

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are
Most Surely Believed Among Us
An Expository Study of The Gospel According to Luke
Chapter 21- Luke 21:5- 38
320- When Therefore Will These Things Happen?-
Part 6- The Promise of Judgment- Part 4

July 17, 2016

Luke 21:5-38

5 And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said,

6 *"As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."*

7 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what *will be* the sign when these things are about to take place?"

8 And He said, *"See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not go after them.*

9 *"When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately."*

10 Then He continued by saying to them, *"Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,*

11 *and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.*

12 *"But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake.*

13 *"It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.*

14 *"So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves;*

15 *for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.*

16 *"But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put *some* of you to death,*

- 17 and you will be hated by all because of My name.
- 18 "Yet not a hair of your head will perish.
- 19 "By your endurance you will gain your lives.
- 20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.
- 21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;
- 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.
- 23 "Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;
- 24 and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.
- 25 "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,
- 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
- 27 "Then they will see *THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD* with power and great glory.
- 28 "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."
- 29 Then He told them a parable: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees;
- 30 as soon as they put forth *leaves*, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near.
- 31 "So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.
- 32 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.
- 33 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.
- 34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;
- 35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

37 Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.

38 And all the people would get up early in the morning *to come* to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

To the Glory of God

Now we are right in the middle of seeking to understand this amazing Passage here in **Luke 21**, and we have already covered a lot of ground. But today, I want you to look closely at a very strange section of this Passage that is found in verses 16-19:

Luke 21:16-19

16 "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put *some* of you to death,

17 and you will be hated by all because of My name.

18 "Yet not a hair of your head will perish.

19 "By your endurance you will gain your lives.

Now I completely understand why Jesus would have said the words in verse 16; it is very dangerous to live as a believer in Jesus in a world that exist in hostile opposition to God and His Ways. And so verse 16 is not a mystery to me.

Jesus used a very interesting word here. It was translated into English as "betrayed", but it comes from a Greek word that means: *to give over*.¹ And what makes betrayal so hurtful is that it comes from someone close to you, a friend, or, in this case, a relative. So in this case, to be "betrayed" means that someone close to the people standing there on that day hearing Jesus speak those words, even some close family members, will "give you over" to the authorities for persecution and death.

So, this is a Promise by Jesus Christ to those who love and serve

¹ The Greek word, *paradidomi*, (from Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

Him, that within 40 years of Him speaking these words, some of those standing there on that day would have their close blood relatives and their friends “give them over” to the ruling authorities, in this case, the pagan Romans as well as the Jewish rulers. And these ruling authorities will:

... put *some* of you to death,

So here, Jesus is promising death for some of His followers. And the way this is worded here shows us that the death that is promised by Jesus in this verse is the *logical conclusion* to being “given over”. In other words, the only logical conclusion to a Christian being given over to these ruling authorities during the next 40 years is that they will be martyred for Jesus. So, no one who was there that day and heard Jesus speak these words had any other idea in their minds about what Jesus was talking about here. The Lamb of God is promising betrayal and death to *some* of those who faithfully love and serve Him.

Yet, Jesus also says that not *all* who are betrayed will die. The fact that He said:

... some...

... proves that not everyone who is betrayed by family and friends will die. Some will, but not all. But again, barring a miracle, death is almost certain in this case.

Now what would make a close relative do that? For example, what would make a parent give over their own children to the authorities where death was almost certain? It might be easier for a distant relative or even a friend to do that, but a parent? What would make a parent give over their own child to ruling authorities where death was a given?

And the normal answer is either “fear” or “selfishness”, or both. And historically, this kind of fear only comes to people through times of intense persecution. So, this indicates to us that the people were being threatened. And so this plays into what we have found out over the last several weeks.

We need to remember that the approximate 40-year time frame that Jesus is talking about here is a time of great upheaval. We have

already found out that Jesus told us in verse 8 that there would be many men who would rise up, all claiming to be the Messiah and the fulfillment of over 400 Old Testament prophecies. And even though all of these men would be false messiahs, they would all have one thing in common: they would all be trying to overthrow the pagan Romans militarily. All of them would have, as their goal, to restore Israel to her former glory under King Solomon.

We need to try to comprehend the abject hatred that the Jews had for the Roman occupiers. The average Jew seethed in his anger toward the Romans. The Jews felt humiliated and victimized by the Romans and they prayed that God would destroy them.

