

Psalm 54

Israel's deliverance from the Amalekites in Exodus 17 is reflected here in David's deliverance from King Saul and especially from the treachery and betrayal of the inhabitants of Ziph.

Psalm 54:1 (intro) - "To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, 'Doth not David hide himself with us?'"

The Ziphim are the inhabitants of the Israelite town of Ziph and the wilderness area surrounding it, about 5 miles southeast of Hebron.

Twice, apparently, David hid in the vicinity of the Ziphites when being pursued by King Saul. Each time the Ziphites, although of David's own tribe of Judah, told Saul of his location. They seemed to think it better to support the reigning king than to be kind to David, whom they considered a rebel. (See 1 Sam.23.14-23; 1 Sam.26.1-5)

This is an example of legalism blinding us to a deeper spiritual truth, something Jesus encountered from the Pharisees. David's betrayal by the Ziphites also echoes Jesus' betrayal by Judas, and indeed his rejection by his own people and nation.

David expands on this idea of betrayal in the next psalm.

Psalm 55:12-13 (NET) - "Indeed, it is not an enemy who insults me, or else I could bear it... But it is you, a man like me, my close friend in whom I confided."

Psalm 54:1 - "Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength."

"by thy name" - That is, by God himself, for names are often put for persons.

"judge my cause" i.e. declare a judgment in my favor and then vindicate me.

Psalm 54:2 - "Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth."

It was through prayer spurred by Moses' outstretched arms that Israel defeated the Amalekites.

David, like Christ, entrusted himself to God:

1 Peter 2:23 - "When they heaped abuse on Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats, but entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly."

Psalm 54:3 - "For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah."

The Ziphites, although Israelites, he calls "strangers" in regard of their perfidious

conduct toward him, by which they showed themselves to be "estranged" from God.

"They have not set God before them" — They have cast off all regard to God's presence and authority, and all fear of his judgments. - *Benson Commentary*

Psalm 54:4 - "Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul."

Like Aaron and Hur literally upheld Moses' arms in prayer (**Exodus 17**). And, ultimately, as God upheld Christ in the wilderness, and in the garden, and on the cross.

Psalm 54:5 - "He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth."

"enemies" - *sharar* - a word only used five times, all in the Psalms. From a root meaning to twist or entwine, to make firm, thus to oppress, to be hostile. It seems to emphasize the tricky and perverse way the Ziphites dealt with David.

"Cut them off" — Or, put them to silence. The enemy voices opposing Christ within us will be silenced.

Rashi - "with Your truth": Since You are truthful, and You said that You would wreak vengeance upon talebearers [the Ziphites] and those who pursue to kill, therefore, cut them off.

Psalm 54:6 - "I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good."

Psalm 119:108 - "O accept the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, And teach me Your ordinances. "

Hebrews 13:15 - "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess His name."

Psalm 54:7 - "For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies."

"his desire" - not in the Hebrew. The last phrase should read "and mine eye hath looked upon mine enemies." - i.e. they came near enough to be seen by David, and that was all. God protected him.

In this case, David wished only to be spared, and later he would even spare Saul. Saul withdrew his forces from searching for David when he heard the Philistines had invaded.