



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 26

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Introduction

- The author is David as the title of the Psalm, *A Psalm of David*, is attributed to him
- David appears in this Psalm as one enduring reproach; in this he was the type of Jesus Christ
- It is an encouraging example for us to carry the burden of insult and slander to the throne of mercy
- Various possibilities have been suggested regarding the occasion of writing it
- Some suggested it is Saul's persecution of David, or Absalom's rebellion, some political crisis, etc.



Introduction

- Many think it was written by David at the time of the assassination of Ishbosheth, Saul's son, (2 Samuel 4:5-12) by Baanah and Rechab, to declare his innocence of all participation in that murder
- He was also accused of betraying his country and his people, by taking refuge in other countries
- In addition, he was accused of partaking of the worship and evil practices of idol-worshippers
- According to some scholars, this psalm is a collective lamentation; even though the psalmist speaks in the singular tense, as a representative of the congregation, being one unit



Introduction

- In addition to his self-defense, he petitions God for deliverance (verses 1,9-12), and promises a public acknowledgement when it is accomplished (verse 12)
- The Psalmist prays that God would distinguish between the righteous and the wicked and save him from sharing the fate of the wicked
- Yet in the face of the danger his confidence in God is unshaken
- This Psalm is linked to Psalms 25, by several resemblances of thought and expression



Introduction

- Compare the professions of integrity in Psalm 26:1,11 with Psalm 25:21, and of trust in Psalm 26:1 with Psalm 25:2
- The prayer for deliverance and grace in Psalm 26:11 with Psalm 25:16,21-22
- The sense of God's lovingkindness and faithfulness in Psalm 26:3 with Psalm 25:5-7,10
- On the other hand, the confessions of sin and prayers for forgiveness which are a marked feature of Psalms 25 are absent in this Psalm



Introduction

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- David Proves His Love to God's House 26:6-8
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David Upholds His Innocence

26:1-5

- Like many of David's psalms, this song was written from a time of great trouble
- It may seem to some Christians a bold act to call on God for judgement, *Vindicate*
- And some assumed that David's confidence is set upon his trust in the 'ego', and self-righteousness; criticized his boasting of good behavior, and compare him to the Pharisee mentioned in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax-collector (Luke 18:9)
- However, here he attempts to vindicate himself from the false charges directed against him



David Upholds His Innocence

26:1-5

- In addition, he had no evil intentions, but walks in purity and innocence
- According to some, *Vindicate me*, David means, *Come to my defense*
- He asks an examination of his situation; he brings the matter before God for Him to decide
- *walked in my integrity*, This is the first thing which he brings before God for him to examine - the consciousness that he had tried to live an upright life
- He professes to have had a sincere heart in serving God, and his love for the Lord always has been unchanged



David Upholds His Innocence

26:1-5

- Therefore, despite his present difficulty, he could say, *I shall not slip*
- *Examine me*, As the refiner examines his metal to test its fine quality because it is possible that one may deceive himself, and be biased
- St. Augustine comments on verse 2 and says, “Lest, however, any of my secret sins should be hid from me, prove me, O Lord, and try me, making me known, not to Thee from whom nothing is hid, but to myself, and to men.”



David Upholds His Innocence

26:1-5

- The request to *examine, prove, and try* refers mainly to the *inward* working of a person the *mind* and the *heart*
- The mind and the heart are mentioned because those were believed to be the seat of the passions and feelings, and when the feelings are right the whole man is right
- The heart is the fountain from which issue streams of life, and if the fountain is pure, the streams cannot be impure
- Hence, he asks mainly that the examination may be directed to his mind, thoughts, and to his heart



David Upholds His Innocence

26:1-5

- David here again combined the ideas of trusting in God and His mercy *Your lovingkindness*, and in his demonstrated life of faith, *I have walked in Your truth*
- He can pray for an assuring judgement, and submit himself to this examination, because he knows God's lovingkindness and faithfulness
- He keeps God's *lovingkindness is before my eyes*, reflects on it, meditates on it, presents it to his thought, continually
- They are the object of his constant meditation, the daily experience of his life



David Upholds His Innocence

26:1-5

- The psalmist was preserved from sin by his assurance of the truthfulness of God's promise
- He walks - he has always walked - in God's truth
- God's Law is the truth (Psalm 119:42); and walking in God's truth is walking in the Law which He has given to men
- The idea of *walked* speaks of action, of manner of living
- David knew the importance of both right *inward* life *mind* and *heart* and right *actions* and deeds
- Having stated the fact of his faithful life to God, David then described several specific ways that his life demonstrated a living faith



David Upholds His Innocence

26:1-5

- He had not even associated with the lovers of evil
- Men are identified by their friends and company they keep
- He was accused of partaking of the worship and evil practices of idol-worshippers
- He is confirming that he did not associate with *idolatrous mortals*, those whose hearts are set upon vain and worthless things
- And this was an evidence of his faithfulness to God, that he never associated with those who he had any reason to think were enemies of God or false friends, *hypocrites*



David Upholds His Innocence

26:1-5

- *Hypocrites*, They speak one thing, and mean another
- They are an assembly of unfaithful men and are deceitful workers, who walk in guile and pretense
- They are those who have the form of religion, but are strangers to the power of it
- It is important to avoid bad company which is a good evidence of our integrity and a good way to keep us in it
- *the assembly of evildoers*, There is an *assembly* of God and *assembly* of evil



David Upholds His Innocence

26:1-5

- St. Ambrose remarks that “the Apostle, in Acts, does well to salute the Churches of CHRIST, because there are also churches of the devil.”
- Although the prophet David, by fleeing to an idol-worshipping land, was deprived of His own people, and of the house of God, yet, with his heart, he had *not sat with idolatrous mortals, Nor will I go in with hypocrites. I have hated the assembly of evildoers, And will not sit with the wicked.*

