

Those Who Trust in the LORD Psalm 125

Those who trust in the LORD are those who are trusting in God's provision and providence for salvation. God has made provision for human salvation. Old covenant saints trusted in those things God provided for their forgiveness and righteousness that pointed ahead to Jesus, and we trust in what Christ has done as the basis of our salvation. Christ's obedience in life and in death is the way those who trust in the LORD are saved from the penalty and power of sin. Those who trust in the LORD also trust in God's providence in salvation. They believe God is controlling every circumstance in their lives for their good and growth in salvation. Even when they face what is hard and painful, they believe God is overseeing and orchestrating it all to produce greater holiness, and that greater holiness means greater happiness. Tim Keller explains the belief of those who trust in God's providence like this, "If we knew what God knows, we would ask exactly for what he gives."

This Psalm begins by affirming the protection of those who trust. It compares the way Mt. Zion is surrounded by mountains that are like a wall around it, to how God surrounds and protects his people. This protection, however, is not a promise of protection from all physical harm or suffering for those who trust God. Jesus, speaking to his disciples about the future said, "...and some of you they will put to death...but not a hair of your head will perish." This sounds strange, but what Jesus is promising is the same kind of protection this Psalm is pointing to as it begins. Jesus is promising that even martyrdom would not bring even the slightest, ultimate harm to those who trust. The end of Romans 8 also points to this same thing. It speaks clearly about suffering and death for God's people, but assures that none of these kinds of things will ever separate them from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The next verse, Psalm 125:3, declares the promise of God to those who trust. This Psalm seems to have been written at a time when God's people were ruled by those who were wicked. This promise is that the wicked will not always remain in power over God's people. This would have been a cherished promise because "...when the wicked rule, the people groan." (Prov. 29:2b) Also, when the wicked ruled over God's ancient people, some of the people of Israel, called the righteous, would act in sinful ways. This often happened because under a wicked king evil would become legal and normal. Some among the people of God would sin because the social stigma would become smaller because of the influence of a wicked leader. Those who trusted in the LORD, however, would continue to do what is right and long for such rulers to not remain in power. Here, it is promised that this desire would ultimately be realized. The ultimate fulfillment of this promise will come when Jesus return to the earth to establish God's kingdom in all of its fullness. Christ will then rule forever over all the earth, and those who didn't trust in the LORD will have their place in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.

In the last two verses of this Psalm, we see the perseverance of those who trust. These verses begin with a prayer for God to do good to those who are good. This doesn't mean that God is good to people because they are good. There is a correlation between our being good and God doing good to us, but our goodness is not the cause. Salvation is the cause of the believer being good and is also the causes of God being good to the believer. Salvation, by grace through faith, is the reason God is good to his people. But we are told that those who turn aside to their crooked ways will be led away with evildoers to eternal punishment. This doesn't mean a person had salvation and then loses it because of turning aside to crooked ways. Those who trust in the LORD persevere. Notice the text refers to them turning aside to *their* crooked ways. For a while they appeared to be good, but this was not the state of their heart. Their ways were already crooked but for a while their good conduct wasn't consistent with their evil character. But after a while, they turned aside from outward good to the crooked ways that were already their true nature. There were Jews who were named among the righteous but did not trust in the Lord and have an upright heart, and this became evident eventually. Similarly, today there are those who claim and seem to be Christians, who aren't. This is the reason some become and remain lapsed from basic Christian doctrine and practice. Paul says this about those who go astray, "But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his' and 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.'"