
For the Chief Musician. A Psalm by David.

PSALM 140: 1 Deliver me, LORD, from the evil man. Preserve me from the violent man;

The psalmist prays against his enemies, Psa 140:1-6; returns thanks for help, Psa 140:7; describes his enemies, and prays farther against them, Psa 140:8-11. His confidence in God, Psa 140:12, Psa 140:13.

The Hebrew, and all the Versions, attribute this Psalm to David; and it is supposed to contain his complaint when persecuted by Saul. The Syriac determines it to the time when Saul endeavored to transfix David with his spear.

Verse 1

From the evil man - Saul, who was full of envy, jealousy, and cruelty against David, to whom both himself and his kingdom were under the highest obligations, endeavored by every means to destroy him.

PSALM 140: 2 those who devise mischief in their hearts. They continually gather themselves together for war.

Verse 2

They gathered together - He and his courtiers form plots and cabals against my life.

PSALM 140: 3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent. Viper's poison is under their lips.
Selah.

Verse 3

They have sharpened their tongues - They employ their time in forging lies and calumnies against me; and those of the most virulent nature.

PSALM 140: 4 LORD, keep me from the hands of the wicked. Preserve me from the violent men who have determined to trip my feet.

Verse 4

Preserve me from the violent man - Saul again; who was as headstrong and violent in all his measures, as he was cruel, and inflexibly bent on the destruction of David.

PSALM 140: 5 The proud have hidden a snare for me, they have spread the cords of a net by the path. They have set traps for me. Selah.

Verse 5

Have hid a snare for me - They hunted David as they would a dangerous wild beast: one while striving to pierce him with the spear; another to entangle him in their snares, so as to take and sacrifice him before the people, on pretense of his being an enemy to the state.

Selah - This is the truth.

PSALM 140: 6 I said to the LORD, "You are my God." Listen to the cry of my petitions, LORD.

PSALM 140: 7 LORD, the Lord, the strength of my salvation, you have covered my head in the day of battle.

Verse 7

Thou hast covered my head - Not only when I fought with the proud blaspheming Philistine; but in the various attempts made against my life by my sworn enemies.

PSALM 140: 8 LORD, don't grant the desires of the wicked. Don't let their evil plans succeed, or they will become proud. Selah.

Verse 8

Further not his wicked device - He knew his enemies still desired his death, and were plotting to accomplish it; and here he prays that God may disappoint and confound them. The Chaldee understands this of Doeg.

PSALM 140: 9 As for the head of those who surround me, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

PSALM 140: 10 Let burning coals fall on them. Let them be thrown into the fire, into miry pits, from where they never rise.

Verse 10

Let burning coals - The Chaldee considers this as spoken against Ahithophel, who was head of a conspiracy against David; and translates this verse thus: "Let coals from heaven fall upon them, precipitate them into the fire of hell, and into miry pits, from which they shall not have a

resurrection to eternal life." This is a proof that the Jews did believe in a resurrection of the body, and an eternal life for that body, in the case of the righteous.

PSALM 140: 11 An evil speaker won't be established in the earth. Evil will hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

Verse 11

Let not an evil speaker be established - איש לשון *ish lashon*, "a man of tongue." There is much force in the rendering of this clause in the Chaldee גבר דמשתעי לישן תליתי *gebar demishtai lishan telithai*, "The man of detraction, or inflammation, with the three-forked tongue." He whose tongue is set on fire from hell; the tale-bearer, slanderer, and dealer in scandal: with the three-forked tongue; wounding three at once: his neighbour whom he slanders; the person who receives the slander; and himself who deals in it. What a just description of a character which God, angels, and good men must detest! Let not such a one be established in the land; let him be unmasked; let no person trust him; and let all join together to hoot him out of society. "He shall be hunted by the angel of death, and thrust into hell." - Chaldee.

PSALM 140: 12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the needy.

Verse 12

The cause of the afflicted - Every person who is persecuted for righteousness' sake has God for his peculiar help and refuge; and the persecutor has the same God for his especial enemy.

PSALM 140: 13 Surely the righteous will give thanks to your name. The upright will dwell in your presence.

Verse 13

The righteous shall give thanks - For thou wilt support and deliver him.

The upright shall dwell in thy presence - Shall be admitted to the most intimate intercourse with God.

The persecuted have ever been dear to God Almighty; and the martyrs were, in an especial manner, his delight; and in proportion as he loved those, so must he hate and detest these.