

On The Palms Of God's Hands

If the Holy Spirit enables us to read this chapter as a conversation between the Father and His Son, and Christ and His people, we shall discover a deep well of spiritual truth and wisdom. We have seen previously how references to islands, or isles, in the prophecy of Isaiah are suggestive of gospel expansion and the enlargement of Christ's kingdom amongst the nations. Here the whole world is called to listen as the Lord Jesus reveals His own personal undertaking of covenant duty as the Substitute and Surety of His people. The Lord declares the terms of His Messianic role and His offices of Prophet, Priest, King, Redeemer and Saviour.

The womb of eternity

John Gill speaks of this call to covenant service, by the Father to the Son, as having been made in eternity. Christ was called, says Gill, 'not only from the womb of his mother Mary, ... but from the womb of eternity, from the womb of eternal purposes and decrees; for he was set forth, or foreordained in the purposes of God, to be the propitiation for sin; and was predestinated to be the Redeemer before the foundation of the world, even before he had a being in this world as man'.

A body thou hast prepared me

Christ's covenant duties required a human body which the Father prepared. However, human nature would entail weakness and Christ would face hostility throughout His earthly life. His ministry to His own nation, the Jews, largely fell on deaf ears. As Christ anticipated His earthly duties His Father gave Him promises of divine help against the great army of foes; spiritual and physical, who would contend against Jesus and try to destroy Him. The Son accepted and cherished these promises of support saying, 'my God shall be my strength'.

Christ will have the glory

Strengthened thus, the Lord Jesus successfully bore His people's sin and carried their sorrow. He endured God's wrath against the sins of the elect and His prize is commensurate with His grief and suffering. Kings and princes bow to the One they once despised. In this gospel age Christ raises up and restores the remnant from amongst the Jews. He also reaps a great harvest amongst the Gentile nations to whom He is Light, being God's 'salvation unto the end of the earth'.

Christ our covenant

This calling of Christ to the work of saving His people is a covenant agreement; the covenant of grace and peace. The Lord Jesus is a party to the agreement. He is the *Representative* of His people in it and *Surety* for them of it. He is the *Mediator* and *Messenger* to them concerning it. He is its *Ratifier* and *Confirmer*. Indeed, Christ is the entire blessing in the covenant for His people. Every promise, every benefit, every good and perfect gift secured in the covenant comes to the elect by Jesus Christ. 'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen' (2 Corinthians 1:20). Examples of these blessings are listed in vv. 9-13.

But what if ...

In v.14 the fears of the remnant people of Judah in Isaiah's day are acknowledged and addressed. How hard it is even for the Lord's people to trust the Lord! At the time Assyria was still a present threat. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile lay ahead. What if the Lord forgets mercy? He cannot. The covenant is the ground of our confidence. It is everlasting, certain, fixed and sure. A woman may forget her own suckling child but the Lord will not forget His people. The names of the elect are written on the palms of Christ's hands; the very palms that were pierced for us.

The Lord watches over us

Furthermore, 'thy walls are continually before me'. The walls of the houses of God's people, wherever they may be, are under the watchful eye and continuing care of the Lord. The elect, being typically stones in Christ's spiritual temple, are always guarded by the protecting hand of God. Whatever we lose by trial will be compensated in blessing. What greater loss in nature than a child? Nevertheless, 'Thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me' (v. 23).

No reason for doubt

Can those who have sinned and are slaves to Satan, captive to the lusts of the flesh and condemned under the law, can such ones truly be delivered? Yes, they can! 'Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.' Let us all take note of the Lord's final remark that we may not doubt or be afraid. 'All flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob'.

Amen

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