So when someone rose up, laying claim to be the "one", he immediately drew a crowd. And as he spoke of patriotic themes, he would incite hundreds of people to join with him. And as we found out, these bands of deceived Jews would engage in kidnapping and assassinations and other terrorist acts against the Romans, and even against the Jewish rulers who they considered to be "sell-outs".

And then both the Jewish and Roman authorities would clamp down on these bands of terrorists. Roman soldiers would go house to house searching for them, and they would attack and brutalize and torture anyone they thought would give them information. The result was even more hatred against the Romans and the Jewish rulers which resulted in even more false messiahs rising up.

And so, ancient historians, like Eusebius and Josephus tell us that, during this time, commerce and trade and food shipments and many of the daily activities that the Jews carried out to just live were disrupted and canceled. And the result of this situation carrying over for many decades was that disease and death began to claim the lives of tens of thousands of Jewish citizens, especially in the larger cities like Jerusalem.

And because the Christians were hated by both the Romans and the Jews, great persecution, like they had never known, came upon them. And so here in verse 16 Jesus is prophesying that the fear of persecution, the fear of being arrested, the fear of being accused of being a Christian overwhelmed people to the point where they began to betray one another and give them up.

And the closest thing that I am aware of to what this must have looked like is what is going on right now over in the Middle East as

genuine Islamists are slaughtering Christians wholesale. And so, hundreds of thousands of genuine believers are being captured, tortured, and killed in the most gruesome ways imaginable. They are having their heads cut off, they are being burned alive, they are being drowned, and they are being stone to death. And the *manner* in which they are martyred is designed to strike fear into the hearts of those who lay claim to be a Christian. So that when these Islamists come to their towns and villages and cities looking for more Christians, many of these people are betraying them, they are “giving them over” to the ruling authorities.

So, out of fear of being killed *themselves*, and out of loving *themselves* more than they love Jesus and each other, people who say they are saved are betraying genuine believers and “giving them over” into the hands of evil men to be tortured. And *some* of them are being “put to death” in very gruesome ways.

And this is what happened to our brothers and sisters 2,000 years ago. Now the normal question that should be asked right here is, “*Why?*” Why do they kill Christians?

Christians are the most gentle and the most loving and the kindest people on earth. Christians have been commanded by the Lord Who saved them to feed the hungry and clothe the naked and house the homeless. We are told that if we do not help the widows and orphans, God will be angry with us; if we abuse the poor and ignore the plea of the weakest and the sickest people, that God will visit us in Judgment.

So from the Resurrection until today, it is the followers of Jesus who have built hospitals and who give away medical care, and who teach blind and deaf children how to read, and teach cripple children how to live. Christians are the most compassionate and caring people on earth, and for two millennia we have been used by God in Acts of Mercy all around the world.

Now I used to run a business and I sought to hire only Christians because Christians don't tell lies, they don't steal, and they don't defraud their employer. For example, Christians are told in **Colossians 3:22-24**:

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

So, Christian employees work hard and live honestly, and so they make the very best employees because they don't drag in late and they don't leave early. Go quickly with me to **Titus 2**. In **Titus 2: 9-10**, part of having a healthy Church *requires* that the leadership of the church will faithfully:

9 Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,

10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith...

... and then Paul gave the reason *why* they are to act like this, beginning at the end of verse 10:

Titus 2:10b-15

10 ... so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

So, people who have been born from above not only make the best employees, but they also make the best employers as well. And they make the best neighbors and the best teachers and the best students and the best businessmen and the best policemen and the best politicians because they are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit that gives them both the will and the power to love and serve and obey God.

And so, why torture your best workers? Why murder your best neighbors? Why attack the most honest and the hardest working people in town? Why persecute people who would rather die than tell a lie? On the surface, it just doesn't make any sense. Until you read **Luke 21:17:**

and you will be hated by all because of My name.

You see, the very same thing that can be said about Christians could be said about Jesus Himself. Why kill a Man Who never sinned? Why persecute a Man who loved God perfectly? Why attack a Man Who loved His neighbor perfectly? Why call a Man who cast demons out of people "satan"? Why tell lies about a Man Who only spoke Truth?

