

For that purpose He has placed the sword in the hands of the government, to punish evil people and protect the good. And being called in this manner to contribute to the advancement of a society that is pleasing to God, the civil rulers have the task, subject to God's law, of removing every obstacle to the preaching of the gospel and to every aspect of divine worship.

They should do this while completely refraining from every tendency toward exercising absolute authority, and while functioning in the sphere entrusted to them, with the means belonging to them. They should do it in order that the Word of God may have free course; the kingdom of Jesus Christ may make progress; and every anti-Christian power may be resisted.

Moreover everyone, regardless of status, condition, or rank, must be subject to the government, and pay taxes, and hold its representatives in honor and respect, and obey them in all things that are not in conflict with God's Word, praying for them that the Lord may be willing to lead them in all their ways and that we may live a peaceful and quiet life in all piety and decency.

And on this matter we denounce the Anabaptists, other anarchists, and in general all those who want to reject the authorities and civil officers and to subvert justice by introducing common ownership of goods and corrupting the moral order that God has established among human beings. (*The Belgic Confession*, Article 36, URCNA version)

***Hymn** "Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul"

Hallelujah, praise Jehovah,
O my soul, Jehovah praise;
I will sing the glorious praises
Of my God through all my days.
Put no confidence in princes,
Nor for help on man depend;
He shall die, to dust returning,
And his purposes shall end.

Happy is the man that chooses
Israel's God to be his aid;
He is blessed whose hope of blessing
On the Lord his God is stayed.
Heav'n and earth the Lord created,
Seas and all that they contain;
He delivers from oppression,
Righteousness He will maintain.

Food He daily gives the hungry,
Sets the mourning prisoner free,
Raises those bowed down with anguish,
Makes the sightless eye to see.
Well Jehovah loves the righteous,
And the stranger He befriends,
Helps the fatherless and widow,
Judgment on the wicked sends.

Hallelujah, praise Jehovah,
O my soul, Jehovah praise;
I will sing the glorious praises
Of my God through all my days.
Over all God reigns forever,
Through all ages He is King;
Unto Him, your God, O Zion,
Joyful hallelujahs sing.

Old Testament Reading

Psalm 20

Congregational Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory. Forever and ever, Amen.

*Hymn "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill;
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sov'reign will.

Chorus
God of mercy, God of grace
Give us eyes to see;
Eyes to see Your smiling face,
Within the mystery (within the mystery).
Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

Chorus

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding ev'ry hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

Chorus twice

Written by William Cowper (1774), Scottish Psalter, 1615. CCLI License #256499

New Testament Reading 1 Timothy 2:1-8

Message "GOD SAVE THE KING"

*Hymn "Arm of the Lord, Awake, Awake!"

Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!
Put on Thy strength, the nations shake,
And let the world, adoring, see
Triumphs of mercy wrought by Thee.

Say to the heathen from Thy throne,
I am Jehovah, God alone;
Thy voice their idols shall confound,
And cast their altars to the ground.

No more let creature blood be spilt,
Vain sacrifice for human guilt!
But to each conscience be applied
The blood that flowed from Jesus' side.

Let Zion's time of favor come;
O bring the tribes of Israel home;
And let our wondering eyes behold
Gentiles and Jews in Jesus' fold.

Almighty God, Thy grace proclaim
In every clime of every name;
Let adverse powers before Thee fall,
And crown the Savior Lord of all.
William Shrubsole, 1796

***God Blesses His People** 2 Corinthians 13:14

***Hymn 731** "Doxology"

"GOD SAVE THE KING!"
Psalm 20

Famous battle-songs have led warriors into the fight. Likewise Psalm 20 arises from a very particular historical context. The nation sends off her Commander-in-Chief with worship, prayer and music.

We are reminded that "a text without a context is a pretext." So we have to understand where Psalm 20 comes from and why. Then we can follow how it leads us to our Divine Warrior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and from Him to its application for us.

