

7141

SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1996

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE PSALMS

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Class #3

My Times Are in Thy Hand

Reading - Psalm 31

We come, brethren and sisters, to Psalms of betrayal. Yesterday, we saw the way in which, the Lord Jesus Christ was prepared to exercise dominion over sin. And we were swept away, brethren and sisters, by Psalm 8 into the kingdom age, when we will exercise that dominion together with Him, providing we have been prepared as the rulers, who we'll become. So, brethren and sisters, we come today to look at the means and the process of preparation of those who can exercise dominion over carnal things.

We come to look deeply into that beautiful jasper stone; to look at another face, another side of that stone, and to see its sparkling beauty and glory in the character of the Son of God. We come to look, brethren and sisters, at what it was that prepared Him to endure the most cruel of betrayals. And while that very betrayal was going on in the darkness of the night, as Judas made his way to the house of the High Priest, what was it brethren and sisters, that prepared the Son of God to take bread and wine? and distribute that as the memorials of the great sacrifice He was about to make for the salvation of the world? and especially of those which sat with Him in that room and others that would come after, who would sit down together with Him, to remember that work?

You remember the words of the apostle Paul, brethren and sisters, in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 23, 'For I have received of the Lord that which I also deliver unto you, that the same night in which He was betrayed, the Lord took bread'; the same night, could you do that, brethren and sisters? Could you labour for the salvation of the world, while you were being betrayed by one of your closest friends? It is my conviction, brethren and sisters, that at some time in our life, whether early or late in our experience in the truth, that we'll pass through the trial of rejection and betrayal. The servant is not above his master; if they betrayed the Lord, brethren and sisters, if they could take the Son of man and betray Him and crucify Him and to use the words of 2 Samuel 7, 'to subvert His right, to take away His justice' in the very act of redeeming human kind; if they can do that to Him, it is more than likely that it's going to happen to

us. And the reason it has to happen to us, brethren and sisters, is that's the only way that God is going to find out, whether or not, we are truly exercising dominion over carnal things, because the way human beings operate, is to fight back, to take vengeance. You all have had circumstances in your life; I recollect that mine was only a small one but I well remember this incident, driving back from the beach one day in Brisbane. I happened to cut-in on someone, not deliberately, it just happened that way because there were other cars coming up, and in Australia you've only got two lane highways, and you have to get out of the way and I cut-in on this fellow, and he took umbrage at that, and he chased me for the next 10 miles, until he got an opportunity to cutback in on me. I mean, I could have wiped out his rear fender quite easily. I had to brake very hard; that's the way flesh operates! When someone betrays you or injures you, the flesh wants to fight back; it wants to take vengeance; we're going to see, brethren and sisters, that we need to develop a character which is the exact antithesis of that. And that's what this psalm, Psalm 31 is all about! It's about the character of the Son of God, Who was prepared by this and many other parts of the scripture, but especially by examples like this in the life of David. He was prepared, brethren and sisters, to do what flesh finds very, very difficult to do, to lay down in love, for the salvation of even those who were betraying Him.

You know, Christ knew a lot about Jews. I want you to turn up Psalm 109, and while you're turning that up, brethren and sisters, I want to read to you from Psalm 41 and verse 9. He knew a lot about Judas, 'Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted', says Psalm 41 verse 9, 'which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me'. Christ knew, brethren and sisters, that His betrayer would be from amongst His own familiar friends, with whom He'd spent many, many days, in fact years of sweet fellowship in the work of preaching the gospel. In Psalm 55 and verse 12 to 14 He says this, (you stay at Psalm 109, we'll be there in a second) 'For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have born it, neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. (You know whose voice this is that's talking, brethren and sisters; well of course it's a Psalm of David but it's not David talking at all, really, is it? We learnt that in our first study, it's our Lord Jesus Christ) 'We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company'. He knew that his betrayer would come from amongst His own inner circle of disciples, and He knew a lot about him too! Psalm 109 and verses 3 to 5, He knew this about Judas, 'they compass me about with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause, for my love they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer and they have rewarded me evil for good and hatred for my love', so that He knew that in due time, the sweet fellowship that He shared with Judas would be turned into what was tantamount to hatred. He also knew from verse 9 that Judas would be a married man and would have children. Verse 9, 'that his children be fatherless and his wife a widow', is there any doubt this is about Judas? just look at the previous verse, verse 8, 'let his days be few and let another take his office', and you'll notice from your margin that that is cited in Acts 1 and verse 20, which is of course, the incident where the gap amongst the apostles was filled by the selection of another apostle to replace Judas. So there's no doubt about what this is talking about; Judas was married and he had left his family

