

(How to Understand the KJV Bible) 14 Psalm 40

by Keith Simons

Keith Simons explores Psalm 40, emphasizing the themes of waiting on God, His deliverance, and the importance of obedience and trust in our lives.

Duration: 24:35

Scripture: Psalm 40:1

Topics: "KJV Bible", "Trust in God", "Divine Rescue"

Description

Keith Simons teaches on Psalm 40, emphasizing its themes of rescue and salvation. He explains how David, in a desperate situation, patiently waited for God's help and ultimately experienced divine deliverance. The psalm illustrates the importance of trusting in God, obeying His commands, and proclaiming His goodness to others. Simons highlights that true obedience comes from a heart aligned with God's will, and he encourages believers to rely on God's mercy in times of trouble. The sermon concludes with a reminder of God's faithfulness and the joy that comes from trusting in Him.

Transcript

Welcome, my name is Keith Symons. I'm a Bible teacher from England and you're listening to the next in our series of talks on how to understand the King James Version of the Bible. Today we're looking at Psalm 40.

Other psalms have been psalms of prophecy or psalms of history, but today's psalm is a psalm of rescue, a psalm of salvation. And as usual, we'll be going through it line by line and verse by verse and word by word, looking at the meanings of the words to see what we can learn of how to understand the King James Bible, but also of this great psalm. It begins with the title Psalm 40 to the chief musician, a psalm of David.

That chief musician refers to the person who organized the music for the worship in God's great house in Jerusalem, the temple. Verse one, I waited patiently for the Lord and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. So the description is of someone in a desperate state, probably David himself, waiting for God to help him.

I waited patiently. In the Hebrew language, that's waiting. I waited.

Now, by waiting patiently, David doesn't mean that he didn't call out for help. No, he tells us at the end of the psalm, I heard my cry. So clearly he was crying out, but he was waiting and waiting.

He was waiting for the time when God would act. He didn't know how long that time would be, but he didn't give up his dependence on God. He didn't give up his trust in God.

He waited until God inclined unto me. In other words, God turned to him. God was listening to his cry for help.

So a desperate situation in David's life, this could refer to the time when Saul was following him and trying to kill him. And yet God in time turned to David. He responded.

He heard what David was calling for help and he acted. Of course, God heard it from the beginning, but he was waiting for the time of his choice to rescue David from that situation. In verse 2, David describes more thoroughly what his trouble was.

It seems to be a word picture in David's life. We don't think this actually happened to David, but the verse, let me read it. Verse 2. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

So an horrible pit. Well, Joseph was kept prisoner in a pit and Jeremiah was kept prisoner in a pit. And you might wonder what these pits were.

Well, in Israel, there is a dry season that's about six months. Of course, people need water in the dry season. So what they used to do was to do deep holes in the ground with a narrow opening and to line the bottom of it with clay, a sort of mud which won't let through water.

And that stores water for the dry months of the year. Of course, the same pit, the same hole in the ground was also a good place to put a prisoner. Because if you had arrested someone and you didn't want them to escape, there was no way they could escape from such a pit unless other people helped them.

And even then, it will be with difficulty as we discover from the account of Jeremiah being in the pit. This is an horrible pit. That in the Hebrew means a roaring pit.

So some people have wondered whether this could refer to a cave with great chasms and the sound of roaring water. But probably it's a word picture. It's a word picture for an awful pit, a terrible pit.

Because we've also got the clay which would line the bottom of the pit to avoid the water leaving it. And this clay is ma'ari. Ma'ari means muddy.

It's wet clay. So David is describing someone held a prisoner in a dark pit, unable to escape by themselves in an awful situation with their feet sinking into the mud at the bottom of it. No stable place to place their feet, no way to climb out.

Yet God saved him. God set his feet upon a rock. A rock, of course, is solid ground.

It's the opposite of that ma'ari clay. And established my goings. That means what it sounds like.

My goings, my steps. He made a firm place for me to stand on. Verse three.

So David has been rescued from these terrible troubles. And so God has given him a song to sing. It's a song of God's salvation.

It's a song to praise God for the good things he's done for David. Many shall see it in fear. People will see what God has done for David and that will make them astonished, amazed at the wonderful things that God has done.

