Psalm 21

"Thanks for Blessings; Anticipation of Future Military Success"  


For the choir director. A Psalm of David.


B1 The List of Yahweh's Blessings 21:1-6

C1 For the Joy of Strength and Salvation: {1} O LORD, in Your strength the king will be glad, And in Your salvation how greatly he will rejoice!

C2 For Granting His Request: {2} You have given him his heart's desire, And You have not withheld the request of his lips.

C3 For Blessing Him with Good Things Such as a Gold Crown: {3} For You meet him with the blessings of good things; You set a crown of fine gold on his head. ²

C4 For Granting Him Long Life: {4} He asked life of You, You gave it to him, Length of days forever and ever.

C5 For Granting Him Glory and Majesty: {5} His glory is great through Your salvation, Splendor and majesty You place upon him.

C6 For Granting Supreme Blessing and Joyful Fellowship: {6} For You make him most blessed forever; You make him joyful with gladness in Your presence.

B2 The Reason for Yahweh's Blessings 21:7

C1 The King's Trust in Yahweh: {7} For the king trusts in the LORD,

C2 The Loyal Love of the Most High: And through the lovingkindness of the Most High he will not be shaken.

¹ Psalm 21: Many believe this psalm is closely tied to Psalm 20, which is seen to be the king's prayer in the sanctuary before departing for battle. Presumably, then, Psalm 21 is a time of thanksgiving following that successful military endeavor (see Allen P. Ross, “Psalms,” The Bible Knowledge Commentary). The difficulty is that, while the king thanks God for blessings in 21:1-6, he does not specifically mention victory in battle. The people, furthermore, are not, in 21:8-12, thanking God for successes won on the battlefield, but for anticipated victories. While denying neither the similarity between the two psalms nor the possibility of Ross's interpretation, I think it is difficult to link them unequivocally to the same event.

² 21:3 - crown of gold: In Ross's view (that the king is thanking God for a victory won in response to the prayers of Psalm 20) this is the crown of a conquered foe, possibly an Ammonite king (2 Sam. 12:30).
A2  THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE:  The King's Future Military Success Because of Yahweh's Blessings

B1  Successful Detection of Enemies:  {8} Your hand will find out all your enemies; Your right hand will find out those who hate you.

B2  Fiery Victory  21:9

C1  Fueled by the Confrontation of the King:  {9} You will make them as a fiery oven in the time of your anger;

C2  Fueled by the Anger of Yahweh:  The LORD will swallow them up in His wrath, And fire will devour them.

B3  The Totality of Victory -- The elimination of any possibility of descendants:  {10} Their offspring You will destroy from the earth, And their descendants from among the sons of men.

B4  The Thwarting of the Evil of the Enemy:  {11} Though they intended evil against You And devised a plot, They will not succeed.

B5  The Retreat of The Enemy:  {12} For You will make them turn their back; You will aim with Your bowstrings at their faces.

A3  THE PEOPLES' VOW OF PRAISE  21:13

B1  Their Request for Yahweh's Triumph in Power:  {13} Be exalted, O LORD, in Your strength;

B2  Their Promise to Praise His Power:  We will sing and praise Your power.