

The View From Here

God's Protection

In your daily Bible reading, I'm sure you've encountered Psalm 91. The topic today comes about as a result of reading Psalm 91. The Psalm is written from God's perspective, describing someone ... a believer ... someone who trusts in God. The Lord says, "Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation." I'm sure we would agree those are meant to be comforting words, but they can strike some folks much differently.

I say that because I had an encounter with a person after I had conducted a funeral awhile back. The person was a close friend of the deceased, someone who had died and left behind a family. This friend had held fast to the Lord in faith, even as she battled cancer. Even so, it didn't seem to this person with the question that God delivered or protected this friend. She certainly wasn't blessed with a long life. So, the individual with the question wanted help in understanding what had happened and what kind of comfort there might be for friends and family who find themselves in this situation. It's a pain-filled question and the answers are not easy.

As far as I know, nobody can say with absolute certainty who wrote this Psalm. Most experts say King David wrote it but some say Moses is the author. Either way, both men had their share of difficulties in life. King David suffered the death of children because of sin and rebellion. He was also a man acquainted with war and his best friend had to die in order for David to become king. Moses was brought up in the court of Pharaoh, but he ended up committing murder, was sent into exile, reluctantly ended up leading the Israelite people to freedom. During those 40 years of wandering about in the wilderness, Moses had to deal with people who rebelled, griped, complained, argued, and, I suppose, generally thought they could do the job much better than he did. So whoever wrote this Psalm, these fellows were no strangers to problems.

Having said that, how could they believe they would be delivered, protected, rescued, and honored? Well, first, in this Psalm the Lord talks about giving His angels charge over us to keep us in all we do. It's one of God's promises and it is true. But that does not mean a Christian only experiences good things in this life. In other words, believing does not vaccinate one against evil. We are sinners living in a sinful world. The results of humankind's disobedience are all around us. We are not immune from them. What the Lord does promise is that He will keep us, help us, lead us through our various problems and pains. We should also note that the devil used this Psalm when he was tempting Jesus. The Savior replied that we shouldn't test the Lord, because God will do what is best for His people. He always does what is right and best. Remember how St. Paul had that unidentified "thorn in the flesh." The Lord didn't take away that thorn; He used it to teach Paul to rely on Him.

But how about those last verses... what do you do with those promises? If we look at those verses again, I think the Lord is speaking about this life AND our eternity with Him. I think you will see that indicated when it says, "Because we hold fast to the Lord in love, He promises to deliver us." We need to consider the situation in my example above ... this friend who died ... who loved the Lord, was she ultimately delivered? Absolutely! She is now in the arms of her Savior, her soul is in a place where there is no more crying, or cancer, or pain, as she awaits the Day of Resurrection. She will awake as if an instant has gone by and will be with the Lord along with all believers in Heaven. The Lord says He will deliver us from this world. Then He adds, "I will be with him; I will answer him; I will rescue and honor him." Were those promises fulfilled when this friend's soul was taken home to heaven? Indeed they were. And, the Lord is also keeping His other promise because our friend's soul is now in heaven in the very presence of Jesus, awaiting the Day of Resurrection when she will be reunited with her glorified body and all those who died in the faith.

That's important. She has it better than us. We are saved but still struggling, she has reached the goal of her faith. She is in the presence of Jesus, the Winner of her salvation ... the ultimate protection and deliverance!

That's the View from Here.

Pastor Bill Winter