God's wonderful power shown to David will fill them with awe and will cause them to trust in the Lord. David then turns aside from his own testimony to verse four. Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

So he says his deliverance, verse three, will cause other people to trust in God and that people who trust in God are happy. They're in a happy state. These are the ones who, like him, have trusted God.

They're not depending on, they're not showing honour to proud people. They're not turning to lies to defend themselves. No, it is God who defends them.

It's God who looks after them. It's God in whom they trust. And just as God has rescued him, then God rescues many people.

Verse five. Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done and thy thoughts which are unto us ward. So God's done so many wonderful things.

There's a song, Count Your Blessings. Well, we can't count them. They can't be reckoned up in order unto thee.

It's the next line in David's Psalm. God has done so many wonderful things, not just for David, but to us ward. In other words, God's thoughts, his works to us, to all of us who trust in God are many.

If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. God has done so many wonderful things for us. Verse six.

David now turns the subject to the question of obedience to God. The person who trusts God should obey him. Verse six.

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. Mine ears thou hast thou opened. Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

Well, God's law did require offerings or sacrifices, animals to be given to God and various other gifts to be given to God. But God didn't really want people just to be killing animals. God didn't really want people just to be giving gifts to God.

No, it was much more important that they should learn to obey God, that they should learn to please him and live in the way that he wanted them to live. And so David speaks of serving God here with that strange line, mine ears hast thou opened. In the Hebrew, it means you've pierced my ear, my ears.

And that's a reference to Exodus 21, 6, where if a slave didn't want to be released, if he wanted, when he had the opportunity to go free, to continue to serve his master, because he had a wife and family with his master, and he was, he loved his master and he wanted to continue to serve him. Well, the master would pierce his ear and put a nail through, much as people have an earring today, but that nail would attach to the master's doorpost as a little sign that he had chosen to remain in the master's service. And of course, he wouldn't remain there because he had his work to do, but it was a little ceremony.

And people wondered how to translate that into different languages. When they translated it into the Greek Bible, as you can see from the reference to this in the book of Hebrews in the New Testament, you find a reference to my body you have prepared, something like that, because they didn't follow that custom in other countries. People wouldn't understand my ear you've pierced.

They would think of the way a permanent slave had his body marked. But they didn't do that in England at the time of the King James Bible. No, it was the duty of the servant to open his ears.

And that's what gives us the King James Version translation here. Mine ears thou hast thou opened. In other words, I'm listening to my master's commands.

I'm obedient. I choose to be obedient to my master. And the master, of course, in this context is God.

And the servant is David. And David is saying, I've chosen to obey God. Verse seven, then said I, lo, I come.

In other words, I'm coming to follow your instructions. In the volume of the book, it is written of me. That's a reference to the scrolls of God's law.

The books were formerly in the form of scrolls, a long sheet of parchment, a type of paper, which was rolled up tight around a pole. And yes, God's law described this. It described it of David, perhaps, but it described it certainly of the Messiah, God's perfect King.

And David speaks in prophecy here, as we can see again in the reference in the book of Hebrews. He's looking forward to the King whose perfect will, whose perfect desire was to obey God. And that means the Messiah or Christ.

David himself, though, chose to serve God. David loved God with all his heart. He wanted to do what God wanted, although he failed a number of times, yet still that was his desire.

Verse eight, I delight to do thy will, O my God. Yea, thy law is within my heart. It's not just something in books.

Your law, God, is not just what I read or what I've memorized. No, it's in my heart. It's deep inside me.

It's become part of me. And so my choice, my glad choice is to obey you, just like the slave who chose to have his ear pierced because he wanted to obey his master. Well, David loved God and he wanted to obey God.

Verse nine, I preached righteousness in the great congregation. Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I've declared God's righteousness, maybe, or maybe what is right in the great congregation before all of Israel.

I have declared it. This is the God who rescues me. These are his standards.

This is what he's like and this is how he would have us to live. I've not refrained my lips. I've not kept back from speaking.

I've not been silent. Verse 10, I've not hid thy righteousness within my heart. What you consider to be right and good, I've not hidden it away.

I've done and I've proclaimed what you consider to be right. I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation. I've declared that God is a God who we can trust.

