

In the LORD I put my trust;
How can you say to my soul,
“Flee *as* a bird to your mountain”?
² For look! The wicked bend *their* bow,
They make ready their arrow on the string,
That they may shoot secretly at the upright in heart.
³ If the foundations are destroyed,
What can the righteous do?
⁴ The LORD *is* in His holy temple,
The LORD’s throne *is* in heaven;
His eyes behold,
His eyelids test the sons of men.
⁵ The LORD tests the righteous,
But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.
⁶ Upon the wicked He will rain coals;
Fire and brimstone and a burning wind
Shall be the portion of their cup.
⁷ For the LORD *is* righteous,
He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.

Introduction

It is difficult to determine the historical background to this Psalm. David was often in danger. He spent 10 years on the run, hiding from King Saul who was trying to kill him, and was also in hiding during the rebellion of his son Absalom. However, what we do know, is that during the crisis that David went through, as he describes here, he did not run away, but remained strong and trusted in God. David passed the test that God had allowed to come into his life. Whatever crisis we might face in our lives, this Psalm teaches us that we must choose between two things.

1. We can choose to be afraid – This is walking by **sight**.
2. We can choose to trust God - This is walking by **faith**.

It is clear from this Psalm that David chose to walk by faith. Let us discover the challenges that David faced, when he decided to not be afraid and choose to trust God in his crisis.

1. David’s faith in God was attacked – v. 1-3.

The attack upon David’s faith came through what others said to him. David doesn’t tell us who these people are. They may have been his friends, or they may have been his enemies, we don’t know. However, what we do know is that the real enemy of our faith is Satan.
It is Satan who attacks our faith in God.
Sometimes even our friends can unknowingly be an instrument in Satan’s hands.

Attacks can come from either **within our minds** or outside **from what people might say to us.**
Let us note here in v. 1-3 how David's faith was attacked.

a) **David was attacked in the form of discouragement – v. 1.**

David was told by somebody to run away.

The illustration given was to **flee like a frightened little bird to some high mountain to escape the problem.**

Running away from any problems in the Christian life should never be a choice if we want to **walk by faith and trust God.**

One of Satan's weapons comes in the form of discouragement.

However, we will notice in a moment from **Ephesians Chapter 6: v. 13-17** that there is no piece of armour for the back of our bodies.

God does not expect His children to retreat from the battle, exposing our backs to the enemy.

Turn with me to Ephesians Chapter 6: v.13-17.

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

I would like to briefly go through the pieces of spiritual armour that we will need when Satan attacks us, especially through discouragement.

Truth - Notice that truth is the first piece of spiritual armour to put on.

The devil is a liar and he is the father of lies. -

John 8: v.44

⁴⁴ You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Satan never speaks the truth.

Therefore, to break Satan's power we need to know the truth about God's word and what it says in any given situation.

John 8: v. 31-32 in N.K.J.

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Satan will attack your **identity in Christ** more than anything else.

This is who you are as a Christian.

Therefore, you need to read what the Bible says about you and not what Satan says about you.

How you view yourself "In Christ" can often affect your behaviour as a Christian.

Did you know that, if you are a Christian then **"YOU"** are the **"Light of the world"**

Turn with me to Matthew Chapter 5: v. 14 – (N.K.J.)

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Now turn with me to John Chapter 8: v. 12. – (N.K.J.)

¹² Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

So there is no need for Christians to walk in darkness or to be discouraged, because we are the “**Light of the world**”. We are the only hope for people today.

We have the message of Salvation.

If someone is interested, we can lead them to eternal life through Jesus Christ.

How wonderful is that?

I have only highlighted one aspect of our identity in Christ, but there are at least 20 other encouragements from God’s word that we can meditate upon if we get discouraged. (A list is added to this sermon at the end for your meditation)

Eph. 6: v.14 Put on the breastplate of righteousness – In Roman armour the breastplate covered the main organs of the body. It especially covered the heart, the seat of our emotions. If you didn’t have this armour, then any enemy arrow or sword would easily kill you very quickly.

