

BLESSINGS GUARANTEED TO THE SAVED

Psalm 91:9-16

It is scarcely possible to conceive any stronger terms than those in which the scriptures express the privilege of believers. In these verses there is a declaration of the privilege of a believer from the time of his reconciliation to God to the consummation of his happiness in glory.

The true Christian is one who has been "turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of satan unto God." Being once brought to God, he "makes the Most High his habitation." He regards God, not merely as reconciled to him, but as affording him what a dwelling-house affords to its possessor:

1. Free access.

A person goes familiarly to his house at all times, not doubting but that he shall gain a ready admission into it. He considers it as his own, and feels that it exists only for his accommodation. It is thus that the believer goes to God as his God. He has access to Him with boldness and confidence. He is certain that, when he calls, he shall receive an answer.

2. Necessary provision.

Every man, whatever be his situation in life, expects to find in his own house the things suited to his necessities. He does not seek his meals at the houses of his neighbors, but in his own; and he returns home at stated seasons to partake of them. And whither does the believer go for daily supplies of bread for his soul? It is in Christ Jesus that his fulness is treasured up, and in Him the believer expects to find the "grace that is sufficient for him." God invites him to come to Him for the express purpose that he may be filled and satisfied with good things. "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isaiah 55:2.

3. Sure protection.

If storms descend, or dangers menace, we take refuge in our house, and find it a place of safety. Thus "the name of God also is a strong tower, to which the righteous runneth and is safe." Proverbs 18:10. It is to Himself that God invites us when He says, "Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, shut the door about thee; and hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Isaiah 26:20. And that this was a primary idea in the mind of the Psalmist appears from the very words of the text, wherein he calls God "his refuge." With this also agrees the beautiful description given of Jesus by the prophet, as "an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." Isaiah 32:2.

4. Sweet repose.

To this house a man retires from the noise and bustle of the world; and there he lays himself down to rest after the fatigues of the day. Home is to most people the most agreeable place, because there they are most at ease. And such is God to the believer. "In every place, God is to him as a little sanctuary," where he finds himself at rest. He carries his wants to God, and "casts all his care on him," and enjoys peace which passeth all understanding. In this sense he says for his own encouragement, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul:" and attests for the glory of his God, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."

The man who makes God his habitation shall not have any evil befall him.

No evil shall befall him here. No casual evil shall befall him. There is no such thing as chance. Everything, even to the falling of a sparrow, is ordered of the Lord. As for the children of God, "their heavenly Father hath given His angels charge over them, to keep them in all their ways. We must not imagine, however, that believers are at liberty to rush into needless dangers; for our Lord, when tempted by Satan to cast Himself from a pinnacle of the temple in expectation that the angels would preserve Him from injury, replied, "Thou shalt not tempt thy God;" but nothing can happen to them except by the divine appointment: they are hid in the shadow of their Father's hand.

No real evil shall befall God's children. That they may have troubles is certain; that their troubles may be heavy and accumulated is also certain. But who accounts even the amputation of a limb evil, if it be the only and infallible method of preserving life? Any sufferings which the believer may be called upon to endure shall either work for his good in this life, or be the means of increasing his weight of glory in the next.

No evil shall befall him hereafter. It is in this life only that the believer can meet with even the semblance of evil; when he goes hence he is instantly placed beyond the reach of harm. No sin, no sorrow, no pain, no temptation, no weariness, no want can ever be felt by him in the mansions of bliss. He will there enjoy forever one unclouded day; and his happiness will be without alloy, without end. Who, except the believer, can apply to himself the promise in the text? Commit yourself to God and you have nothing to fear.

In verse thirteen beasts are used as figures of speech for the enemies of one's soul, whether they are human beings or Satan himself. In the pathway of obedience to God one finds himself able, with God's help, to overcome the dangers symbolized by the young lion, the adder and the serpent. The lion represents the openly violent foes of the godly, whereas the adder and the serpent represent the crafty liars in wait.

Some temptations are like the lion. They roar, they assault and they rend. There is nothing secretive about them. All of us will encounter them along the pathway of life. We know about where and when we shall encounter them. The lion is not easy to contend with, but he is not as bad as the adder. This creature coiled along life's pathways strikes at us from under cover as we pass. We have no idea that it is there. We are on the watch for the lion, but the adder strikes us when we least suspect his presence.