I've declared how God rescued me. Salvation means rescue. I've not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

I've not hidden away how kind you are, how good you are, how truthful you are. And just as I have not refrained my lips, verse nine, I ask God, verse 11, not to refrain his mercies. In the Hebrew, refrained in verse nine is the same as withhold in verse 11.

Withhold not thy tender mercies from me, O Lord, that thy loving kindness and thy truth continually preserve me. And so David is praying now. He's praying, God, you saved me in the past.

I've chosen to be your servant. I've chosen to be faithful to you. I've declared your kindness and your truth.

And now I'm needing your kindness and your truth to preserve me, to protect me, to look after me. I have not refrained my lips. I've not kept back from speaking.

So don't you withhold, keep back from me your mercies, your kindness, your love, your compassion, because I'm in need. Verse 12, for innumerable evils have come past me about. Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me so that I'm not able to look up.

David says, I can't even look around. Everything evil has turned against me. The wrong things that I've done have now come against me.

And just as I couldn't count God's goodness in verse five, so now these troubles which have come upon him, these sins, these evil things, they are more than the hairs of my head. Therefore, my heart faileth me. In other words, deep inside, I am so weak.

I am in such trouble. Because there are evils, there are troubles on every side. I'm thinking now about how David had to escape from Absalom.

But even in that situation, David turned to God in prayer. All of this, remembering God's past mercies, remembering how he was God's servant, was his preparation to pray in this desperate situation. Verse 13, be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me.

In other words, to rescue me. O Lord, make haste to help me. At the beginning of this psalm, I waited patiently for the Lord.

But now he's praying, Lord, make haste. Act quickly. I need your help again.

Verse 14, let them be ashamed and confounded together. Let them be defeated. Let's seek after my soul to destroy it.

My soul is David's inner life. They're not content just to kill his body. They want to destroy him totally.

They want to put him in hell. But David remembers he is God's servant. And in spite of his past sins, in spite of the wrong things he's done, yet he turns to God.

Yet he depends on God. And he asks God to rescue him. Let them be driven backward and put to shame.

Wish me evil. May they be pushed back. May they be defeated, he prays.

Let them be desolate through a reward of their shame that say to me, aha, aha. That aha is laughing at David, mocking him. And so David prays, let them be defeated totally.

Let them be defeated because that should be the proper result of the shame that is due to them. But he prays, let all those who seek thee, verse 16, rejoice and be glad in thee. Let such as love thy salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified.

David means when God's people, when those who seek God, see how God has again rescued David, then they will rejoice. They'll be glad. They'll praise God for his goodness and for his salvation, for the way that he rescues his people.

So David prays, let them rejoice again. Let them see again the good things that you're doing for me. Let them see that even in this situation, you will again rescue me.

But I am poor and needy, verse 17. Yet the Lord thinketh upon me. Thou art my help and my deliverer.

Make no tarrying, O my God. I need your help, God. I'm poor and needy.

Once I was a king, David might say. Once I was powerful, but now I have nothing. So once more, I turn to God.

Once more, I trust God to rescue me. Yet God, God doesn't impress by pride or by wealth or by what people call greatness. Because although I'm poor and needy, the Lord thinketh upon me.

God remembers me. And so I turn to him. He is my master.

I am his servant. But he is also my help, the one who helps me. He's my deliverer, the one who saves me.

So this is my prayer, says David. Just as I waited in the past and you rescued me. Make no tarrying.

Don't delay. Act now to rescue me, I pray. And I'll wait to the day when you rescue me and you set me free from my current troubles and my current situation because I depend on you, my God.

My email address, if you'd like to write to me, is 333kjb at gmail.com. I'd love to hear from you. 333kjb at gmail.com. Now let me read through the whole of Psalm 40. To the chief musician, a psalm of David.

I waited patiently for the Lord and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.

Many shall see it and fear and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust and respecteth not the proud nor such as turn aside to lies. Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done and thy thoughts which are to us word.

They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened.

Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come. In the volume of the book it is written of me.

I delight to do thy will, O my God. Yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation.

Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart. I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation.

I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation. Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord. Let thy loving kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

For innumerable evils have come past me about. Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up. They are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me. Let them be ashamed and confound it together that seek after my soul to destroy it.

Let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. Let them be desolate for reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee.

Let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified. But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me. Thou art my help and my deliverer.

Make no tarrying, O my God.

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