The Righteousness that protects our lives comes from Jesus Christ.

Jesus gives us His righteousness when we believe in Him.

(2 Corinthians 5: v. 21)

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Therefore, to remain protected from Satan in our righteousness we must always confess our sins, and put them under the blood of Jesus.

Satan can gain a foothold if there is unconfessed sin in our lives.

Satan is the accuser towards Christians.

If everything is confessed to God, He forgives us through Jesus, and we stay protected.

Eph. 6: v. 15 “and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

For the Roman soldier the sandals that he wore on his feet were very important.

They consisted of three layers of leather, with straps to secure the sandals firmly to the foot.

They often had small hob nails sticking out from the bottom of the soles in order to get a good grip in slippery ground.

Roman soldiers mainly walked everywhere, and their sandals were an important foundation for all that they did in battle.

The gospel message must be the foundation of our faith.

Satan is always busy trying to undermine, dilute, and distract us from the core of our faith.

We need to make sure that we fully understand the “Gospel”.

Other aspects of Bible truth are important but the “Gospel” is the most important.

Eph. 6: v. 16 – Above all taking the shield of faith, which you will be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

This bit of spiritual armour is very simple.

Believe what God’s word says about you, and not what Satan might say in your mind or through other people.

When we believe by “faith” it isn’t blind faith. Our faith is based upon the facts that are contained in the Bible.

Eph. 6: v.17. – The Helmet of Salvation.

The Roman Helmet protects the head of the soldier. Our minds need protecting. Everything goes through our mind.

If Satan can influence our mind, then later it will involve an influence upon our behaviour.

Our minds need to be protected. If we protect our minds, then it should result in better behaviour as Christians.

Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 10: v. 5 to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.**

In other words, our thought patterns can be an entrance for Satan.

If Satan can influence our mind, it will not be long before we are doing wrong things.

There is nothing more discouraging for a Christian than to be deceived by Satan.

Eph. 6: v. 17 – The sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

We are told that God’s word can be used to protect us from Satan. Jesus used this method Himself.

In Matthew Chapter 4 Jesus was tempted by Satan three times, and each time He used God’s word to protect Himself.

God’s word is a great protection against Satan. Please use it, quote it aloud to yourself if necessary.

b) David was attacked in the form of a threat – v. 2.

When Satan can’t discourage us, he sometimes comes like a roaring lion to frighten us. Satan is like a bee without a sting. He can make a lot of noise but he can’t destroy God’s people, who are secure in Jesus Christ.

The reference to the wicked mentioned in v. 2 are the godless people who do not put their trust in God.

David appears to have been threatened with violence by some people.

He is being intimidated, but he is not running away.

c) David was attacked, with an attempt to destroy his foundational truth. – 3.

David was God’s chosen King. Saul had been rejected by God and Absalom was self-appointed. God did not choose Absalom.

If David ran away from his chosen position, then what would happen to the righteous people who followed God’s will, and supported David?

Certainly they would be very discouraged.

This is why Biblical truth must be passed on from generation to generation.

2 Timothy 2: v. 1-2.

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Unfortunately, today there are many professing believers in Jesus who are drifting away from the foundations of the Christian faith.

It is our job as believers to make sure that we pass on the foundations of Biblical truth to the next generation.

2. **David's faith in God was secure, because it was tested – v. 4-5**

In v. 4-5 we are told that God's eyes are upon His people and that He **tests the righteous.** The word test or try that is used in v.4 carries the idea of "**testing metals by fire.**"

Jeremiah 17: v. 10.

¹⁰ I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give every man according to his ways,
According to the fruit of his doings.

God tests the righteous to bring out the **best in them.** Satan tempts to bring out the **worst in the righteous.**

When we trust the Lord in the difficulties of life, **our trials work for us and not against us.**

2 Cor. 4: v. 7-18. In N.L.T.

⁷ We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

⁸ We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. ⁹ We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. ¹⁰ Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.

