

Psalm 41 - Notes

Background:

1. The author is David according to the title of this Psalm.
2. We cannot determine with any certainty the occasion upon which the psalm was written. Many, if not most, agree that it was written during the time Absalom was pursuing David. It appears David was going through a physical sickness, caused by either the elements, the mental stress, the physical strain of being chase, some other factor, or a combination of these.
3. It is a Lament Psalm. It is a Sickness Psalm. It is a Psalm with some Messianic tones..
4. It is a chiasm psalm pointing to the contrast in the way God has ministered to the psalmist's needs in sickness and the way the enemies of the psalmist took advantage of his sickness.
5. Key words in this Psalm: Lord (Yahweh) 6x; Enemy 3x; Speak/Word 3x; Evil 3x.

VV. 1-4 - The Helpless and the Helper

1. vv. 1-3 - The one who helps will be helped.
 1. Helpless = Low, Weak, Poor, Thin
 2. The God-approved one "considers" them
 1. The word means "be prudent ... shew oneself attentive (to), look ... understand" (BDB).
 2. It is not just noticing, it is putting self in the sick's shoes and meeting those needs.
 3. How God blesses the righteous helper of the weak: God delivers him, protects him, keeps him alive, will be praised, will be protected, will be sustained, will be healed and restored. - Matt. 5:7
2. v. 4 - The Lord is the only one who can heal the worst problem - sin!

VV. 5-10 - The Enemies and the Helper

1. vv. 5-9 - The enemies are:
 1. v. 5 - Speak evil of him, wanting him to die
 2. v. 6 - Shows feigned compassion
 3. v. 7 - They devise plans to make things worse for him
 4. v. 8 - They pessimistically predict his peril
 5. v. 9 - The one(s) closes to him did the most harm to him.
2. v. 10 - But he asks God for help and healing to give justice to them.
 1. Very imprecatory
 2. It was his duty as king to render justice.
 3. God helps him who has not done evil (v. 1)

VV. 11-13 - The Confidence and the Helper

1. v. 11 - You protect me (v. 2)
2. v. 12 - You help me (v. 3)
3. v. 13 - Praise God!
 1. Some believe this verse has no sole connection to this psalm.
 2. Many believe it is more of a doxology to conclude the entire Book I of the Psalms.
 3. Either way, it works.