

Eight Benefits for Those Who Love and Know God

Psalm 91:14–16¹

Introduction

As we continue on these very strange times it is now more than ever that you must remind yourselves of what you know to be true as found in the pages of Scripture. There are no doubt many people who will be more open to the possibility of considering what the Bible says about death since the media reminds us of it every day. The panic that others feel with regards to the future marks distinctly the difference between true followers of God and unbelievers. I hope that as we have gone through this Psalm that you have seen *why* that distinction ought to be apparent.

Now we come to the final three verses of Psalm 91. The first 13 verses of the psalm were spoken by the psalmist himself. Now it is no longer the psalmist who speaks but God. And the Lord is reminding you of the truth that *the one who has an intimate relationship with God will experience the unique benefits of that special relationship.*

Psalm 91:14–16 ¹⁴“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. ¹⁵He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. ¹⁶With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.”

8 Benefits for Those Who Love and Know God

Preview Outline:

- 1. Basis for the Benefits**
- 2. Assurance of the Benefits**

Why does God make these pledges in vv. 14–16? Here we see the—

I. Basis for the Benefits (v. 14) — “Because he has set his love on me / known My name”

Up to this point the psalmist has been speaking to us as the readers/singers. Now, the voices shift. The Lord now speaks in vv. 14–16 and gives what I would call a promise (i.e. pledge) to “the one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High” (v. 1).

“*Because he has set his love on Me*” — This is a causal clause (i.e. because of ____, this will happen). The reason that these benefits will come to the man mentioned in v. 1 is because “he has set his love” on God. He has made God the object of his love. This word for love in v. 14

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version.

(Heb. אָהַב) means “to be attached to, to love, to desire [intensely].”² This is the only time in the Old Testament when the word is used to describe man’s desire and love for God. The other times it is used in the Old Testament describes God’s love and affection for His people:

Deuteronomy 7:7 (NASB) The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

Deuteronomy 10:15 The Lord delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day.

Scripture attests to the fact that the Lord protects those who love Him (Ps. 145:20). David calls his fellow Israelites to “love the LORD” because “He preserves the faithful” (i.e. the ones who love God) and repays the proud:

Psalms 31:23–24 ²³ Oh, love the Lord, all you His saints! *For* the Lord preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person. ²⁴ Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the Lord.

The proud are contrasted with the faithful (v. 23). The faithful, in turn, are equated with the ones who love the Lord. *To not love the Lord is to therefore be among the proud. Conversely, to love God is to humble yourself before Him.*

Scripture elucidates further on the one who loves God by describing how he “hates evil” (Ps. 97:10). *The benefit loving God is that He will watch over you.* His direct attention is on you and His intentions are always good toward those who love Him (Rom. 8:28). Thus, those that know him perceive that when they endure hardships they will be rewarded in the end (James 1:12).

“*Because He has known My name*” — This is parallel to the phrase “he has set his love on Me” (in other words, to love God and to know God is to be a believer in God). The word here for *known* (Heb. יָדָע) carries with it the concept of “[knowing] a person, especially knowing God...involving intelligent worship and obedience.”³ To know God is more than just being “acquainted” with Him. This includes knowing Him on a very personal, intimate level. We know from other portions of Scripture that all who know God intimately also trust Him because He does not fail His children:

Psalms 9:10 (KJV) And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: For thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

When explaining Psalm 9:10 in his commentary one Bible scholar observed, “They know the name of the LORD, meaning that they understand who the LORD is and experience by faith

² Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977): 365.

³ BDB, 393.

his promise of protection and provision.”⁴ To know God is to experience the blessings and acknowledge His character.

The Scriptures paint a very dark picture of those who do *not* know God:

- A. They are slaves to sin (Gal. 4:8; Rom. 1:28; 1 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 2:12; 1 Thess. 4:5).
- B. They will experience the judgment of God on their sin (2 Thess. 1:8).
- C. They not only do not know God, God likewise does not know them (Matt. 7:21–23).

What is true of you when you *do* know God?

- A. God also knows you in an intimate way (John 10:14–15, 27; 2 Tim. 2:19; 1 Cor. 8:3).
- B. You do not know anyone but Christ—you can distinguish the true shepherd from the liars and false teachers (John 10:5).
- C. You *desire* to know God more (Phil. 3:8–10).
- D. You possess eternal life (John 17:3).
- E. You can boast only in knowing God and nothing you have done (Jer. 9:23–24; 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17; Gal. 6:14).