¹¹ Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. ¹² So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.

¹³ But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the psalmist had when he said, "I believed in God, so I spoke." ¹⁴ We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you. ¹⁵ All of this is for your benefit. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.

¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. ¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! ¹⁸ So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

Noah was tested by God to build an Ark to protect his family from the flood.

The earth had never seen rain. The people mocked, but Noah had faith in God.

Abraham was tested by God, when God asked him to sacrifice his one and only son Isaac.

Abraham passed the test of heart obedience and was not required to sacrifice his son. It was just a test that God put him through.

How about us?

What tests has God put us through in life?

How did we get on?

Did we run away, or did we trust God?

I hope that we trusted God in the trial and if we did then our faith would have been strengthened in God.

Never look upon a test as a negative thing.

God loves us and is wanting us to grow in our experience as secure believers.

When God has tested us, He usually has a plan to use us for some purpose.

Nearly 20 years ago, a Pastor of a nearby church to mine in London, lost his wife in only one week.

She had a headache, ended up in hospital and a week later she died.

The Pastor was about 40 years old with a young family.

I visited him once in his home and he said to me.

Alistair, I think this is a “test” from God.

Up to now in my ministry, I don't think God has really “tested” me.

He later re-married and had another daughter.

It was a very hard test for this Pastor, but he passed the test, continued in ministry as a Pastor, although moved to another Church.

3. David had faith in God's judgement for the wicked – v. 5-6.

We are told in v.5 that God hates people who love violence.

In v. 6 we are told that God will rain down coals, fire and brimstone and a burning wind upon wicked people.

We may think that it is a bit hard for David to say these things about God's judgement. We may even think that God's judgement is too harsh.

However, once we have experienced the violence that comes from evil people, we may think a little differently.

Violence against God's people is an attack against God Himself.

God will defend His people and bring judgement to those who exercise violence towards them.

All around the world today Christians are persecuted. Churches are destroyed, and Christian homes are burnt.

These things are done by violent men and one day their works will be judged.

David had faith in God's judgement and the timing of that judgement.

We too need to trust in God to judge the wicked according to His time-scale.

WHO I AM IN CHRIST

ORIGINALLY COMPILED BY NEIL ANDERSON

I AM ACCEPTED...

<i>John 1:12</i>	I am God's child.
<i>John 15:15</i>	As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ.
<i>Romans 5:1</i>	I have been justified (declared righteous).
<i>1 Corinthians 6:17</i>	I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit.
<i>1 Corinthians 6:19-20</i>	I have been bought with a price and I belong to God.
<i>1 Corinthians 12:27</i>	I am a member of Christ's body.
<i>Ephesians 1:3-8</i>	I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child.
<i>Colossians 1:13-14</i>	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
<i>Colossians 2:9-10</i>	I am complete in Christ.
<i>Hebrews 4:14-16</i>	I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ.

I AM SECURE...

<i>Romans 8:1-2</i>	I am free from condemnation.
<i>Romans 8:28</i>	I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances.
<i>Romans 8:31-39</i>	I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I cannot be separated from the love of God.
<i>2 Corinthians 1:21-22</i>	I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.
<i>Colossians 3:1-4</i>	I am hidden with Christ in God.
<i>Philippians 1:6</i>	I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me.
<i>Philippians 3:20</i>	I am a citizen of heaven.
<i>2 Timothy 1:7</i>	I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind.
<i>1 John 5:18</i>	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

I AM SIGNIFICANT...

<i>John 15:5</i>	I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life.
<i>John 15:16</i>	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
<i>1 Corinthians 3:16</i>	I am God's temple.
<i>2 Corinthians 5:17-21</i>	I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
<i>Ephesians 2:6</i>	I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm.
<i>Ephesians 2:10</i>	I am God's workmanship.
<i>Ephesians 3:12</i>	I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
<i>Philippians 4:13</i>	I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.