

“MY TIMES ARE IN GOD’S HANDS”

Psalm 31

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INTRODUCTION

Many have benefitted from this psalm over the years.

- Jonah—“Vain idols”—v. 6; Jonah 2:8
- Jeremiah 20:10—v. 13, the slanders of many, “terror is on every side” Jeremiah used this expression at least 6 times in his book.
- Psalm 71:1-3 quotes almost verbatim 31:1-3; it is likely that David may have written Ps. 71.
- Jesus quoted v. 5 for His last utterance on the cross—“Into thy hands I commit my spirit.”

All of this shows the extensive influence of these psalms well beyond the experience of the original author, and also in various circumstances of life, and not only in formal worship times.

Possible background to this psalm in David’s life: I Sam. 23. Philistines attack city of Keilah; David and his men at God’s direction go and deliver the city from the Philistines. David and his men stay there for refuge. Saul hears and plots to attack and destroy the city and David in that place where he is “shut in a city with double gates and bars.” David inquires of God whether the people will safeguard him and his men or betray him to Saul. The Lord revealed that the city would surrender him and his men into Saul’s hand. David must have witnessed much whispering and plotting behind his back; how betrayed he must have felt; how threatened; how helpless!

Do you sometimes live in fear and uncertainty? Have you ever said in your alarm, “I am cut off from God’s eyes?” (v. 22)

Have you been in such distress that your **eye is wasted away in grief**, as are **your soul** and **your body** also? (v. 9)

Do you spend your life with sorrow, and your years with sighing; do you feel that your **body is wasting away**? (v. 10)

Do you ever feel like a reproach before others; an object of dread to those neighbors and acquaintances? Do people stay away from you like you are the plague and they don’t want to “catch it”? (v. 11)

Do you ever feel disregarded and forgotten as though you were a dead man; as useless to others as though you were a broken vase or piece of pottery? (v. 12)

Do you ever feel that people are talking about you behind your back? Plotting against you and scheming to ruin you or even to take your life? (v. 13)

If any or all of these situations apply to you, then you need to listen to what God did for David and how He turned David’s life around.

I want you to see how many references he makes to the “hand” of those opposing him or to the workings of evil and deceit:

- They have secretly laid a net for him (v. 4).
- God has not given me over to their hand (8).
- Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me (15).
- They have conspiracies (20).

- They cause strife with their tongues (20).
- They slander and gossip; they plot terror on every side while they take counsel against him (13).
- They scheme to take away his life (13).

David found the answers to his dilemma, and he shares these answers with us.

- Have you found God to be your safety and your hiding place? Is He your Rock and your Fortress and Stronghold, your place of refuge (vv. 1-4; v. 19)?
- Have you come to realize that your life is not a game of chance and that you are not at the whim of “fate” or “destiny.” Your life is not a roulette wheel that someone, especially your enemies, spin and stop it when and where they choose. David says, “**My times are in Thy hand.** (v. 15)”
- Do you trust Him to guide your life? David also says, “**Thou wilt lead me and guide me**” (cf. Ps. 23), and “**You have ransomed me**” (vv. 3, 5).
- Have you learned to trust the Lord as David did? “*I trust in the Lord*” (vv. 6, 14)
- Have you entrusted your life to Him? David also said, “**Into Thy hand I commit my spirit.** (v. 5)”
- Do you rejoice in Him as David did: “*I will rejoice and be glad in thy loyal love.*” (v. 7)
- Do you acknowledge that God knows you? “*You have seen my affliction, you have known my troubles*” (v. 7).
- Have you experienced His large, unconfined, roomy place where He has set you? (v. 8)
- Have you found him truly to be your God? (“*You are my God*”—v. 14)
- Do you enjoy His good treasures and secret place of His presence? “*God has stored up treasures consisting of His goodness—and has them hidden in the secret place of His own presence; there He also hides His people—far away from human conspiracies and the strife of wicked tongues and malicious plans. God keeps his own in a secret tabernacle or tent—where no one can harm or even threaten them* (vv. 19-20).).

David is safe because of **who God is!**

- 1) He is Good; His goodness is great (v. 19).
- 2) He has Loyal love, lovingkindness, mercy, graciousness (7, 21).
- 3) He is Righteous (1).
- 4) He is Strong—Rock, place of refuge, fortress, etc. (1, 2, 3, 4)
- 5) He is Truth and Faithfulness (5)
- 6) He is gracious (9)
- 7) He leads and guides (3).
- 8) He is David’s God (14)!

Therefore, what response should His **godly ones** have—those who are the objects of His loyal love (v. 23)?

1. Love the Lord. (23)
2. Be strong, and let your heart take courage. (24)
3. Trust in the Lord (v. 6, 14).
4. Take refuge in Him (1)
5. Hope (Wait for) in the Lord (24).

6. Rejoice and be glad in Him (7).
7. Call upon Him (17); make supplication to Him (22); cry out to Him (22).
8. Commit your spirit to Him (5).

CONCLUSION

Let us consider what it means to so commit our spirit to God.

- David simply says that he “put himself and all of his hopes into the hand of God.”
- Jesus states that He sovereignly of His own will and power commits and yields over His spirit—thus His life—to His Father; cf. Mt.’s expression that Jesus “gave up his spirit” (Mt.) or “delivered over” his spirit (Jn.)
- Note that many believers have followed our Lord’s lead in this commitment at death—such as Bernard, Huss, Jerome of Prague, Luther, Melanchthon, etc.
- Perowne notes that it is good to die *for* the Lord as martyrs, *in* the Lord as do all believers; but even better to die *with* the Lord “as breathing out their lives in these words, ‘Into Thy hand I commend my spirit” (quoted from Luther in Perowne, p. 285).
- We are hidden with our Lord in the secret place of His presence (20)
- He has great treasures of His goodness stored up for us in this secret place (19)

YOU MUST KNOW THAT YOUR TIMES ARE IN HIS HANDS (v. 15).

Therefore:

Commit your spirit, your body, your life unto him (v. 5).