home, to follow his Lord. Now, who would do that? Peter had done it, but who would do that unless they were committed in some way. What happened to this man? He'd left behind his wife and children to follow Christ, only to end up being his betrayer! He knew that Judas was a man of some means, verse 11, 'let the extortioner catch all that he hath', suggests that he did have something. Christ had nothing! and 'let the stranger spoil his labour', perhaps it was because Judas was a man of some means, that he had shown an ability to manage funds, and so Jesus gave to him the 'bag', and made him the treasurer amongst the disciples. Unfortunately, Judas had some ambitions of going into real estate, and he was pilfering from the bag during the course of the three and a half year ministry, and with that money he bought a parcel of ground; (that's where he ended up, by the way!), in death, even though, of course, he cast the silver they gave to him for betraying Christ, back at the feet of the priests, he nevertheless, had gone into real estate by that time. Jesus knew that this man had a problem; He also knew, brethren and sisters, that like Ahithophel, Judas was a man who carried grudges!

Have a look at verses 16 to 18, 'Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man (Christ Himself, of course), that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so that it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones'. He knew, brethren and sisters, that Judas had an unforgiving spirit, that those times when the Lord would have said something, and in the upper room, you remember, he said certain things that would have bitten hard into Judas. And because this man has an unforgiving spirit, and he could not forget the past, he could not do what Christ was doing for him; labouring for his salvation while Judas was setting about to betray Him. He didn't have that kind of spirit; he didn't exercise dominion over carnal things, brethren and sisters. It was because of that that Judas went out into the darkness of the night, to the house of the High Priest.

'In the same night in which He was betrayed the Lord took bread', how did He endure that trial? Well Psalm 109 verse 4 is the answer; 'For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer'. Brethren and sisters, when your time comes, for like David and like our Lord Jesus Christ, your times are in Yahweh's hand. He knows when the time is right; when your time comes for rejection, and for betrayal by those, maybe, whom you have laboured to get into the kingdom, maybe by those who are your closest friends and allies in the work, who knows, only God knows what is best for you and for me. But when your time comes, brethren and sisters, are you going to have the spirit of this man, Who in the same night that He was betrayed, took bread? Well, if you do, it will be for this reason alone; the existence of your personal, close relationship with your God, the hallmark of which is prayer. 'But I give myself unto prayer' and prayer, of course, bespeaks absolute dependence upon God. We saw that in Psalm 8; that's the spirit of those who exercise dominion over carnal things.

So come to Psalm 31 with me! What we have here, brethren and sisters, is as our notes suggest, a desperate but a trusting prayer for deliverance. It's a Psalm of David,

and it has a very important background, Psalm 31. Its background is in the betrayal of David by the men of Keilah and of Ziph. In the first of Samuel chapter 23, to which we shall return in a moment, and we can prove that, I think, at least by inference, from the Psalm itself, that that truly is its background. There are many little hints, lots of little hints along the way, that suggest, that that indeed, is the background to the Psalm; not the least of those is verse 21 of Psalm 31. 'Blessed be Yahweh: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness, says David, in a strong city'. Now, it just so happens that 'Keilah' means 'a strong city or a citadel', and David I believe, is referring back to the city of Keilah, and we'll see that in a moment when we come back to 1 Samuel 23, and I think you'll pick up other little indications that that truly is where we should be in our minds, and that is where the Lord Jesus Christ was in His mind. And this, brethren and sisters, is not truly the words of David; this is the words of David as a type of Christ, as the forerunner of Christ, and therefore, these words are the words of Christ. This was the spirit of Christ in David, and the reason we can say that is because verse 5, the first half of verse 5, are the words, in fact, the last words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, there's the seventh saying on the cross. Can you get the picture brethren and sisters?