How like the different temptations that you and I encounter! We know the lion that flares up within us and causes us, to the loss of dignity and self-respect, to lose our tempers. We know that if we come in contact with certain people that we shall be tempted along carnal lines. There is hardly a person anywhere who cannot be broken down at last by some huge and gross sin that appeals to his appetites. The alcoholic knows this and those who are affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous realize that the only way to keep clear of the lion is to practice total abstinence. But the adder is different. In one little moment the opportunity to compromise is presented to Christians and they fail. People, without any intention of doing wrong, sometimes take the money of others and use it in projects that fail. The one who trusts in God can triumph.

Each of the promises in verses 14-16 is a jewel, and glows like a diamond cluster. The direction put upon these promises is so unmistakably clear that anyone with any spiritual discernment can tell that these wonderful blessings promised herein are for the saved only. These blessings which are guaranteed to every true believer are six in number.

I. Protection.

"I will deliver him." He assures the believer of protection and deliverance from danger, temptation and sin. He delivers from sin's penalty, power and presence. The reason for this is not because the believer is without sin, or is worthy of this protection, but because he has set his love upon the Lord. In the love of a divinely illuminated believer there are two things:

1. The delightful ingredient of admiration.

Everything in God's redeeming plan is deserving of the warmest admiration. This applies to all that the Lord Jesus is in Himself, all that He has done, all that He is doing in the present, and all that He has promised to do for His own in the future.

2. The sweet property of gratitude.

The soul of the believer is filled with gratitude because of the salvation which has been obtained through Christ, the evil from which the soul has been saved and the blessings in hand and in hope.

II. Position.

"I will set him on high." This means He will exalt him to a lofty place where he shall be safe. The reason He gives for making this promise "because he hath known my name."

The first principle of the life of God in the soul of man is spiritual knowledge. The saint knows His name as a merciful, gracious, long-suffering God. This saving knowledge is always vital, active and powerful. On account of this He says, "I will set him on high," that is, I will make him high in honor, in happiness and in glory.

III. Promise.

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him." This promise is specific to believers whose hearts are fast on God, and the main trend of whose lives is Godward. To them prayer is vital. This signifies that the believer will pray to God and that an answer will be given. We may not get what we fancy we need, for we are not always good in translating our needs into words; but we will get what is best for us from Him Who on the throne of eternal and perfect wisdom understands what we need a great deal better than we do. God will always give to us what is best, but that may be far different from what we expected.

IV. Presence.

"I will be with him in trouble." There is no need for a troubled soul to be solitary as well as sad. There is no greater reality than that of His presence. God promises His presence with His saints in their troubles. They will have trouble. Trouble cannot be escaped. Job said, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Job 5:7. However, God does not bring us into trouble and then leave us there alone. Instead, He will be with us to strengthen and help us. God is always with us, but in our trouble He is more especially with us. In a sense He here speaks and acts like a tender-hearted mother towards a sickly child. When the child is in perfect health she can leave it in the hands of a nurse; but when it is sick she will attend it herself; she will say to the nurse, "You may look

about other matters, I will stay with the child myself." God says, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." Isaiah 43:2-3. God is always near in sympathy and power to help His tried ones. God's presence is the supreme good. All we can need is included and involved in it. It is because that He is with us.

V. Promotion.

"I will deliver him, and honour him." That is what the tortured soul wants -- deliverance. The meaning of the word here is conveyed by the figure of lifting up out of a pit, of dragging up out of the midst of anything that surrounds a man with its distressing environment. There are some sorrows from which we can never escape. Then how does deliverance come? He gets under the burden and helps us bear it, and He makes us strong to carry it. God honors believers by taking them out of the bondage of sin and making them children of God. Then He promotes them who are faithful in small things. He always honors them who honor Him.

God is profoundly solicitous for the well-being of each of His people. He does not overlook the individual in the multitude. He cares for every godly soul with a care as complete and constant as though He had no other soul to care for.

VI. Prospect.

"With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." Length of days is always viewed in the Old Testament as a blessing, and a special reward for obedience. It is only in the New Testament that we learn how much "better" it is "to depart, and be with Christ." But length of days alone does not satisfy those who attain old age. Something else must come in to fill in the satisfaction.

The man described here fills out the measure of his days, is quite satisfied with life, and is content to leave it. He rises from life's banquet as a man who has had enough and has no desire for more. He has seen that the past had been good. Goodness and mercy had followed him all the days of his life. He did not wish to linger longer. He closed his eyes in peace, with no vain cravings for prolonged life. He got out of the world what it could give, and he was contented to be done with it all. Let us so live that when life comes to a close, we may be able to say, "It is enough! Let thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."