

DEUTERONOMY 8

² And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

³ And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only [\$444,743.61], but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live [priceless].

⁴ Thy raiment waxed not old [\$125,000/\$1,583,680] upon thee, neither did thy foot swell [\$700,000], these forty years.

[T]he God which fed me all my life long unto this day. (Genesis 48:15).

GENESIS 27

1. And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son

This has both a literal (physical) application as well as a spiritual application. Isaac's conduct as it related to the blessings of Esau and Jacob (told in Genesis 27) revealed a spiritual shortcoming.

PSALM 13

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, as he faced possible death, likely at the hands of Saul or Absalom, but in any case, and as Spurgeon says, it is not necessary to link this Psalm to a particular event (which is conjecture) but rather this Psalm gives voice to feelings that arise in any of the many trials a child of God experiences on his journey through this world.

Condition:

1 How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? For ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

This type of plea is common amongst the Psalms. So, for example, we see in Psalm 79:5: **How long, Lord? Wilt thou be angry for ever? Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?** And this from Psalm 89:46: **How long, Lord? Wilt thou hide thyself for ever? Shall thy wrath burn like fire?**

For ever? Is this not a bit hyperbolic; that is to say, is this not an exaggeration not meant to be taken literally? It certainly seems David is overstating or overplaying his position with such language. Do we not have here a bit of puffery?

The “how long” this Psalm commences with is repeated four times in the Psalm. This suggests a very intense desire for deliverance and great anguish of heart. The Treasury of David suggests this repeated plea becomes a “very howling.” We feel for David. The “for ever” supplementation just highlights the distress David is experiencing.

But we know and must remember that what David is saying is not reality. It’s his perception and earnest belief in the moment. But God never does nor can he forget his people, for whom a special book of remembrance is written. Here’s the reality: **For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.** (Psalm 9:18).

Hide thy face from me: How long will God withdraw his favor and assistance. The question being asked here is how long will David's creator conceal his friendship and favor towards the Psalmist. Aversion, hatred, dislike and displeasure are shown by turning away the countenance. The plea here is similar to what David said at Psalm 4:6: **Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.**

² How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

Two "how longs" in one verse undeniably displays the anguish, aching, torment, exhaustion, fatigue and distress of the writer.

The first "how long": Self-help. He is looking for ways to alleviate his suffering with human effort. This is real; it's what today we would call depression. And it's daily and unrelenting. **And I will set fire in Egypt: Sin shall have great pain, and No shall be rent asunder, and Noph shall have distresses daily.** (Ezekiel 30:16). *How long shall I be in such perplexities and anxieties of mind, not knowing what course to take, nor how to get out of my troubles?* (Poole). Gill describes this as "heart sorrow" that attends day-by-day.

The second "how long": Exalted enemies! This may be understood to refer to temporal enemies, in the case of David including such as members of his own house (which is common amongst the Lord's chosen), or spiritual enemies, principally Satan, as when he prevailed upon David to number the people, Peter to deny his Master, and so on.

³ Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

This troubled child of God is on the verge of death and thus pleads that he be considered and heard by his Creator. His eyes are dim with weakness, denoting approaching death. **Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.** (1 Samuel 14:29). **Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.** (Psalm 6:7). **My heart panteth, my strength faileth**

me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. (Psalm 38:10). Isaac's dim eyes – spiritual blindness/failings.

The sleep of death, or literally sleep in death. *The idea is, that death, whose approach was indicated by the dimness of vision, was fast stealing over him as a sleep, and that unless his clearness of vision were restored, it would soon end in the total darkness - the deep and profound sleep - of death.* (Barnes). In Scripture, death is often compared to sleep. **These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.** (John 11:11). **For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.** (1 Corinthians 11:30). **And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.** (Daniel 12:2).

The bottom line of this picture is that David, in his representative role of all the children of God, has found his own counsel to be insufficient. He is therefore essentially making the prayer found at Ephesians 1:18, 19: **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power[.]** His calamitous condition is expressed as darkness, so he greatly seeks comfort and deliverance, expressed as light. **And now for a little space grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.** (Ezra 9:8). **The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.** (Proverbs 15:30).

⁴ Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

The woeful description of David's sad condition continues to a crescendo here. All of this badness is going to culminate with his adversaries winning and rejoicing therein.

