

The protection of the Lamps

As we continue in our lamps ministry, we know that the enemy will try to destroy us. This is something lamps have already accepted.

We are also very much on the victory side. The enemy has lost his protection against us:-

“Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”
(Numbers 14: 7-9)

However, even in defeat, he is a dangerous opponent, and we have to know how to protect ourselves and our families. Here is the first of our protections, for the use of the lamps - the protection of love.

Love: Isa 63:1-16

¹ *Who is this coming from Edom,
from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson?
Who is this, robed in splendour,
striding forward in the greatness of his strength?
“It is I, speaking in righteousness,
mighty to save.”*

² *Why are your garments red,
like those of one treading the winepress?*

³ *“I have trodden the winepress alone;
from the nations no one was with me.
I trampled them in my anger
and trod them down in my wrath;
their blood spattered my garments,
and I stained all my clothing.*

⁴ *For the day of vengeance was in my heart,
and the year of my redemption has come.*

⁵ *I looked, but there was no one to help,
I was appalled that no one gave support;
so my own arm worked salvation for me,
and my own wrath sustained me.*

⁶ *I trampled the nations in my anger;
in my wrath I made them drunk
and poured their blood on the ground."*

Praise and Prayer

⁷ *I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord,
the deeds for which he is to be praised,
according to all the Lord has done for us—
yes, the many good things he has done
for the house of Israel,
according to his compassion and many kindnesses.*

⁸ *He said, "Surely they are my people,
sons who will not be false to me";
and so he became their Saviour.*

⁹ *In all their distress he too was distressed,
and the angel of his presence saved them.
In his love and mercy he redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them
all the days of old.*

*Yet they rebelled
and grieved his Holy Spirit.
So he turned and became their enemy
and he himself fought against them.*

¹¹ *Then his people recalled the days of old,
the days of Moses and his people—
where is he who brought them through the sea,
with the shepherd of his flock?
Where is he who set
his Holy Spirit among them,*

*¹² who sent his glorious arm of power
to be at Moses' right hand,
who divided the waters before them,
to gain for himself everlasting renown,*

*¹³ who led them through the depths?
Like a horse in open country,
they did not stumble;*

*¹⁴ like cattle that go down to the plain,
they were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord.
This is how you guided your people
to make for yourself a glorious name.*

*¹⁵ Look down from heaven and see
from your lofty throne, holy and glorious.
Where are your zeal and your might?
Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us.*

*¹⁶ But you are our Father,
though Abraham does not know us
or Israel acknowledge us;
you, O Lord, are our Father,
our Redeemer from of old is your name.*

There are two incredible examples of love in this passage, when we look closely at it.

1. "Bozrah" – love from the outside.

This looks an unlikely passage for a demonstration of love, but this is tough love. Edom was God's enemy. This was their choice. They chose to oppose God, and oppress his people. When they oppressed his people, they were oppressing him, and challenging his sovereignty. Those that do this, deliberately do this, and continue to do so find not the compassion of Jesus, but the truth of being opposed to God. This is not his will, but the inevitable consequence of opposing him. This is not easy for our 21st century minds to grasp.

God loves us, his people, and will fight for us against those who deliberately seek to destroy us. Edom wanted to destroy Jerusalem, and Satan wants to destroy the new children of the heavenly Jerusalem. But God will fight for us.

We find the same sentiment in Zechariah:-

“Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.” (Zech 14:3-5)

Ultimately, we find it in Revelation-

“They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.” (Rev 16:14)

God fights for us because he loves us. We are not alone. Those that oppose us are opposing him, and he will not tolerate such arrogance. We need to learn to stand in the strength of this love.

2. Love from the inside.

While it might be good to be loved by a God that challenges and defeats my enemies, that would be a little sterile. Where is the passion and compassion in the heart of God? It's found in these verses.

*** Kindness (Heb: “hesed”)**

The word “kindness” does not really pack the punch which the word has in its original setting. “Hesed” is covenant love, that deeply committed love which God has for his people, which he will never break, no matter what happens. In

this verse, we are beginning to see love from the inside. God cannot, and will not let us go, because he has “hesed” for us.

*** Deeds**

God has hesed, and consequently, he acts to rescue and bless his people. His love is active, not passive. He reaches out, not waiting for us to be able to reach to him.

*** Saviour (Heb: “yasha.”** See also *Joshua* Joshua or Jehoshua = “Jehovah is salvation” and then to *Jesus*, the Latin form of the Greek *Iesous*, which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew *Jeshua*, or *Joshua*, or again *Jehoshua*, meaning “Jehovah is salvation.”)

This is a very powerful word indeed. And it means what we think it means - Father sent a “Saviour” to rescue his people from their sins and failures. I don’t need to expand on the depth of love which this shows for us, his people.

*** His distress**

This is the most astonishing demonstration of love which we can ever imagine. God doesn’t look on our distress - he feels it and shares it. The acute pain of our loss moves him to compassion.

*** Redeemed (Heb: “gaal”)**

More of the active love here, in the word “gaal”, a very special word in Hebrew. In Ruth 4:1-2, we see that Ruth had to be redeemed by the “kinsman-redeemer.” For her to transfer to Boaz, the “gaal” had to be satisfied. Then Ruth could and would belong solely to Boaz. There was a price to be paid. God became the “kinsman-redeemer” of his people. In other words, he loved so much he was prepared to pay the price for us. Sound familiar?

* Rebellion

But what happened, in the face of all this love? The people rebelled against God, and went their own way. They “hurt the Holy Spirit.” (from “qodesh” which means “holy”, and “ruwach” which means “Spirit.” (See Genesis 1:2))

But despite the inevitable judgement which this bought on the people, God could not, and would not let them go.

Wow! This is the love from inside the heart of God which protects us. Flowing from his covenant, (“hesed”) he paid the price (“gaal”) through a saviour (“yasha”) and sealed that commitment with the Holy Spirit.

This is a Trinitarian passage within the O.T.(I have always puzzled at people who tell me that the Holy Spirit was a N.T. discovery, and had no support in the O.T.) More than this, it is an awesome exposition of the power of the love of God, towards those who he has chosen to be his people. This is our joy and our protection. We can turn to the Apostle for the best response:-

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8: 31-38)(NIV)

Or as the Message graphically puts it:-

So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn't hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn't gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God's chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

They kill us in cold blood because they hate you.

We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one.

None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.

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