Here is the man whose justice has been subverted, to use the actual Hebrew of 2 Samuel 7. His justice has been subverted by Jew and Gentile. Which of you convicteth Me of sin?, He could say, that there He is hanging upon the tree between two criminals. And as the agonizing six hours is about to come to an end, as the body is racked and the bones are standing out, and His chest is heaving in the last few agonizing breaths, brethren and sisters, His mind is in Psalm 31. 'Father, into thine hands I commit my spirit'. Last breath, and for three days and three nights that racked body is at rest. That tortured mind cannot think until two angels arrive, I believe the two greatest of the angels, Michael and Gabriel, and the stone is rolled away, and they begin to unwrap the cloth that was about His head, and when they've got His head exposed, brethren and sisters, they revive Him and His eyes open to look into the eyes of Michael the archangel, what words do you think He might have said? Could I suggest to you the balance of verse 5, 'Thou hast redeemed Me, O Yahweh, power of stability and faithfulness and truth' because I trusted in Thee (that's how the Psalm begins) brethren and sisters, 'In Thee O Yahweh, do I put my trust'. And that trust, that trust, brethren and sisters, brought Him to life.

Why would His mind be in Psalm 31, in the last moments of His life? Just a convenient verse to sort of 'pluck out of the scriptures'? No, brethren and sisters, this man had been prepared for the most awful of betrayals, the most bitter of sufferings, the most incredible of experiences to which the human body can be put, the most unbelievable torture. Six hours of agonizing suffering as we shall see tomorrow, God willing, when we come to Psalm 22, which prepared Him for it. He went through all of that, brethren and sisters, knowing that in the moral sense, He was not worthy of a criminal's death, though He knew He had to placard that body before all men, and to show that it was rightly related to death. What would prepare Him for that? Well, this psalm and its background was one of the things that played a very important role in that. I want to try and demonstrate that now.

Let's go back to 1 Samuel 23 and here we have to rely upon your knowledge of the record of David's fleeing from Saul, and just to take one or two instances out of that period of about ten years of David's life. This is early on in the experience of David, and God foresaw, brethren and sisters, that David needed this trial. He came to Nob and there he saw the beady eyes of Doeg the Edomite watching him, as he asked Ahimelech the priest for some bread, and for the sword of Goliath. (He should have taken the ephod rather than the sword; it would have done him a lot more good). But he flees from there and he hears the news when Abiathar the only one of the family of the priests, to escape the sword of Doeg, as the whole city of Nob was wiped out. And we read in the record of chapter 22 and verse 20, 'that one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David (he actually went to Keilah because that's where David was at this time, see verse 6 of chapter 23). 'And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand'. So you get the picture here, brethren and sisters? while David is actually delivering the men of Keilah from the Philistines, Doeg the Edomite is wiping out the entire priesthood of Israel and David knows that he's partially responsible for that happening. He says to Abiathar, 'they've done this because I went there and took bread from your father', see that in chapter 22 verse 22. David said to Abiathar, 'I knew it that day when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house'. We can read that; have you ever in your experience felt the impact of being partly responsible for the loss or damage to someone particularly in the truth? It is one of the most dreadful feelings that you could ever experience, when you know, (you didn't deliberately set out to do it, but the effect has been, that someone has suffered dreadfully because of your activity). David must have been in an absolutely awful state of mind when the news came that the entire priesthood of Israel had been wiped out by Doeg. And God, who has David's times in His hand, has instructed him while that is going on, and before he knows about it, to go to relieve the men of Keilah.