With all the shenanigans going on in Rome with hypocritical people with plastic smiles, why attack the followers of Jesus? With all the lies and falsehoods being perpetrated on the people by the Jewish religious hypocrites, why attack the gentle people of Jesus? One reason:

Jesus

Make no mistake about this, dear friends, Christians are not persecuted because they build hospitals or because they feed the hungry and clothe the naked. They are not persecuted because they are hard and honest workers. Nobody attacks Christians because they don't lie or don't steal, or because they don't defraud their neighbor.

No, Christians have been persecuted, they are being persecuted, and they will always be persecuted because of Jesus, and three things about Jesus:

1. Who Jesus is
2. What Jesus did
3. What Jesus said

As we have discovered many times before, the phrase "the Name of Jesus" is not merely some memorized words that we put at the end of our prayers. No, the word "Name" means: Reputation and Character.

Now when my children were young, I taught them to never *dishonor* my "name" with their actions. You see, it has taken me a

lifetime to build up my reputation and my testimony throughout this Community. I have made very hard decisions and carried out many difficult tasks and walked on very narrow paths to have a testimony among the people who know me best, that I am a man who is an utterly unimportant and unworthy sinner, who has been wondrously redeemed by the precious Blood of the Lamb of God, and has been made a bond-slave of Jesus Christ. And so, my children must live accordingly. Because their foolishness can tarnish my reputation; they can bring shame to my testimony.

And this is so true that those who live under my roof must live in such a way that doesn't disqualify me to lead in this Church. And that is because your reputation and character and testimony matters. We live in day when the various banks and lending companies rate people according to what they call your "Credit Rating". And the higher the Credit Rating, the more responsible and trustworthy they see you as being. But that is really nothing more than what the Bible calls "the Honor of a Good Name". For example, **Proverbs 22:1** says:

A *good* name is to be more desired than great wealth, Favor is better than silver and gold.

... and **Ecclesiastes 7:1**:

A good name is better than a good ointment...

... and then it says:

And the day of *one's* death is better than the day of one's birth.

... because after your dead, your testimony can't be ruined by bad behavior, while a person who is just starting out in life can live atrociously and ruin his testimony.

Well, that is what the "Name" of Jesus means. Jesus of Nazareth lived and died and rose again. And Who He is and what He said and what He did has been recorded for us. So it is an historical record. It is what it is. You can't change it. It isn't up for debate. You might not like it, and you might not want to ascribe to it, and you might even disagree with it, but you can't change it. Jesus is Who Jesus said He

was, and Jesus did what the record says He did, and Jesus said what the records says He said.

And all that together makes up Jesus' Name, His Character, His Reputation, and His Testimony. And that is why we can get access into God's Presence simply by going before God "in Jesus' Name". Don't ever think that God loves you do much that He hears you and answers your prayers and allows you to enter into His Presence without you being covered in the Blood and the Testimony and the Reputation and the Pristine Character of the Lord Jesus Christ. You wouldn't last five seconds in God's Presence if you were to enter in your own name and in your own testimony and in your own reputation. God would eviscerate you in an instant because you're a sinner. So we go to God "in the Name of" Jesus Christ; we enter God's Presence draped in Jesus' Righteousness and covered in His Blood.

So those who go by Jesus' Name, those who lay claim to be His, those who make the boast that they belong to this Jesus, have to act certain ways, or else they bring shame to His Reputation, they sully His glorious Testimony, and they bring dishonor to what Jesus did and what Jesus said and Who Jesus is.

So Jesus says, right here, that Christians would be hated:

... because of My name

... meaning that believers will be persecuted because they are hated, and they will be hated because of Jesus' Reputation and Jesus' Character and Jesus' Testimony.

And so as we *proclaim* the Biblical Record of Who Jesus is and What Jesus said and What Jesus did, as we simply *repeat* what the Bible says about Jesus, as we merely *echo* the Words of Scripture pertaining to Jesus, as we refuse to "add to" or "take away from", but as we simply and carefully and accurately and fully *reflect* that which sacred Scripture declares to be true about Jesus, we will be hated by evil men, and that hatred is the fuel by which we will be persecuted.

And, we know that going in. And yet, we are so careful not to change anything about Jesus. We work very hard to display God accurately. We labor unendingly so that we are correctly heralding Who Jesus is and what Jesus did and What Jesus said, and we make no apology for it. And so we are not ashamed of Who Jesus is, We are not

embarrassed at What Jesus did, and we are not about to alter what Jesus said in order to make His Name and His Reputation more appealing and less offensive to lost or lukewarm souls. Because make no mistake about it, the Name of Jesus, when rightly and fully understood, is offensive to all who refuse to repent.

