

Features of True Greatness

Psalm 91: 1-16

G. Davison.

Sept 1962

I desire to call attention to the greatness and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ which I believe shines out in this Psalm.

We cannot doubt its application to Him, indeed in the temptation the devil himself applies it to Him, and we are assured that from start to finish it is definitely a Messianic Psalm, concerning the perfect, subject, sinless, Manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ when in this world, and His going out from this world to the right hand of God in glory.

The Psalm opens with an abstract statement, "He," whoever that may be, "that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." It is a very striking thing that both these divine titles came to light first of all in God's dealings with Abram. The title "the Most High" is mentioned in Genesis 14: 19, when Melchizedek met him after the slaughter of the kings saying "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth." The thought of God being the Supreme ruler, the Most High, is contained in that title. Secondly, after Abram, in Genesis 16, had attempted to circumvent the dealings of God in a way that resulted in the birth of Ishmael, God said to him in the beginning of Genesis 17, "I am the Almighty God." As though God would say to Abram, You thought I could not bring to pass the promise which I had made when I said "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," Gen. 12: 3. And so he is instructed, "I am the Almighty God; *walk before Me*, and be thou perfect," Genesis 17: 1. Abram had been walking before Sarah; God says, "*walk before Me*", and in that wonderful title "the Almighty God," He was making known to Abram that every resource was in Himself, he could give to Abram the promised son; Abram's portion was to *walk before God*. God as supreme in the universe, has every divine resource necessary to accomplish His will in this world in relation to one truly walking before Him.

Thus in the opening of this wonderful Psalm we have these titles, "The Most High" and "The Almighty," and if in verse 1 we have just an abstract statement, there is no doubt that in verse 2 we have prophetically the word of Christ Himself as the humble, dependent, subject Man, "I will say of the LORD, He is My refuge and My fortress; My God; in Him will I trust." If ever there was One who walked before God, One who was perfect, who was daily sustained by God in the accomplishment of His will, we see that One in Christ, as in dependent Manhood He moved in this world day by day in the accomplishment of the will of God.

We understand that the voice of the Spirit of God is heard in verse 3, in commendation of the One who speaks in the language of verse 2. This section runs from verse 3 to verse 8, and appears to be the comment of the Spirit of God in answer to the words of verse 2. Thus we find in verse 3, "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler." When do we need a fortress? In every attack of the devil! Was not this very Psalm quoted in the devil's attack upon Christ? Where did He find His refuge? Notice His repeated utterance — the Lord Thy God; the Lord Thy God; and as He stood for God He found a sure fortress, and was at every point delivered "from the snare of the fowler."

But again He could also say "My refuge." A refuge is needed when there is a storm. What restfulness marked Him as, in the midst of all the unrest and confusion around, He trod His pathway of perfect Manhood in the consciousness of the refuge He had in God. Yet once again, we read that He

was preserved "from the noisome pestilence." As we think of that sinless perfect Man and the corruption and evil which were around Him on every hand, how delighted we are to know that He left this world as sinless and as perfect as when He entered it. Nothing of its corruption, or of its sin could leave an impress upon this blessed Man, whose every confidence was in God, and who ever moved for God's pleasure in this world. We have often noticed the Scriptures "without blemish," Exodus 12: 5; "without spot," Numbers 19: 2. Not until we reach the book of Numbers is the thought of "spot" raised in relation to a sacrifice. Without blemish would suggest without *a defect*; without spot would indicate without *a stain*; and that is what comes to light in Numbers 19, in relation to the red heifer. We have wilderness conditions in that chapter, and the only Man who passed through this world without stain of sin is Christ. At His birth He came in without *defect*, and in His pathway He passed through without a *stain*; the "noisome pestilence" and corruption and evil on every hand, but never a single stain of that evil ever found upon the Son of God. Could anyone but He put a hand upon a leper without being defiled? He alone could, and as He did so could say to the leper, "be thou clean," Mark 1: 41.