Application: First, do you *know and love* God? Have you learned from Scripture how you *can* know God? The Bible teaches that God is holy and we as humans are not. Scriptures teach us that we are dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1ff). We have earned both the spiritual and physical death penalty (Rom. 6:23). The ultimate destination for anyone who does not know God is eternal torment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). But because God is rich in mercy (Eph. 2:4) we can escape that judgment. Jesus Christ came into the world to die on our behalf and rose again from the dead so that we could have eternal life (cf. John 3:16; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8–9). The call for all people is to call upon Jesus as Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead which will result in salvation (Rom. 10:9).⁵

Second, have you embraced these wonderful truths of knowing God and being known by God? Are you living like a child of God? *You must embrace and live out these truths as a believer.*

So we know that the basis for the benefits we will look at is that we know and love God. Now, what are these benefits? Notice with me now the—

II. Assurance of the Benefits (v. 14–16)

The psalmist assures us that there are eight promises for those who love and know God’s name. Here are the eight benefits:⁶

⁴ Ross, Allen P., *A Commentary on the Psalms: 1–41*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011): 308.

⁵ If you would like to know more about the gospel (i.e. good news) of Jesus Christ, take a look at our website where you will find the plan of salvation as presented in the G.R.A.C.E. acronym: <https://www.cbcbfindlay.org/im-new/>

⁶ These eight benefits / promises are parallel and at times very similar. Nonetheless, there are very subtle distinctions amongst them all.

- (1) “*I will deliver him*” — This is *protection*. The word deliver (Heb. **וָלַצַּח**) conveys escaping from something dangerous/perilous.⁷ David uses this same word in an earlier Psalm:

Psalm 18:48 He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man.

David is speaking of a physical deliverance from literal enemies (i.e. Saul, the Philistines, etc. [see Psalm 18 superscription]). This is what God pledges to do to those who love and know Him (cf. Ps. 59:1). While we know that God can deliver us from our physical afflictions (and sometimes He does deliver us from them), this is not to say that He will in fact *always* deliver us from physical afflictions (e.g. Dan. 3:17–18). Why? Because sometimes those physical afflictions are used by God to humble us (cf. 2 Cor. 12:7–10). We do know that God does set us free from sin (John 8:31–32, 36); we know that God has delivered us from this present world (Gal. 1:4); we know that God delivers us from temptation (Matt. 6:13; Luke 11:4); we know that God delivers us from the body of this death (Rom. 7:24); and we know that God rescues us from disobedient brothers (Rom. 15:31; 2 Thess. 3:2).

So, for the psalmist, deliverance is physical—from afflictions that he mentions in vv. 5–10. For Christians, *God delivers us from the penalty of sin and will ultimately deliver us to eternal joy with Him.*

- (2) “*I will set him on high*” — This is *preservation*. This carries with it the idea of being set securely on high (see NASB). God essentially puts those who love and know His name in an inaccessible place. David uses this same word when he describes God’s omniscience (Ps. 139:6). The prophet Isaiah records description of those who walk with Him:

Isaiah 33:14–16 ¹⁴ The sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” ¹⁵ He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, He who despises the gain of oppressions, Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, And shuts his eyes from seeing evil: ¹⁶ He will dwell on high; His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; Bread will be given him, His water will be sure.

The one who dwells with God (i.e. puts his or her trust in God) will be in a place that no one can touch (v. 16 NASB “the heights and impregnable rocks”). As a Christian your faith is protected by God’s power so that nothing will touch you and cause you to lose your salvation (1 Pet. 1:5). Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has promised to protect you (John 10:28–29).

- (3) “*I will answer him*” — This is *communication*. God will listen and respond to the calls of His children. The first statement is that the person who knows and loves God will call upon God. The psalmist Asaph makes a similar statement:

⁷ BDB, 812.

Psalm 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

This invitation from God is accompanied with two assertions: (a) God will deliver him, and (b) he would give God the glory for that deliverance. The fact that God will listen to the cries of sinners is an example of mercy.⁸ Yet it does not surprise us that a loving Father will answer us when we come to Him with our cries for help (cf. John 14:13–14). The prayer of a righteous man “availeth much” (James 5:16 KJV). God will listen to you when you cry out to Him (cf. 1 Pet. 5:6–7). And God *will* answer you (and remember that sometimes the answer to your prayer is *no*).