No other Man throughout history is as loved as Jesus is. The mere mention of His Name causes hearts to melt and demons to shudder. But, as true as that is, it is also true that no other Man in all of history is as hated as Jesus. Because unlike the originators of all the other religions and human philosophies, if what Jesus did was true, if what Jesus said was true, and if Who Jesus is was true, then it is not enough that we simply agree with all that.

No, if what the Scriptures declare clearly and repeatedly about Jesus is true-, then we must follow, and we must obey, because we *cannot* know the Biblical Jesus and stay the same. Those who stay the same have not met the Biblical Jesus. Those who do not follow Jesus do not know Jesus. Those who do not continue to believe and continue to repent and continue to confess and continue to strive and continue to trust have not come to know the real Jesus.

Peter and James and Andrew and John did not debate with Jesus, they did not argue with Jesus, and they did not hesitate. Jesus said follow Me, and they dropped their nets and they followed Him. And that is the way it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. Jesus said in **John 5:25**:

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

So it doesn't matter how sinful you have been, it doesn't matter how deep in despair you might be, it doesn't matter how hopeless your situation might be, and it doesn't matter how helpless you might feel, when Jesus calls your Name, all of those who are chosen by God for Salvation will hear that Voice and they will live! And what it means to live is that you follow and you serve and you love and you obey!

Now, even though all of this is profound, it is basically straightforward. Jesus demands repentance and trust, and those who refuse to do so, hate Him. And those who hate Jesus will also hate those who follow Jesus. And that hatred of Jesus and Who Jesus is and

What Jesus did and What Jesus said, is the source of our persecution and martyrdom.

Okay, that is terrible, but it isn't difficult to understand. But what *is* difficult and what *is* hard to understand is what Jesus said next in **Luke 21:18**:

Yet not a hair of your head will perish.

What? What does *this* mean? I mean, Jesus just got through saying in verse 16:

... you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put *some* of you to death,

... and then He turns around and says this? So is Jesus talking out of both sides of His Mouth in this Passage? How can Jesus say that believers will be betrayed and some will die, and then say:

Yet not a hair of your head will perish.

Now this Statement by Jesus has baffled people all through the ages. And some very strange Teachings have risen up through the years as a result of people trying to make sense of what appears on the surface to be contradictory statements by Jesus.

For example, some very prominent television personalities² of our day have taught that the believers who were persecuted and killed here were the ones who didn't have enough faith. And the ones who *exercised* their faith are the ones that escaped. And this feeds in with what many believe today:

Bad Things Happen to Bad People and Good Things Happen to Good People

And since persecution and martyrdom are "bad" in the view of these people, then obviously it is a sign that these suffering saints lacked the faith they needed to be delivered.

So, the goal in these wayward cults is for people to "build up their faith". And the proof that their faith is high will be that they will

² Kenneth Copeland; Kenneth Hagin, and several other "Word of Faith" Teachers.

escape persecution, and some even teach that saints with a high degree of faith can escape death.³

Of course, the Holy Bible tells a different tale. Please turn to **Hebrews 11** with me. Now, beginning with verse 33, all the way down to the first part of verse 35, the writer of **Hebrews** tells us about people who exercised their faith, and he says they were healed and delivered and blessed and made strong and saw great and mighty displays of God's Mercy. And if that was all that the 11th Chapter of **Hebrews** said, then these pied-pipers would be telling the Truth. But that *isn't* all that the writer of **Hebrews** put into this Chapter.

Beginning with the *second* part of verse 35, the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of the living God says this:

Hebrews 11:35b-38

35 ... others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

God's Word says that the saints who suffered at the hands of evil men were not weak in faith at all. Look at what the Bible says in the first part of the very next verse:

Hebrews 11:39a

And all these, having gained approval through their faith...