Verse 1 of chapter 23, 'Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors. Therefore, David inquired of Yahweh saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines?' Now here is a man who has got contact with God, so when an issue comes along in his life, the first thing he does is refer it to God, with the expectation that an answer will come in some way. And it comes directly, and this doesn't always happen in David's life; there were times when God refrained from giving him an answer. But four times in this chapter, brethren and sisters, God answers David. And He says to him, verse 2, 'Go and smite the Philistines and save Keilah', so he's being instructed by Yahweh to go and save his brethren who are in danger. Put your own life on the line, David, and go and save them. David's men said to him, 'Look, we're afraid, we're running around like rabbits being chased through the wilderness and then you're going to save these people'. And so David goes back to Yahweh; his men are uncooperative and they don't want to go with him. David inquired of Yahweh yet again, and Yahweh answered him and said, 'Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand'. So they went down and did just that and delivered the men of Keilah, and while he's in that city, Abiathar turns up and says, 'The whole

priesthood is dead'. And David said, 'Oh, no!' 'Oh, I occasioned the death of your father and your brothers and all your families', how would you feel, brethren and sisters? Are you entering into the emotions of this? Is this just words on a page? Have you an imagination like mine? I can't read that brethren and sisters, without entering into it. I put myself in David's shoes; and look what happens!

Verse 7, 'And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars' (you see, they may have named Keilah for that reason 'a citadel, a strong city'- it had gates and bars. 'And Saul called all the men of war', verse 8, 'and came down to besiege Keilah, and David knew that Saul secretly practiced mischief against him' verse 9, 'and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod', he at last had it, and he was about to use it. And then said David, 'O Yahweh God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake'. Look what he asks first! Verse 11, No confidence in men! 'Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Yahweh God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And Yahweh says to him in his ear, look what He says; He doesn't answer his first question. Do you see what God's doing to this man here, brethren and sisters? This is the beloved; he has to learn an essential lesson about the exercising of dominion over carnal things. He's got to learn to abandon the spirit of vengeance; he's got to learn to accept ungratefulness from his brethren and still labour for their salvation. He's got to learn that his times are in Yahweh's hand; he can't manage his own life. He thinks he might be able to, but he can't! He's got to learn that the answer to all our problems in the abyss of trial and misery, that the only answer is TO GIVE YOURSELF TO PRAYER!

So God answers him, but He doesn't answer his first question. 'He will come down; yes, Saul will come down'. Then said David, this is what he wants to know, and he's looking around him; he has just saved the men of Keilah from bitter treatment, probably death at the hands of Philistines. Their houses could have been smoking ruins, their crops destroyed, their beasts and animals gone, their wives and children taken away into captivity and they themselves, piles of flesh on the ground. It could have been like that but they weren't; they were going about their normal lives because the Philistines had been chased away by David. There'd be a real expectation you'd think, that they would be very, very grateful; David doesn't trust flesh, 'will the men of Keilah deliver me up into the hands of Saul? And Yahweh says to him, 'they will deliver thee up'. What would you do? You've got 600 men, you've just defeated the army of the Philistines, you could wipe out the men of Keilah in a stroke!

It's the supreme test, isn't it brethren and sisters? When was the last time that people for whom you've spent the best part of your life, might even be children, when was the last time, that they turned and spat in your face, which flesh is want to do, and you acted graciously? Have you been through that, brethren and sisters? I'll tell you something, I've been through that! not from my family, but I've been through that and I'm watching other brethren go through it right now! and I've watched some be destroyed by it! Do you know that? God wants to know, brethren and sisters, whether we can

exercise dominion over carnal things. He wants to know if the servant will be as the Master; and the time will come for 'our times are in His hand'. That's the lesson of that and David's going through it as a young man, so he flees to the wilderness of Ziph.

Verse 14 says, 'Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand'. Now, there's something here we need to mention; there are several themes in this section of Samuel. In fact, one of the themes of the first book of Samuel is the theme of the hand, the Hebrew word 'yad' (we can't go through that now, but take out a Strong's concordance and look it up, and you'll see that 'yad' or hand occurs numerous in the first book of Samuel. It's not so in other books of the bible, but it is so here in Samuel; we'll meet a few of those occurrences; we've already met some, verse 4, verse 6, verse 11, verse 12). You see, the word 'hand' is quite prominent here, 'God delivered him not into his hand', because you see, David's times were in Yahweh's hand. The hand is a symbol of power and control, so that's one theme that emerges from this context. We know the story of how Jonathan came down and found David easily, though Saul sought him every day and could not find him.