I. AN OVERVIEW OF PSALM 20 AS USED IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

A. The People Pray for the Defense of the King

Ex 28:43; 29:30; 35:19; 39:1

B. The King Expresses Confidence in His God

Deut 17:16; Isa 10:4; 65:12; Ps 72:9; 78:31

C. The United Chorus of Petition to the Real King

D. Three Takeaways from This Text

- 1. An entire praying nation was vital for the success of the military campaign. Acts 2:42-43; 1 Tim 2:8*
- 2. Ardent prayer does not cover disobedience. 2 Chron 35:21*
- 3. How we pray reveals what we really trust in. Isa 37:16-18, 20*

II. HOW NOT TO USE -- AND HOW TO USE -- THIS PSALM IN WARTIME

A. There is No Exact Equivalent Since

The Battle of Bouvines (1214); King Philip II of France

B. We Can Pray for Victory in a Just War

We should pray for our troops and their leaders, and we can pray for their victory if their cause is righteous.

David versus Goliath was a just war; Josiah against Pharaoh Necho was not a just war.

What about 1 Timothy 2? Tertullian: “Without ceasing, for all our emperors we offer prayer. We pray for life prolonged; for security to the empire; for protection to the imperial house; for brave armies, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest, whatever, as man or Cæsar, an emperor would wish. These things I cannot ask from any but the God from whom I know I shall obtain them, both because He alone bestows them and because I have claims upon Him for their gift, as being a servant of His, rendering homage to Him alone....There is also another and a greater necessity for our offering prayer in behalf of the emperors, nay, for the complete stability of the empire, and for Roman interests in general. For we know that a mighty shock impending over the whole earth—in fact, the very end of all things threatening dreadful woes—is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman empire. We have no desire, then, to be overtaken by these dire events; and in praying that their coming may be delayed, we are lending our aid to Rome’s duration.”

Dunkirk in 1940: God sent unseasonably calm weather. It allowed Britain to evacuate its troops before Hitler’s panzer tanks wiped them out. On that day many in England were praying, “O Lord, save the king!” the very words of this psalm. And God did.

III. CHRIST IS THE VICTORIOUS KING WHO ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS!

So then we are left asking, “Who is the King whose cause is always righteous? Etc.”

A. This is Our Victory Song Through Christ

Psalm 20 becomes His prayer for victory at Calvary. Heb 5:7). With Christ delivered from death, raised up from the grave, ascended to heaven, and enthroned in glorious power -- subjugating all things under His feet for our sake. Psalm 20 now becomes a prayerful war-song of God's Church-Militant.

B. Earthly Battles Prefigure The Final Judgment

The earthly battles of Israel versus the pagan nations prefigure the final judgment. That’s why at times they seem incredibly harsh with God showing no mercy. Who will usher in the final victory? Rev 19:11-16.

C. We Shall Be Triumphant in the End

We do not pray for Him, but He intercedes for us with His righteous blood; He assures us that our cause shall triumph if it is His cause! Unlike Israel of old, we may suffer what seems to be defeats along the way, through no fault of our own. Spurgeon: “Because the good old cause does not seem to prosper for a single day, and the kingdom does not come to Christ in my short life, shall I sit down and weep? Nay, I am but one among millions who shall achieve the divine purpose—one little coral reef builder, helping to pile up the rock...I will do my work, though it be beneath the waves, I will do my work and die, and others shall do the same, but the rock is rising, God’s purpose is being accomplished.” Christ shall have the triumph, and we in Him.

Conclusion



Anthropic Principle – Anticipatory Design

What are the odds of the anthropic principle occurring by chance?

Astrophysicist Hugh Ross has calculated that the odds of all anthropic constants (122 at last count) to be in place for any planet in the universe by luck alone to be **one chance in ten with 138 zeros after it**. This number becomes even more incredible when one realizes there are only 10^{79} atoms in the entire universe. Finally, mathematicians point out that anything which exceeds 10^{50} power is the exact same thing as zero chance.

"In the absence of an absurdly-improbable accident, the observations of modern science seem to suggest an underlying, one might say, supernatural plan."

– Arno Penzias, Nobel Laureate scientist