So, this tells us that these suffering saints gained *approval* through their faith. And to Whom was their faith approved? God. So God did not consider the saints who were *not* delivered and who were *not* set free and who did *not* escape death and who did *not* accept deliverance to be weak in their faith. No, this is what God said about these persecuted and tormented and martyred saints:

³ William Brannon

... *men of whom the world was not worthy*

So, the writer of **Hebrews** is telling us here that the very *same* faith that allowed for *some* of the believers to be healed and delivered and made strong, and allowed them to see great outpourings of the Mercy of God was **the very same faith** that allowed these other saints to suffer and to be tortured and to be killed and *not* to be delivered. So, what are we to make of this? Four Things:

1. Through Faith- God can and does work “Miracles” and “Acts of Providence” to bring practical earthly help and deliverance to His people.
2. God does *not* always work Miracles and Acts of Providence for our deliverance from suffering; sometimes, by this same Faith, God *sustains* His people’s Salvation through their sufferings.
3. Having faith or not having faith is *not* the ultimate determining factor in whether you suffer or escape. God's Sovereign Will and Wisdom and Love take precedent over our faith.
4. Those who love and treasure Jesus more than life, and who suffer willingly awaiting something better than what this earth can offer, are God's great gifts to the world.

So, why did Jesus mention the hairs of our head here as it pertains to suffering, persecution, and even death? To find out, we need to go back to when Jesus first mentioned the hairs of our head. Turn back to **Luke 12** with me.

Luke 12:4-7, 11&12

4 "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.

5 "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? *Yet* not one of them is forgotten before God.

7 "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

11 "When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say;

12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

So this is not the first time Jesus has mentioned the "hairs of your head" in relation to suffering, persecution, and death. So, what Jesus is doing in **Luke 21** is simply reminding his people of what he taught them here in **Luke 12**, that God is sovereign, even in their suffering, even in their persecution, and even in their death; even during the time of great persecution that Jesus promised here. For example, the great Puritan, Matthew Henry, wrote this in his commentary of **Luke 21**:

"It [the phrase about the hairs of your head] is a proverbial expression, denoting the greatest indemnity and security imaginable and is frequently used both in the Old Testament and New. Some have said it refers to the preservation of the lives of all the Christians that were among the Jews when they were cut off by the Romans [70AD]; because historians tell us that not one Christian perished in that desolation."⁴

So, while Christians were killed by the Romans and Jews *prior* to the destruction of the Temple, historical records tell us that no genuine believers were killed as God was tearing down the Temple because while the Jews ran into Jerusalem for safety, the Christians, however, remembered the Words of Jesus when He said:

Luke 21:20-21

20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.

21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;

.. and so they all ran into the Mountains and did *not* go into Jerusalem, and they were spared.

⁴ (from *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database Copyright © 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All Rights reserved.)

But, whether we are killed or delivered is really not the main point, anyway. Because, Jesus, also, said:

Luke 21:19

By your endurance you will gain your lives.

... so, Jesus is teaching here that evil men who persecute and torture believers, and who are even killing some of them are not in charge. God is in Charge. And, as we trust Him, even in suffering and death, we gain our eternal lives. And this brings up the fifth Principle concerning suffering, persecution, and even death:

The common feature of the Faith that *escapes* suffering and the Faith that *endures* suffering is this: both of them involve believing that Jesus Christ is better than what life can give to you now, and better than what death can take from you later.

Now over in **Psalm 91**, God promised some similar things. For example:

Verse 3: **For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence.**

Verse 7: **A thousand may fall at your side And ten thousand at your right hand, *But* it shall not approach you.**

Verse 10: **No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your**

Verse 12: **They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone.**

Verse 14: **Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him *securely* on high, because he has known My name.**

So, do these Promises in **Psalm 91** mean that those who trust God won't ever be snared, and they won't ever get a disease, and they won't ever fall in battle, and they won't ever experience evil, and they won't ever lose tent-mates to the plague, and they won't ever crash against a stone, but that they will always be delivered and protected?

One great caution that we must keep in mind is to *never* use the Bible the way that satan used it. He told Jesus to count on the deliverance promised to the godly in this Psalm. And so quoting from **Psalm 91**, satan said to Jesus:

Matthew 4:6

If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU' [Psalm 91:11]; and 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE. [Psalm 91:12]'"

But, instead of following satan's use of **Psalm 91**, Jesus willfully embraced the path of suffering, trusting that God's Deliverance would be different from His, but would be better. So, Jesus' trust in God's Will allowed Him to complete His Mission as Lord and Savior. And so, the thorns penetrated His Scalp. And the whip lacerated His Back. And the rod struck on His Head. And the nails pierced His Hands and Feet. And the spear severed His Side. And Jesus was killed by His enemies. And God's Will was carried out and we are saved.