And the Ziphites in verse 19, 'came to Saul to Gibeah and said, Don't you know that David is hiding with us in the wilderness of Ziph. Come down', and so Saul eventually does come down, and verse 24 of 1 Samuel 23, 'they arose and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain or 'arabah' on the south of Jeshimon. And Saul and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down into (not a rock as it says there, but into the rock). And the word 'rock' there is 'selah'; selah of course, meaning a lofty craggy rock. And in the scheme of things in the scriptures, brethren and sisters, the 'selah' represents those things which have relationship to immortality, where 'tsur' the immovable boulder, has relationship to God's work amongst men in mortality. (I could prove that to you if we had time, but we haven't got time) So David comes down and he's there at the rock; they're going to rename this rock shortly because something happens here that's very important in the wilderness of Maon. Saul pursues him at the end of verse 25, 'pursued David into the wilderness of Maon, and Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain, and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David'. Now that word 'compassed' means, in fact the literal Hebrew is 'were surrounding' David and his men. So in fact, brethren and sisters, what was happening here was that David was trapped; he was caught in the net. Saul with his 3,000 plus men and David with just 600; he had no hope on human terms. And he was trapped and he was going through a valley around the mountain, and Saul had men coming from both ways. He was gone; it says, 'they encompassed David and his men round about to take them'; this is one of those dramatic little pieces of scripture, where divine providence enters the arena. 'David, your times are in My hand'.

There came a messenger unto Saul, at that very precise moment; and you can see him racing up, huffing and puffing, greeting Saul; Saul's here and he's got men over there on the other side of David's men, and he's leading this part of his army and he's coming in 'for the kill'. All of a sudden this man comes (huffing and puffing) 'Saul, Saul, the

Philistines have come again!! They have??' And he's got to retire from the battle; do you see that, brethren and sisters? Saul goes back and returns from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines, 'therefore they called that place (David, I believe, names that place) Sela-hammah-lekoth'. Selah, the lofty craggy rock which bespeaks the 'help of Yahweh from above'. 'Hammah-lekoth' in fact the Hebrew word is 'machaloqeth' which means to 'share' or 'a division' or 'an allotment' and the root word 'halak' means to 'break into parts' hence 'to divide or to apportion or to assign' and the key element here is that God, brethren and sisters, divided between David and his men and Saul and his men. It was by divine intervention that David was saved at the 'selah' and he names it to memorialize that deliverance!

We turn just one or two pages in our bible to chapter 26 of 1 Samuel, we could go on, of course, and talk about what happens in between just as we pass over. A little exercise that you can do for yourself in chapter 24 from verses 9 to 15, when David makes his appeal to Saul with Saul's garment in David's hand (remember how he cut it off in the cave?) And look at the words he says in verse 10, 'behold this day thine eyes have seen how that Yahweh delivered thee today into mine hand in the cave' and he then says, 'I said I will not put forth mine hand against my lord'. Verse 11, Moreover my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand'; he says at the end of that verse, 'there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand'. Verse 12, 'but mine hand shall not be upon thee', the end of verse 13, 'but mine hand shall not be upon thee'; see brethren and sisters, the use of the word 'hand'. David was learning; he wasn't going to use his own hand to avenge himself, he was going to use his hand to fulfill God's promise to him, that he would be king, when he used his hand to manipulate affairs for his own good, thinking that he could achieve for himself; he was going to rely on Yahweh's hand. He was going to rely on Yahweh's hand, he understood, brethren and sisters. He was learning, 'your times, David, are in My hand'.

