Our Place of Safety

26th April 2020

Dear [----------]

I am SO sorry this has taken me longer than I thought it would…

When I spoke with [------], she said that just after we all went into lockdown, some verses of Scripture from Psalm 91 and Joshua 1 and 2 really spoke to her, so she put them in a letter for you to read and cling on to, and to be reassured that God is giving you these Scriptures because He cares for you and because this is His perfect will for you during this difficult time.

Psalm 91 speaks of the Lord being our refuge:

> "Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (vs.9,10).

Joshua chapter 1:11 says:

> "…command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals"

Joshua 2:19 says:

> "And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head…"

[------] wanted to encourage you that these are hard times for everybody, and it will be difficult to get through it, but even so, it's very important that you don't go out at all but stay at home (i.e. in your dwelling or your tent). If you trust the Lord, and:

- Stay at home – stay where you are,
- Make sure you have sufficient provisions ready so that you're not wanting for anything,
- Don't go out at all (except, obviously, into your garden),

…then the Lord will be your refuge and He will make sure no harm comes to you.

Below are some further thoughts that have come to me… They aren't strictly specific to the Lord's will for you in this lockdown situation, or to the seriousness or otherwise of the coronavirus. They are, rather, general observations about how we are to remain safe whatever troubles may come upon us or whatever judgements God may visit upon the world, and they may be helpful for you as another witness to the Scripture passages the Lord gave [------] for you…

The Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the places of safety for God's people, when He wanted to protect them from their enemies or from a pestilence or a judgement, were in a variety of different kinds of **physical** locales. There are many such places of safety recorded in the Old Testament, and the following are just some of the more well-known ones:

Noah's Ark

This is probably the most well-known of all the places of safety God provided for His people:

> "And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation … and they went in … as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut them in … And the waters prevailed … And all flesh died … and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark" (Genesis 6-7).

Moses' Basket in the Bulrushes

The Hebrews had been in Egypt for four hundred years since the time of Joseph, and now the current Pharaoh wanted to kill all new-born Hebrew boys. When Moses was born, his mother hid him:

> "She hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes … and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink" (Exodus 1-2).

Moses in the Land of Midian

Moses killed an Egyptian who smote one of his fellow Hebrews, and so had to flee to a place of safety:

> "Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian" (Exodus 2:11-15).

The Passover in Egypt

God commanded the Israelites to stay inside the safety of their homes when he sent the 10th plague judgement upon Egypt:

> "And the LORD spake unto Moses … I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt … And the blood shall be to you for a token upon

> the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you" (Exodus 12:1,12-13).

The House of Rahab

The episode to which [------] referred in Joshua 2:19, is part of the story of Rahab hiding the Israelite spies in her house:

> "And the woman took the two men, and hid them … she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax … Then she let them down by a [scarlet] cord through the window" (Joshua 2:3-21).

The spies promised Rahab that if she and her family displayed the scarlet cord in their window and stayed inside her house when the Israelites returned to Canaan to conquer the land for Israel, they would be not be killed (v.13), but if they left the house, they would lose the promised protection (v.19).

The Cave of Adullam

David was fleeing from King Saul who wanted to kill him:

> "And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul … David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam" (1 Samuel 21:10; 22:1).

Types of The Lord Jesus Christ

Each of these physical places of safety in the Old Testament is a story of God protecting His People, hiding them away until He lifts His hand of judgement or removes the evil. All these *physical* places of safety in the Old Testament were 'types' or 'pictures' or 'precursors' of the Lord Jesus Christ and the safety (and salvation) we have *only* in Him.

Below are just three examples from the places of safety we looked at above…

The Lord Jesus is Noah's Ark

Noah and his family were still in the midst of the flood waters, but they were saved from God's judgement upon the whole earth by obeying His command to hide in the Ark. They also needed to continue to stay in the Ark – if they had come out at any time during the deluge, they too would have drowned with the world.

