

PRAYING PSALM 31

“Bow down your ear to me, deliver me speedily...” (Psalm 31:2).

This psalm was written by David, probably during Saul’s persecution during his experiences in Keilah, where Jonathan strengthened his hand in God. David had delivered Keilah, but they were unwilling to help him from Saul. In his prayer David expressed fears and doubts about being delivered. He put his trust in God and questioned at the same time. In the struggle he found victory.

Psalm 31 is a combination of petitions and praise. 1. PRAYER FOR CONFIDENCE (1-6). Let me never be ashamed. Deliver me. Be my rock. You are my rock. Lead me for your name’s sake. Pull me out of the net they have secretly laid for me. Into your hands I commit my spirit. 2. PRAYER FOR REMEMBRANCE (7-8). You have considered my trouble. You have known my adversities. You have not given me over to my enemies. You have set me in a safe place. 3. PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE (9-18). First David gives his reasons: I am in trouble. My life is spent in grief. My strength is failing because of my sin. I am a reproach among my enemies. I am despised by my neighbors. I am forgotten. I am broken. Fear is on every side. 4. PRAISES FOR DELIVERANCE (19-24). Because of God’s goodness (19-20). Because of God’s kindness (21-22). Because of God’s strength (24).

Notice the progression in the psalm. In the process of prayer, David went from lack of confidence, to remembering deliverance from previous distresses, to request for present deliverance, to praise for anticipated victory. Prayer can be a time for working through your present trouble to the assurance of future triumph. If you are stuck, begin where you are and move forward in prayer, until you are embraced by the goodness and kindness of God. Then, trust in His strength, not yours. It is quite normal to trust and question God at the same time. When that happens, praise God in advance for answered prayer.