Chapter 26 verses 8 to 10, 'Then said Abishai to David (they've got Saul where they want him, so to speak, lying prone on the ground and his guards asleep as well, and David and Abishai creep up to the encampment and Abishai says) 'Let me hit him just once, that's all I want!'. David says, 'No'; verse 8, 'Abishai says, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time'. And David said to Abishai, 'Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against Yahweh's anointed, and be guiltless?' David said furthermore, 'As Yahweh liveth, Yahweh shall smite him' (with His hand he means) or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish'. That was the supreme test, brethren and sisters, it would have been extremely tempting for the flesh, wouldn't it, there in the darkness of the night with a group along side of you, who didn't need to strike twice?; it would have been the supreme test of character, you know. ('I don't know if I should be saying this, but I'll just be looking the other way for a second and you have a go, and all my problems will be gone; you know I could just squeeze out of my conscience for five seconds maybe, and then I'd look and, oh! he's not dead is he? what a pity!) That's how the flesh operates isn't it? Supreme test, you know what David's learnt? It's taken a while, excruciating pressure, running around all over the wilderness being chased like a rabbit, and he's

learnt, (it takes us a long time to learn this, brethren and sisters, we run around don't we? hither and thither, we try to achieve for ourselves, doing this and doing that) we've got to learn in character building, in the arena of God manifestation, the crucial issue is our personal relationship with God which recognizes that our times are in His hand. And when trials come, and they will come, we believe absolutely that there's purpose in it; we don't do what the flesh does, ('Why is it happening to me?? Why has everything gone wrong in my life??') David learnt that; he learnt how to show graciousness and kindness, to labour for the salvation of those who hated him, who would have taken his life and those who had betrayed him, when he had saved them from certain death.

See why Psalm 31 is written? Do you know when this was written, brethren and sisters? I believe it was written when Saul's army was called away to meet the Philistines, and David turned to the selah and renamed it, 'selah hammahlekoth'. That's when I believe he wrote Psalm 31, so he says things like this; Verse 1, 'In thee, O Yahweh, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Incline thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock (the word is 'tzur', 'a rock of refuge' translates Rotherham) for an house of defence (metsudah from which we get 'masada'. If you want to check these things out they're in your notes pages 19 to 21).

Verse 3, 'For thou art my rock (guess what the word is this time? selah) and my masada (fortress); therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength', and here he is, he's in the net of Saul, he's a bird to be caught and Yahweh plucks him out of it. What would you say? What would you say? This is what he said, 'Into thy hand' (get it?) Into thy hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Yahweh God of truth'. You see, brethren and sisters, what we have here is the mind of a man, that has been through a trial of rejection and betrayal, and has learnt where his strength lies, and that strength has enabled him to exercise dominion over carnal things.

In your notes you'll see that we've broken Psalm 31 up into verses 1 to 8 which is a plea for help to God who can save, and rejoicing at his deliverance. That's the first eight verses of the psalm. Verses 9 to 13 deal with the psalmist's pitiful situation and emphasizes his need for help. He speaks of his troubles and afflictions and if you read that section carefully, you'll find that its background is back there in 1 Samuel 23 and onwards. 'I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me'. Verse 13, 'For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life' (Saul and his men were doing that, and the men of Keilah were betraying him and the men of Ziph were going backwards and forwards like yoyos to Saul, to parcel information as to where David was at any given time). Then he comes to the next section, verses 14 to 18, trust urges the psalmist to further cry for help, and look what he says in verses 14 and 15. 'But I trusted in thee' (the word means to 'hie for refuge') O Yahweh I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy

mercies' sake' and so on it goes, brethren and sisters.

And then he comes to the 'key verses' of the psalm. Verses 19 to 22, praise of the goodness of God toward those that fear Him, but in those verses there is a key issue which takes us back to Psalm 109 verse 4, let's read them. Verse 19, 'Oh how great is thy goodness' (I'm not back in Psalm 109, I'm in verse 19 of Psalm 31), which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. Blessed by Yahweh: for He hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in (Keilah) a strong city'. He spoke to me four times; they might work, they might work their machinations against me, but I will give myself unto prayer'. That's the issue here, brethren and sisters.