David Proves His Love to God's House 26:6-8



- David did not believe he was sinless or perfect
- He did need to *wash* his hands, but he could do so in the *innocence* of a clear conscience before God
- David meant to proclaim his innocence of the charges against him
- As if he is saying, *“I will carefully watch against all sin, and keep my conscience pure from those dead works which defile it and forbid my drawing nigh to God.”* Psalm 24:3-4
- Probably people wash their hands very often daily

David Proves His Love to God's House 26:6-8



- Perhaps every time we wash our hands which happens often, we should remind ourselves to cleanse our hands from wicked actions, our mouth from evil words, and our heart from sinful and immoral desires
- Outward cleanliness is good, but worth nothing if our life and heart are not clean and pure before God
- *go about Your altar*, As the priests, before they came near to the altar to minister (Exodus 30:17-21)
- Those who offered the scarifies, most probably did the same as the priests but from a distance, acknowledging the seriousness of the practice of offering the sacrifice on their behalf

David Proves His Love to God's House 26:6-8



- David feels that although he is like a fugitive, he is present by his heart, not only among the people of God, but partakes of the holy ministry of the priests
- He is present by his Spirit in the tabernacle, washes his hands, together with the priests, not in the water of the laver, but in the innocence of the heart, ... goes about the altar, not with his body, but with his inner longing, and his kindled and fiery love
- No power could deprive him of the enjoyment of the beauty of the house of God, nor the presence by Spirit in the place where His glory dwell

David Proves His Love to God's House 26:6-8



- Origen, explaining the *altar* to be the soul of man, further adds, “When the soul nods not outwards, but looks towards herself, and to her own center, she compasses the altar of GOD, framing no angle which can retain corruption, for the wise Solomon tells us that folly ‘lieth in wait at every corner.’”
- The prophet David probably means to say in verse 7 that in the midst of all the slanders of his enemies, his ears are not inclined to their words, and his mind is not preoccupied, even with defending himself before them, for the joyful voice of praise fills his whole being, and satisfies his life

David Proves His Love to God's House 26:6-8



- David is confident of his clean hands that would allow him to gather in worship with God's people
- And while he's there at the Tabernacle he would fully wished for and desired to give thanks to the Lord
- He wanted to tell others of God's wondrous works
- And certainly, those works would have included God's delivering David from his enemies
- *I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, That I may make known to others*

David Proves His Love to God's House 26:6-8



- In the Vulgate Latin translation it reads, *That I may hear the voice of praise*
- Some say, God must teach us first, before we can hear, secondly, we can tell of His works
- St. Augustine says, “That I may hear the voice of Thy praise.” That I may learn how to praise Thee. “And that I may declare all Thy wondrous works”. And after I have learnt, I may set forth all Thy wondrous works.”
- *LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house*, For David, a right walk with God was more than the avoidance of evil

David Proves His Love to God's House 26:6-8



- It was also a simple yet deep love for God and His presence
- He loved the tabernacle because it represented the *house* of God; it was the *place* of God's *glory*
- The psalmist expresses his love to this place, in opposition to the, congregation of evildoers, which he hated, Psalm 26:5
- And he tried to eliminate all lies about him, that being among the Philistines, and at a distance from the house of God, he no longer loves the house of God
- Although it was his greatest concern that he was banned from the house of God's privileges

Daide Beseechs God for Mercy

26:9-12



- In light of David's great need and his great trust in God, he asked God to preserve his *life*
- Having given proofs of his integrity, earnestly prays, with a humble confidence towards God that he might not fall under the destiny of the sinful and evil
- He refused to associate with the wicked in life; he asked God to keep him from *sinner*s in death
- *bloodthirsty men*, Literally, men of bloods
- The wicked are described as men of blood, who do not hesitate to commit any violence and murder

Daide Beseechs God for Mercy

26:9-12



- These wicked men not only imagine malice and harm in their hearts, but persist in it, and execute it with their hands
- They deliberately plan and execute crime; and their *right hand* is *full of bribes*, which they take to change, modify, and alter justice
- David knew of many wicked men with evil plots who were *full* of greedy *bribes*; he considered it a curse to be associated with them either in the present age or in death
- Comparing between those whose hands are filled with bribes, and those who raise pure hands to heaven, St. John Chrysostom says: “Let the lifting up of my hands be as the evening sacrifice”

Daide Beseechs God for Mercy

26:9-12



- David, with a holy humble confidence, commits himself to the grace of God
- He is by no means a boaster, or bragger of his own strength, for he cries for redemption and pleads for mercy
- Despite the danger to his life, despite the presence of the wicked, he, by God's help, would *walk* in his *integrity*
- He could only *walk* in *integrity* if God would *redeem* him and *be merciful* to him
- He promises that by the grace of God he would continue in his obligation and responsibility

Daide Beseechs God for Mercy

26:9-12



- He stand upon a sure and solid foundation, being under the protection of God's promise and His almighty and watchful providence, there is nothing to cause him to stumble
- This solid foundation will not to be shaken by the temptations of the world
- *In the congregations*, In all his gatherings with God's people, he will speak good of the name of the Lord and bless His Holy Name
- St. Augustine comments, ““In the Churches I will bless Thee, O Lord”. I will not hide Thy blessing, O Lord, from those whom Thou hast called; for next to the love of Thee I join the love of my neighbor.”

Discussion



- What is the dominant theme of this Psalm?
- What actions and attitudes should characterize a man of God?
- What is David saying when he asks God to judge him?
- What does sit with the wicked show?



Discussion

- What type sacrifice should we be constantly giving God?
- Why do you go to church?
- What does it mean to walk in faithfulness and how are you displaying this in your life?