So, the seemingly face-value promises of **Psalm 91** did not come true for the most godly Person Who ever lived.

And that meaning, also, didn't come true for the five missionaries who were martyred with spears in January, 1956, in Ecuador. So why did Elisabeth Elliot title her book about her husband, Jim Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty*? You see, that's a quote from **Psalm 91:1**:

Psalms 91:1

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

... yet her husband was killed. And Elisabeth Elliot answered like this:

"The world called it a nightmare of tragedy. The world did not recognize the truth of the second clause in Jim Elliot's credo: *'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.'*" (Harper, 1958, 19).

I think Elisabeth Elliot is on the right track and satan was on the wrong track. The writer of **Psalm 91** was not mistaken, or naive, or foolish. Neither was the writer of **Hebrews**. Neither was Jesus. These men gave Promises of Protection that come true for the saints, by God's Grace, over and over. Literally and simply.

But we would *demean* the writer of **Psalm 91** and the 11th Chapter of **Hebrews** and **Luke 21** if we thought he was unaware of the Truth of **Psalm 44:22** that Paul quoted in **Romans 8:36**:

Romans 8:36

"FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."(Psalm 44:22)

Or that he did not know the Jesus fulfilled warning of **Psalm 22:16**:

For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.

We must understand that the writer of **Psalm 91** stands with Jesus who said:

Luke 21:16b

Some of you they will put to death

And yet in the same breath He said:

Luke 21:18

But not a hair of your head will perish

And both of them stand with the writer of **Hebrews** who said that:

Hebrews 11:34

by faith, some have "escaped the sword"

... and in the same breath said that:

Hebrews 11:37

by faith others are "killed with the sword"

So, I conclude then that the Promises of deliverance and healing and escape and mercy mean two things about the suffering of the saints. One is that *often* God amazingly delivers them physically when others around them are falling. And the other is that God often wills for His children to suffer, but forbids that the suffering hurts them in an

eternal sense. Such evil will never befall a genuine believer. Matthew Henry said this about that:

"It is therefore your duty and interest, in the midst of your own sufferings and those of the nation, to maintain a holy sincerity and serenity of mind, which will keep you always easy (Luke 21:19): *In your patience possess ye your souls; get and keep possession of your souls.*" Some read it as a promise, "You *may* or *shall* possess your souls." It comes all to one. Note, *First*, It is our duty and interest at all times, especially in perilous trying times, to secure the possession of our own souls; not only that they be not destroyed and lost forever, but that they be not distempered now, nor our possession of them disturbed and interrupted. "*Possess your souls*, be your own men, keep up the authority and dominion of reason, and keep under the tumults of passion, that neither grief nor fear may tyrannize over you, nor turn you out of the possession and enjoyment of yourselves." In difficult times, when we can keep possession of nothing else, then let us make that sure which may be made sure, and keep possession of our souls. *Secondly*, It is by patience, Christian patience, that we keep possession of our own souls. "In suffering times, set patience upon the guard for the preserving of your souls; by it keep your souls composed and in a good frame, and keep out all those impressions which would ruffle you and put you out of temper."⁵

Here is the way Charles Spurgeon described the meaning of **Psalm 91**:

"It is impossible that any ill should happen to the man who is beloved of the Lord; the most crushing calamities can only shorten his journey and hasten him to his reward. Ill to him is not ill, but only good in a mysterious form. Losses enrich him, sickness is his medicine, reproach is his honor, death is his gain. No evil in the strict sense of the word can happen to him, for everything is overruled for good. Happy is he who is in such a case. He is secure where others are in peril, he lives where others die." (*The Treasury of David*, Vol. 2, Part 2, 93)

So, it is very possible that, one day, your *own* executioner may laugh you to scorn for trusting in the Promises of **Psalm 91** or **Hebrews 11** or **Luke 21**, but, in the end:

⁵ (from *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database Copyright © 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All Rights reserved.)

Luke 21:18
Yet not a hair of your head will perish.

And:

Psalms 91:8
You will only look on with your eyes And see the recompense of the wicked.

Because:

Luke 21:19
By your endurance you will gain your lives.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.