

PSALM 125

This short psalm may be summed up in those words of the prophet (~~2180~~ Isaiah 3:10, 11), "Say you to the righteous, It shall be well with him. Woe to the wicked, it shall be will with him." Thus are life and death, the blessing and the curse, set before us often in the psalms, as well as in the law and the prophets.

I. It is certainly well with the people of God; for,

- 1.** They have the promises of a good God that they shall be fixed (v. 1), and safe (v. 2), and not always under the hatches (v. 3).
- 2.** They have the prayers of a good man, which shall be heard for them (v. 4).

II. It is certainly ill with the wicked, and particularly with the apostates (v. 5). Some of the Jewish rabbies are of opinion that it has reference to the days of the Messiah; however, we that are members of the gospel-church may certainly, in singing this psalm, take comfort of these promises, and the more so if we stand in awe of the threatening.

~~431~~ PSALM 125:1-3

THE SECURITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

A song of degrees.

Here are three very precious promises made to the people of God, which, though they are designed to secure the welfare of the church in general, may be applied by particular believers to themselves, as other promises of this nature may. Here is,

I. The character of God's people, to whom these promises belong. Many call themselves God's people who have no part nor lot in this matter. But those shall have the benefit of them and may take the comfort of them,

(1.) Who are *righteous* (v. 3), righteous before God, righteous to God, and righteous to all men, for his sake justified and sanctified.

(2.) Who *trust in the Lord*, who depend upon his care and devote themselves to his honour. All that deal with God must deal upon trust, and he will give comfort to those only that give credit to him, and make it to appear they do so by quitting other confidences, and venturing to the utmost for God. The closer our expectations are confined to God the higher our expectations may be raised from him.

II. The promises themselves.

1. That their hearts shall be established by faith: those minds shall be truly stayed that are stayed on God: *They shall be as Mount Zion*. The church in general is called *Mount Zion* (^{<302>}Hebrews 12:22), and it shall in *this* respect be like *Mount Zion*, it shall be built upon a rock, and its interests shall be so well secured that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. The stability of the church is the satisfaction of all its well-wishers. Particular persons, who trust in God, shall be established (^{<303>}Psalm 112:7); their faith shall be their fixation, (^{<304>}Isaiah 7:9. *They shall be as Mount Zion*, which is firm as it is a mountain supported by providence, much more as a holy mountain supported by promise.

(1.) They *cannot be removed* by the prince of the power of the air, nor by all his subtlety and strength. They cannot be removed from their integrity nor from their confidence in God.

(2.) They *abide for ever* in that grace which is the earnest of their everlasting continuance in glory.

2. That, committing themselves to God, they shall be safe, under his protection, from all the insults of their enemies, as Jerusalem had a natural fastness and fortification in the *mountains* that *were round about it*, v. 2. Those mountains not only sheltered it from winds and tempests, and broke the force of them, but made it also very difficult of access for an enemy; such a defence is God's providence to his people. Observe,

(1.) The compass of it: *The Lord is round about his people* on every side. There is no gap in the hedge of protection which he makes round about his people, at which the enemy, who goes about them, seeking to do them a mischief, can find entrance, (^{<311>}Job 1:10.

(2.) The continuance of it — *henceforth even for ever*. Mountains may moulder and *come to nought*, and *rocks be removed out of their place* (^{<312>}Job 14:18), but God's covenant with his people cannot be *broken*

(²⁵⁴⁰Isaiah 54:10) nor his care of them cease. Their being said to stand fast *for ever* (v. 1), and here to have God *round about them for ever*, intimates that the promises of the stability and security of God's people will have their full accomplishment in their everlasting state. In heaven they shall *stand fast for ever*, shall be as *pillars in the temple of our God and go no more out* (⁶⁶²Revelation 3:12), and there God himself, with his glory and favour, will be *round about them for ever*.

3. That their troubles shall last no longer than their strength will serve to bear them up under them, v. 3.

(1.) It is supposed that the *rod of the wicked* may come, may fall, *upon the lot of the righteous*. The rod of their power may oppress them; the rod of their anger may vex and torment them. It may fall upon their persons, their estates, their liberties, their families, their names, any thing that falls to their lot, only it cannot reach their souls.

(2.) It is promised that, though it may come upon their lot, it shall not rest there; it shall not continue so long as the enemies design, and as the people of God fear, but God will cut the work short in righteousness, so short that even *with the temptation he will make a way for them to escape*.

(3.) It is considered as a reason of this promise that if the trouble should continue over-long the righteous themselves would be in temptation to *put forth their hands to iniquity*, to join with wicked people in their wicked practices, to say as they say and do as they do. There is danger lest, being long persecuted for their religion, at length they grow weary of it and willing to give it up, lest, being kept long in expectation of promised mercies, they begin to distrust the promise, and to think of casting God off, upon suspicion of his having cast them off. See ³⁷⁸³Psalm 73:13, 14. Note, God considers the frame of his people, and will proportion their trials to their strength by the care of his providence, as well as their strength to their trials by the power of his grace. *Oppression makes a wise man mad*, especially if it continue long; therefore *for the elect's sake* the days shall be shortened, that, whatever becomes of their lot in this world, they may not lose their lot among the chosen.

PSALM 125:4-5

THE SECURITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Here is,

1. The prayer the psalmist puts up for the happiness of those that are sincere and constant (v. 4): *Do good, O Lord! unto those that are good.* This teaches us to pray for all good people, to *make supplication for all saints*; and we may pray in faith for them, being assured that those who do well shall certainly be well dealt with. Those that are as they should be shall be as they would be, provided they be *upright in heart*, that they be really as good as they seem to be. *With the upright God will show himself upright.* He does not say, Do good, O Lord! to those that are perfect, that are sinless and spotless, but to those that are sincere and honest. God's promises should quicken our prayers. It is comfortable wishing well to those for whom God has engaged to do well.

2. The prospect he has of the ruin of hypocrites and deserters; he does not pray for it (*I have not desired the woeful day, thou knowest*), but he predicts it: *As for those*, who having known the way of righteousness, for fear of the rod of the wicked, basely turn aside out of it *to their wicked ways*, use indirect ways to prevent trouble or extricate themselves out of it, or those who, instead of reforming, grow worse and worse and are more obstinate and daring in their impieties, God shall *send them away, cast them out, and lead them forth with the workers of iniquity*, that is, he will appoint them their portion with the worst of sinners. Note,

(1.) Sinful ways are *crooked ways*; sin is the perverting of that which is right.

(2.) The doom of those who turn aside to those crooked ways out of the right way will be the same with theirs who have all along walked in them, nay, and more grievous, for if any place in hell be hotter than another that shall be the portion of hypocrites and apostates. God shall *lead them forth*, as prisoners are led forth to execution. *Go, you cursed, into everlasting fire; and these shall go away*; all their former righteousness shall not be mentioned unto them. The last words, *Place upon Israel*, may be taken as a prayer: "God preserve his Israel in peace, when his judgments are abroad

reckoning with evil-doers.” We read them as a promise: *Peace shall be upon Israel*; that is,

[1.] When those who have treacherously deserted the ways of God meet with their own destruction those who faithfully adhere to them, though they may have trouble in their way, shall have peace in the end.

[2.] The destruction of those who walk in crooked ways will contribute to the peace and safety of the church. When Herod was cut off *the word of God grew*, ⁴⁴²³Acts 12:23, 24.

[3.] The peace and happiness of God's Israel will be the vexation, and will add much to the torment, of those who perish in their wickedness, ⁴¹³³Luke 13:28; ²⁵⁶³Isaiah 65:13. *My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be ashamed.*