- (4) “*I will be with him in trouble*” — This is *affirmation*. God affirms that you will not go through the challenges of life alone. The Lord affirmed to Joshua that He would be with him (Josh. 1:9). David wrote that God, the Good Shepherd, would be with him in the “valley of the shadow of death” (Ps. 23:4). God assured Israel that He had chosen them and that He would be with them (Is. 41:10; 43:2). The Spirit of God is with believers forever (John 14:16). Christ is with us as we go forth to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:20). God will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). *The result of knowing that God is with you is that you will not fear*. What greater comfort could we as believers ask for?
- (5) “*I will deliver him*” — This is *liberation*. The word for deliver here is different than the word in v. 14 (though they do have similar meaning). This word (Heb. הִלֵּץ) means “to rescue.”⁹ The Lord will rescue and liberate the one who trusts Him in trouble. Again, this does not mean that you can know for certain that God will in fact deliver you from your trouble. Such a conclusion is in the hands of God; He will determine if delivering you from your affliction pleases His sovereign will. However, you can know that God has rescued you from the power of sin and that in the end you will be with Him safely for eternity.
- (6) “[*I will*] *honor him*” — This is *exaltation*. The word here (Heb. כִּבֵּד) means “to make honorable, honor, glorify.”¹⁰ Put simply, God will exalt the one who has made God his refuge. The Lord reminded Eli that the Lord honors those who honor Him (1 Sam. 2:30). Christ said that the one who follows after Him the Father will honor (John 12:26). The thought that Christians will receive honor from God is astonishing. In *The Valley of Vision*, a collection of puritan prayers, one puritan prayed the following:

O that such a crown should fit the head of such a sinner! such high advancement be for an unfruitful person! such joys for so vile a rebel!¹¹

⁸ Consider the example of Jehoshaphat (cf. 1 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 18). Jehoshaphat made one terrible decision after another. Yet, when he faced the consequences of those decisions, he cried out to God and the Lord mercifully heard and answered him.

⁹ BDB, 322.

¹⁰ BDB, 457.

¹¹ Arthur Bennet, ed. *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975): 13.

Even when we were sinners (i.e. enemies), Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). And in turn, He rewards those who have fought the good fight with the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 2:7–8) What mercy!

- (7) “*I will satisfy him with a long life*” — This is *satisfaction*. The word *satisfy* (Heb. שָׂבַע) conveys the idea of material satisfaction—that is, to have something enough of something. Moses uses this same word in the previous psalm of being satisfied with God’s love (Ps. 90:14). A few psalms later in this book another psalmist records how God had satisfied the Israelites (as they were in the wandering in the wilderness) with manna from heaven (Ps. 105:40). The specific way that the Lord will satisfy the one who knows and loves Him is with “long life” (literally, “with length of days”). Abraham’s life is an illustration of what the psalmist had in mind:

Genesis 25:7–8 (NASB) ⁷ These are all the years of Abraham’s life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. ⁸ Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people.

The principle is simply this: *Whatever blessings you may experience in life, it is a blessing that comes from God’s hand.* We know that not every believer will live a (from our perspective) long life. But we know that whatever life God does in fact give us is a mercy from His hand. As a believer, you know that your life is in God’s sure hands. If it is the Lord’s will we will do what we have planned to do (cf. James 4:15).

- (8) “*I will show him My salvation*” — This is *salvation*. While the psalmist most likely was referencing the physical salvation that he experienced because he trusted God, you know that your eternal destiny is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. In fact, for the psalmist, the salvation that would be seen when Christ came was yet to come. When he saw the baby Jesus who had finally come, Simeon said, “My eyes have seen your salvation” (Luke 2:30). God will cause the believer to “see with joy”¹² the salvation of Jesus Christ. Jesus told the Jews that by faith Abraham “rejoiced to see my day” (John 8:56). Oh that believers would rejoice in knowing that they have seen God’s salvation in the face of Jesus Christ!

Conclusion

When you one have an intimate relationship with God you will experience the unique benefits of that special relationship. Never should that realization ever escape your mind. And when you are tempted to fall into the same panic and fear that the unbelieving world is prone to do, remind yourself of the truth that you, as a child of God, are uniquely cared for so that you do not need to fear. You can live in confidence that your Father loves you and will sufficiently care for you no matter the trouble.

¹² BDB, 908.