Look at verse 20; isn't this an absolutely glorious phrase here, 'thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence'. Isn't that true, brethren and sisters? You have been in the secret of Yahweh's presence, that's an awesome feeling! There have been times in my life and doubtless in yours, you know, we spend most of lives I think, almost in neutral. We rarely get into top gear in spiritual things; there are times when we get up on top of a mountain and get away from all the rubbish down below, and we can get into top gear and we can get our relationship with our God working. It might not work like that all the time, but we can get it for a time, working where we actually feel the presence of God. And it's an awesome thing! brethren and sisters. But I can't feel it for you, and you can't feel it for me! It's a secret to those who have it; isn't it? It's not something you can do for somebody else, 'thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues'. Now the first word there 'the secret' actually means 'a hiding place'; just cast your eye across to verse 7 of the next psalm, 'thou are my hiding place, same word in the Hebrew 'cether'. 'And thou shalt keep them 'secretly' means to 'hide by covering over' it's a different word; 'in a pavilion' or 'a succour or succoth' which is a booth or hut like the Israelites made to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. They would come down with branches of trees and they would put up this flimsy shelter and they would live outside under the stars for seven days; sleeping outside under the elements at the height of the summer, with the harvest done, there to rejoice before their God and to remember His goodness, to remember His deliverance, how He brought them out of Egypt. But it was a flimsy shelter; it didn't have any real super structure and no foundations, and when the autumn winds came, and the winter came on, brethren and sisters, the winds would blow away the succoth, that's what it says in Isaiah 1:8. It would be like a cottage left to the violence of the winds and blown away; you see, brethren and sisters, the succoth that Israel dwelt in for seven days, in the seventh month of each of the years, was intended to be a flimsy shelter, that they might trust in their God.

You see, Psalm 27 underlines this point, back a page in your bible, verse 5, 'For in time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion (succoth) (booth) in the secret (there's our word 'cether' in the hiding place of His tent (ohel) shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a (tsur) an immovable rock'. See that, brethren and sisters? You might be in a flimsy shelter there in the succoth, but the man or the woman that has a strong personal

relationship with God, will actually have their feet on an immovable foundation, and it matters not what winds might come up to blow the succoth away. It might be the winds, the cool chewing winds or the evils of the world or it might be the winds of doctrine, it might be anything, brethren and sisters, but it won't matter because their feet are set upon the tzur (the immovable rock). You only get that by close personal relationship with your God. 'But I give myself unto prayer', Psalm 109 verse 4.

Let's just finish off our studies in Psalm 31 while looking at the last two verses. 'O love Yahweh, all ye his saints'. Saints, the word in the Hebrew is 'chaclyd', it means 'kind', hence by association with God Himself, godly. It comes from the same root as 'chesed' a word used by Yahweh in Exodus 34:6 to describe His goodness, the qualities of His mercy and grace; His lovingkindness, so that Rotherham translates the phrase, 'O love Yahweh all ye his men of lovingkindness'; what's he saying brethren and sisters? Well, Christ speaking through David is inviting those who have learnt through the trial of rejection and betrayal, to do what God does for men. Have you ever betrayed your God? What did He do in turn? When we learn that lesson, brethren and sisters, when we can learn to do to others as God has done for us, we become men of lovingkindness.

'For Yahweh preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer', He'll look after them in His own good time, for all the times of men are in His hands, so this is what we've got to do. And this is the voice of Christ saying this, brethren and sisters, let's not forget that! This is Christ speaking to us personally from the psalms. 'Be of good courage', the words in the Hebrew mean 'to be strong' it's 'chazaq' it means to seize hold of something with strength'. **BE STRONG** and as Rotherham puts it, 'He shall make your heart stronger', you'll go from one stage of development to another stage of development and I tell you what, brethren and sisters, it is a giant step to go from being what we are when we are born, to becoming men of lovingkindness, who act toward fellow men, even those who betray them, as God has acted toward us. **THAT IS A GIANT STEP!** and it is a demonstration of a strength which carnal man knows nothing about. Carnal men who build muscles up, you know, rippling over their chests, that's their strength; but men of God have strength up here (minds). Their strength is in their ability to forgive and labour for the salvation of those who might betray them! or hate them or use them spitefully, or turn against them. That's their strength! **BE STRONG** and He shall make your heart stronger, 'all ye that trust in Yahweh'.