalmist may have begun on his face, but he wound up on his feet. Let's find out what made the difference.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. The Background: Why the Lament?

As we begin examining this psalm, it doesn't take long before we sense in David despondency or depression. Maybe that is why many are drawn to this and other psalms on our blue days. In Psalm 13, David felt forgotten, invisible to God's all-seeing eyes, and we wonder why. Unfortunately, the background of this psalm remains a mystery. We do know, however, that some of David's darkest days came before he took the throne of Israel. God used trials to shape David into a man of spiritual maturity and inner strength and to prepare David for the immense task of leading Israel.

Perhaps David wrote Psalm 13 at the apex of Saul's threats. In 1 Samuel 18, David had just killed Goliath, the Philistine prize-fighter, and had become the hero of Israel. As a result, the people started singing David's praises, and his popularity surpassed Saul's. King Saul's jealousy bubbled until it boiled over, and he set his mind on murdering David (1 Samuel 18:9–15). From that time on, David was the object of Saul's diabolical plan. Though innocent before God and loyal to King Saul, David had to run for his life, hiding in the hills of Judah like an animal.



Quotable

*Are you waiting
for a great
voice before
you sing?
God hears
your heart.
So sing!*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. The Experience: How Did David React? (Psalm 13:1–6)

Psalm 13 records David's raw feelings of depression. Hunted and haunted by the madman Saul, David must have entertained doubts at times. David surely must have mentally replayed his experience before the prophet Samuel as oil ran down his face. Here was the king-elect living like a beast, running for his life. Imagine David slumped beside some bushes, hidden beside a boulder on a lonely mountain, dirty and exhausted, wondering if the chase would ever end.

In the first two verses, David fell on his face and wondered: *Has God completely forgotten me? Does He even care anymore? Will I have to take things into my own hands? Should I deal with my enemies instead of waiting for God?*

In verses 3 and 4, David got up on his knees and lifted his eyes to heaven. David remembered that though he *felt* like God had abandoned him, he *knew* that the Lord was near. David expected God to act and to protect His anointed king. The psalmist realized that he needed to view life from God's perspective if he wanted to make it through his trials.

In the third section, verses 5 and 6, David not only lifted his eyes to heaven, he lifted his heart to heaven as well. Even though Saul was still on the prowl and death pursued David throughout the Judean wilderness, David chose to praise the Lord and trust in His abundant grace.



A CLOSER LOOK

A Prayer of Desperation

“How long, O Lord, will you ignore me? My heart is broken, and my body is about to give out. Come quickly, O Lord, and help me!” How many times have we prayed this kind of prayer? Though we plead, sometimes God's answer comes to us slowly. For years, David sought God's deliverance while he ran from King Saul. Though David nearly capsized in a sea of fear, God did protect David. And not only that, but the Lord used Saul's threats to humble David and prepare him to rule over Israel. When we face devastating sorrow or debilitating fear, let's remember the Lord is trying to draw us to Him and develop our faith. Though He may seem far away, our God will never forget or forsake us. Through the pain God allows in our lives, He will develop our maturity and deepen our faith so we can handle the tasks He plans to give us.



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LET'S LIVE IT

Now that we have examined Psalm 13, what lingering lessons can we apply to our lives? This song teaches us that God designs our trials specifically for us, not for our surroundings. The Lord wishes to train us and mold us, and He uses the distressing circumstances of life as His tools. In doing so, He deals bountifully with us.

What trials have challenged your faith? Did they draw you closer to God or push you further away from Him? How have you matured through your trials?



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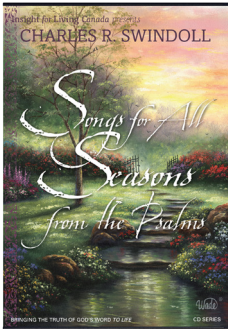
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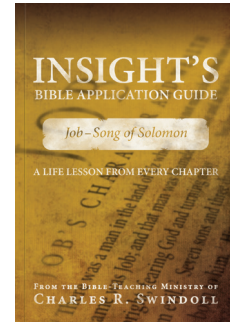
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