

PSALM 116

Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Death.

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From Roy H. Enoch (7-10-96). "Praising God for Recovery from Serious Illness."
- B. Coffman quotes Derek Kinder's evaluation of this psalm:

"There is an infectious delight and a touching gratitude about this psalm, the personal tribute of a man whose prayer has found an overwhelming answer. He has come now to the temple to tell the whole assembly what has happened, and to offer God what he vowed to him in his extremity." Ancient Hebrew tradition attributes this psalm to Hezekiah and written when he was delivered from death in Isa. 38. There are many similarities in phraseology of this psalm and in Isa. 37 and 38.
- C. Some have suggested that this psalm is not of an individual, but refers to the nation of Israel. But it is difficult to conceive of one more personal as the personal pronouns "I," "me" and "my" are found 33 times in 19 short verses.
- D. Coffman divides this psalm into eight sections:
 - I. Why the Psalmist Loved the Lord (116:1,2).
 - II. How Precarious His Situation Was (116:3,4).
 - III. A New Understanding of God (116:5,6).
 - IV. Thankful for Rest, He Pledges to Walk with God (116:7-9).
 - V. The Most Difficult Verses of the Psalm (116:10,11).
 - VI. What Shall I Give to God for Gratitude? (116:12-14).
 - VII. Precious In the Sight of the Lord Is the Death of His Saints (116:15).
 - VIII. Our Debt of Gratitude to God for His Deliverance (116:16-19).

THE TEXT.

- 116:1** I love the LORD, because He hears
My voice *and* my supplications.
- 2** Because He has inclined His ear to me,
Therefore I shall call *upon Him* as long as I live.
- 3** The cords of death encompassed me
And the terrors of Sheol came upon me;
I found distress and sorrow.
- 4** Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
"O LORD, I beseech You, save my life!"
- 5** Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;
Yes, our God is compassionate.
- 6** The LORD preserves the simple;
I was brought low, and He saved me.
- 7** Return to your rest, O my soul,
For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.
- 8** For You have rescued my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,
My feet from stumbling.
- 9** I shall walk before the LORD
In the land of the living.
- 10** I believed when I said,
"I am greatly afflicted."
- 11** I said in my alarm,
"All men are liars."
- 12** What shall I render to the LORD
For all His benefits toward me?
- 13** I shall lift up the cup of salvation
And call upon the name of the LORD.
- 14** I shall pay my vows to the LORD,
Oh *may it be* in the presence of all His people.

- 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD
Is the death of His godly ones.
- 16 O LORD, surely I am Your servant,
I am Your servant, the son of Your handmaid,
You have loosed my bonds.
- 17 To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And call upon the name of the LORD.
- 18 I shall pay my vows to the LORD,
Oh *may it be* in the presence of all His people,
- 19 In the courts of the LORD'S house,
In the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD!

COMMENTS.

- A. Why the Psalmist Loved the Lord.
[v1,2] This makes me feel sorry for those who do not believe in prayer, and for those who pray, and only accept the answer they want—they will not accept God saying no to them. Joy comes from gratitude, and the happiest person is the one who focuses on his blessings with thanksgiving and appreciation.
- B. How Precarious His Situation Was.
[v3] "...pains of death... pangs of Sheol..." "Sheol" is the Hebrew word that means "place of the dead" and is translated "hell, pit, grave, or netherworld." *Vine's Expository Dictionary*. It is the same concept as *hades* in the Greek. "Pains... pangs..." refers to one being near death. He considered himself near death when he called on the name of the Lord.
- C. A New Understanding of God.
[v5] "Gracious... righteous... merciful." These words praise God for His salvation. These same three attributes of God are also mentioned together in Psa. 112:4.
[v6] It is natural for one to be grateful when he has been saved from death. It is unnatural for one to receive God's blessings and think that he earned them by his own effort and deserved them.
- D. Thankful for Rest, He Pleades to Walk with God.
[v7] "Return to your rest, O my soul..." Now he could have peace of mind with his recovery of health. If you never had a sickness or injury that caused you to be near death, you can probably remember something that worried you greatly, and the relief when it was over.
[v8] "For You have delivered my soul from death..." The psalmist is convinced that he was near death. This certainly fits the situation of Hezekiah when the Lord sent Isaiah to tell him that he would die (Isa. 38:1).
[v9] "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." This was his relief when the Lord sent Isaiah back to him after Hezekiah had prayed for deliverance (Isa. 38:5).
- E. The Most Difficult Verses of the Psalm.
Coffman quotes six different translations of this verse to show that the translators were not clear or in agreement as to the meaning. But Paul gives an inspired translation as he quotes it. 2Corinthians 4:13 reads, "And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak," (NKJ).
[v10] "I believed, therefore I spoke..." It seems to me that Hezekiah is saying that his faith in God was the reason he prayed for deliverance.
[v11] "I said in my haste, 'All men are liars.'" This may reflect accusations that some may have made against him. Coffman said that in one Bible class he suggested that "maybe his doctors told him that he would never get well."
- F. What Shall I Give to God in Gratitude?
[v12] "What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me?" He then begins to list acts of gratitude that are appropriate.
"I will take up the cup of salvation..."

“and call upon the name of Lord.”

“I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people.”

He would publicly testify how the Lord had blessed him and publicly pay any vow that he had made.

G. Precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of His Saints.

These words are some of the most often quoted at funerals. The word translated “precious” means “costly, valuable” in *Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon*. Death of saints can be considered precious or valuable because God can bless us far more separated from this physical body than in it. Death is also the end of our trial on earth and therefore our testing is over and as Paul stated at the end of his life, see 2Tim. 4:8.

H. Our Debt of Gratitude to God for His Deliverance.

[v16] “O Lord, truly I am Your servant...” Sometimes it takes a near tragedy for us to realize that we are the Lord’s servant and trust Him enough to do whatever He says. After saying that he was the Lord’s servant, he tells what he will do in service to glorify Him.

[v17] “I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving...” God did not require certain gifts of thanksgiving or that they vow certain gifts, but when they made a vow, it was voluntary and they had to keep it. It was fulfilled in a public place of worship and before the people to give God the glory for His blessings.

[v18,19] “...in the presence of all His people... in the courts of the Lord’s house... Jerusalem.” He identifies the place and in a public assembly that he would praise the Lord in thanksgiving.

Coffman observes that “No matter how great the loving devotion of an individual worshipper may be, his duty is not discharged until he places his appearance and his influence in the midst of the congregation of believers. Private devotion and worship are wonderful; and Satan would really like to keep it that way; but far more is required of the faithful servant of God.”