For the moment, David believes his enemies will overpower and conquer him. He declares his opponents will obtain a complete victory over

him. Moreover, that feared victory will result in his adversaries rejoicing and exulting in triumph when David is moved, that is to say, when he stumbles and falls. Barnes puts this view forward: *His ground of apprehension and of appeal was, that by his being vanquished the cause in which he was engaged would suffer, and that the enemies of religion would triumph.*

This is a plea that God takes notice of and for which reason he does not give up his people into the hands of their enemies, as we learn from this interesting portion of the Song of Moses: **Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this.** (Deuteronomy 32: 27). Poole comments on this verse: *The wrath of the enemy, i.e. their rage against me, as it is expressed [Isaiah 37:28,29](#); their insolent and furious reproaches against my name, as if I were unnatural and cruel to my people, or unable to deliver them.*

Antidote: (remedy; something that relieves)

⁵But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

David has trusted in God's favor, friendship and promises from the get-go; his confidence has been in God only, placing no stock in himself or other human help. Once he gets back to that territory he regains his bearings and exults. **Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.** (Psalm 130:7). The "salvation" referenced refers both to extraction from current difficulties and ultimate salvation of the soul.

The Bible overflows with comforting words regarding the deliverance of his elect people from their enemies. Perhaps a prime example is Psalm 91 (generally believed to have been written by Moses, who also composed Psalm 90) which is worth our attention:

1He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence.

4He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.

5Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day;

6*Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday.

7A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee.

8Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

9Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation;

10There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

14Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

⁶I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

The word translated “dealt bountifully” means to deal with in a kind way, to treat well, to requite or reward – a free and bountiful giving. **Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.** (Psalm 119:17). **Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.** (Psalm 142:7).

Paul speaks of this reward at Hebrews 10:15 when he exhorts the early day Hebrews **[c]ast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.** Nor does that verse stand alone. For example: **Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.** (Matthew 5:11, 12). We fill that bill!

Generally speaking, a reward in human affairs is given in recognition of and recompensing for a meritorious performance; but not so is its general usage in Scripture. The first occurrence of that word in Scripture is found at Genesis 15:1 where we find Jehovah saying unto Abraham: **[F]ear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.** How utterly impossible was it that the patriarch had done anything to deserve this! And from Colossians we read: **Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.**

(Colossians 3:24). *It is so denominated to show that it is not merited by works, but is bestowed by free grace, and will certainly be enjoyed by all the elect.* (Pink).

Moses had **respect unto the recompense of the reward** (Hebrews 11:26), John encouraged his brethren to continue on so to receive **a full reward** (2 John 1:8), Paul begged the Colossians to **[I]et no man beguile you of your reward** (Colossians 2:18), Jesus preached **whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward** (Mark 9:41) and Boaz proclaimed to Ruth **a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.** (Ruth 2:12).

Finally, John has these encouraging words: **Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.** (1 John 3:2, 3). The person who is inspired with this well-grounded hope will keep before his eyes the pure and holy character and person of Christ.

The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen. (Colossians 4:18).

These remaining remarks are directed primarily to those who continue to dip their toes in the water.¹ Can't swim without jumping in!

My advice to you comes from Isaiah 51:1 and 2: **[L]ook unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are**

¹ Start doing something that you have not done before in a slow and careful way because you are not sure if you will like it or if it will be successful. Tentatively begin to get involved in a new experience; cautiously try something new without over-commitment.

digged. Look unto Abraham your father * * * for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

God's requirements from Abraham were clearly made known: **Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee[.]** (Genesis 12:1; see also Acts 7:2-8). After some dilly-dallying, Abraham did just that – he and his **went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.** (Genesis 12:5). Duties must be performed, difficulties overcome and trials endured before a child of God lands in heaven; but this is the first step. **By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.** (Hebrews 11:8).

Regarding God's requirements from Abraham, Pink says: *What a testing of faith was this! What a trial to flesh and blood! Abraham was already seventy years of age, and long journeys and the break-up of old associations do not commend themselves to elderly people. To leave the land of his birth, to forsake home and estate, to sever family ties and leave loved ones behind, to abandon present certainty for (what seemed to human wisdom) a future uncertainty, and go forth not knowing whither, must have seemed hard and harsh unto natural sentiment.*

But Abraham obeyed. And everything worked out wonderfully. **Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.** (John 8:56).