God's (saved) Church is still in the midst of the (unsaved) world which in the last days will be (and is at times now) judged by God, but the Lord Jesus is our Ark and we are safely protected from the flood waters of God's judgements upon the world as long as we enter into His salvation and continue to stay there.

The Lord Jesus is the Passover Lamb

Biblically, Egypt is seen as a 'type' or a 'picture' of the unsaved world. And the spiritual principle underlying the account of the 10th plague visited upon Egypt is the same as that of Noah's Ark: Noah and his family had to stay inside the Ark whilst the unsaved world was judged, and the Israelites had to stay inside their homes whilst the unsaved Egyptians were judged.

Here though, we are beginning to be given a fuller picture of exactly *how* we are safe in Christ… The Israelites were commanded to stay in their homes, as Noah was commanded to remain in the Ark, but this time, abiding in a physical location was not enough; they *also* had to do something else: they had to sacrifice a lamb and mark their doorposts with the blood of the lamb. If their homes weren't covered by the blood of the lamb, then, on its own, staying inside would not have saved them from the plague, and their firstborns too would have died along with the firstborns of the Egyptians.

Likewise, God's People today, His Church, can only be safe (saved) from any plagues God may visit upon the world by taking hold of the Lamb of God - the Lord Jesus, being covered by His shed blood, and remaining under the protection of His saving blood.

The Lord Jesus is the Scarlet Cord

We are given a further 'type' or 'precursor' or 'picture' of Christ's shed blood in the story of Rahab.

Rahab had faith in the God of the Israelites and blessed God's People by hiding the spies from their wicked pursuers. But when God gave the land of Canaan into the hands of the Israelites, Rahab and her household could only be kept safe if they did two specific things: They must display the scarlet cord and they must remain in their home. If Rahab and her household did these two things, they would not be destroyed with the rest of the Canaanites.

The scarlet cord is the blood of Jesus, and so again, we see from this story of Rahab, that we are saved from God's wrath upon the world by appropriating the blood of Jesus, and abiding in His 'Safe House'.

The New Testament

In the New Testament, there is obviously no longer any need for 'types' or 'pictures' of Christ – He has now come and fulfilled all the 'precursors' of Himself given in the Old Testament. As Paul tells us, these things were all but "a shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2:17a).

Now everyone can know of the Lord's death and resurrection, and we can each make our choice: whether to enter His Place of Safety, i.e. His salvation, and stay therein, or whether to remain outside the safety of Christ our Ark, our Passover Lamb, our Scarlet Cord, and thence be judged with the world, with the Egyptians, with the Canaanites.

Psalm 91

David fled to the Cave of Adullam – a physical place – when Saul was trying to kill him, but even though that was many hundreds of years prior to the Cross, yet David, as did all the Old Testament men of faith, knew that all these 'types' and 'precursors' looked forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that his *real* place of safety was abiding in and trusting in God.

And so, along with the passages in Joshua, perhaps that's why the Lord also gave Psalm 91 to [------] for you, to cling to it and be strengthened by it…

> "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover me with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday … it shall not come nigh thee … because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling…" (Psalm 91).

The Safest Place

If we have believed God, and accepted the shed blood of Christ, and remain in Him, then, as Paul says,

> "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8).

We need not fear what may happen to us, because whatever our lot, we belong to Him and we are safe in Him. However, that doesn't mean we can throw caution to the wind and do as we please under the notion that God will protect us regardless.

Within our salvation, the ultimate and only real place of safety is always right in the middle of God's will. His will in any situation might be different for some of His People than for others – for some believers it might be the Lord's will for them to be right in the middle of the 'battle' – whatever form that battle might take. For other believers it might be staying in a 'Safe House' away from the battle - maybe praying in one's home for those required to fight. The Lord has laid upon [------]'s heart that His will for you during this time is to remain at home, and your home and your faith in Him will be your Place of Safety.

With my love in the LORD,

Elizabeth McDonald,
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bayith.org