Verse 4, "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust; His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." We are all surely desirous of learning a little more of the truth, but let us think for a moment of what that truth can do. By it we are shielded, guarded, protected, and preserved, and as we are found walking in subjection to it the evil in this world will not overcome us. We may have troubles, and may be confronted with many obstacles, but thank God, we have the power to overcome. If *truth* is our shield and our buckler we shall not only find joy in being engaged with Christ, but we shall grow to be *like Him* as we are formed by the truth. But the perfection of all this is seen in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in His pathway as a Man in this world.

The next section of the Psalm is from verse 9 to verse 13, "Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." This, we are given to understand, is the voice of the godly remnant, borne out in testimony and in experience with God. They as it were can add their voice to the voice of the Spirit of God, He who would guide and instruct in the truth. It is the voice of those who have known something of this trust in God experimentally, and who can now bear witness in relation to the Son of God. In the beginning of Luke we have Zacharias and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, Simeon and Anna, each one of whom are seen bearing witness to the greatness and the majesty of the LORD. They were part of a remnant who had experience with God. Anointed by the Holy Spirit, speaking by the Holy Spirit, these people, this simple godly remnant, were there as the servants of Jehovah. They are brought before us as bearing testimony in relation to God concerning this Holy Babe. And so we have this suggestion of the *voice of the remnant*, those who through experience with God, have the knowledge of this Holy Babe as the One who, moving on through this world with Jehovah as His habitation, would be preserved from every attack of the enemy, spotless and sinless — the Anointed of God.

Lastly, in verses 14, 15 and 16, we have the voice of God Himself, "Because He hath set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver Him." Why should such a blessed Man as this need deliverance? Do we not read earlier in the Psalm that He would never be in any difficulty at all? But there was a time when He was in difficulty, great difficulty and such as we may never fully understand. For in the accomplishment of the will of God, that pathway marked by such absolute confidence in God and ever lived to His pleasure, must end in Calvary's cross where He tasted death for everything. Then we have God's answer "Because He hath set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver Him." In Psalm 22 we read (v. 21) "Thou hast heard Me from the horns of the unicorns," but prior to that He had to say "I cry . . . but Thou *hearest not*" (v. 2). The answer to His cry for deliverance did not come in the garden

before the cross, but He was heard *from the cross* when the work of redemption was accomplished. How blessed are the words of Psalm 21, spoken prophetically of the Lord Jesus, "The king shall joy in Thy strength, O LORD; and in Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice!" And so again we read, "I will set Him on high, because He hath known My Name," Psalm 91: 14. He could say at the end of that wonderful prayer in John 17, "I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me." What is involved in knowing that Name? Why it is almost inexhaustible to trace the things that are spoken of in relation to the Name of God. The love of God, the grace of God, the mercy of God, are but a few of the precious things contained in that Name, and they are the very things manifested in Christ, and which He ministered here in relation to the need of mankind. He knew the heart of God; He knew the desires of God, and He knew all that was contained in that Name. He stood for the rights of God; He accomplished His will and carried out His purpose, and now we know Him as in the glory to give effect in power to all that the Father has placed in His hands. Thus we read in verses 14 & 15 of our Psalm, "I will set Him on high, because He hath known My Name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer Him."

Just one further point, "I will be with Him in trouble," verse 15. How carefully we need to speak of the cross and the hours of abandonment, and to carefully guard the thought that Scripture does not speak of Him being abandoned by the Father. It was in the accomplishment of God's holy will, and because of His righteous judgment against sin, that that cry of abandonment was heard. We may say that the Lord Jesus was always *with God* for the accomplishment of His will, and when that supreme work was accomplished, we have the word from God's side, "I will be *with* Him in trouble; I will deliver Him, and show Him My salvation." We know that He is honoured now and set at God's right hand in the glory. "With long life will I satisfy Him, and show Him My salvation," verse 16.

Never again will Christ need to suffer; so perfectly has that work been accomplished. Long life and salvation are His as the exalted man, He who in every step of His pathway accomplished the will of God. He has sat down upon the throne, and has become the Object of our affections. We delight in being occupied with Jesus, whether in His downstopping, His pathway, His death, His resurrection, or His present place in the glory. Occupation with Him where He is will make us to be like Him. May it please God to form these things in every one of our souls, so that the power of them might be seen more and more in us in our pathway here.