
A Song of Ascents. By David.

PSALM 124: 1 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, let Israel now say,

A thanksgiving of the godly for extraordinary deliverances, Psa 124:1-4. The great danger they were in, Psa 124:7. Their confidence in God, Psa 124:8.

In our present Hebrew copies this Psalm is attributed to David, דָּוִד ledavid; but this inscription is wanting in three of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., as also in the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, Ethiopic, and Arabic; and in most of the ancient fathers, Greek and Latin, who found no other inscription in their copies of the text than A Psalm of degrees. It was composed long after David's days; and appears to be either a thanksgiving for their deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, or for a remarkable deliverance from some potent and insidious enemy after their return to Judea. Or, what appears to be more likely, it is a thanksgiving of the Jews for their escape from the general massacre intended by Haman, prime minister of Ahasuerus, king of Persia. See the whole Book of Esther.

Verse 1

If it had not been the Lord - If God had not, in a very especial manner, supported and defended us, we had all been swallowed up alive, and destroyed by a sudden destruction, so that not one would have been left. This might refer to the plot against the whole nation of the Jews by Haman, in the days of Mordecai and Esther; when by his treacherous schemes the Jews, wheresoever dispersed in the provinces of Babylon, were all to have been put to death in one day. This may here be represented under the figure of an earthquake, when a chasm is formed, and a whole city and its inhabitants are in a moment swallowed up alive.

PSALM 124: 2 if it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us;

PSALM 124: 3 then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their wrath was kindled against us;

PSALM 124: 4 then the waters would have overwhelmed us, the stream would have gone over our soul;

PSALM 124: 5 then the proud waters would have gone over our soul.

Verse 5

Then the proud waters - The proud Haman had nearly brought the flood of desolation over our lives.

PSALM 124: 6 Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as a prey to their teeth.

PSALM 124: 7 Our soul has escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare. The snare is broken, and we have escaped.

Verse 7

Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare - This is a fine image; and at once shows the weakness of the Jews, and the cunning of their adversaries. Haman had laid the snare completely for them; humanly speaking there was no prospect of their escape: but the Lord was on their side; and the providence that induced Ahasuerus to call for the book of the records of the kingdom to be read to him, as well indeed as the once very improbable advancement of Esther to the throne of Persia, was the means used by the Lord for the preservation of the whole Jewish people from extermination. God thus broke the snare, and the bird escaped; while the poacher was caught in his own trap, and executed. See the Book of Esther, which is probably the best comment on this Psalm.

PSALM 124: 8 Our help is in the LORD's name, who made heaven and earth.

Verse 8

Our help is in the name of the Lord - **בְּשׁוֹם מִיְמְרָא דֵי־י** beshum meywra depai, Chaldee, "In the name of the Word of the Lord." So in the second verse, "Unless the Word of the Lord had been our Helper:" the substantial Word; not a word spoken, or a prophecy delivered, but the person who was afterwards termed Ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, the Word of God. This deliverance of the Jews appears to me the most natural interpretation of this Psalm: and probably Mordecai was the author.