

The prospects of warfare and heaven for God's people (Quality: Good)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 December 1997

Preacher: Pont, Philip

- [0 : 00] I seek again your attention to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 33 and the 29th verse. The book of Deuteronomy chapter 33 verse 29.
- Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee a people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.
- Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.
- Just to pick up the thought that we had this morning that the man Moses here was commanding the blessing to Israel as they were to pass over Jordan.
- He would not pass over with them. He was to be taken, as the following chapter reminds us, to his eternal rest. Joshua was to pass over with them.
- [1 : 32] They shall be brought into that promised possession. So this 33rd chapter is the blessing of Moses upon Israel.
- Israel. And how he speaks so highly of Israel's God. And the relationship, the relationship as we read in our reading was the relationship of love.
- That which bound Israel to Israel's God. That which was the union between the two. Now as we said, it may seem a strange word to say concerning a people who has so frequently rebelled against their God.
- And from the record of scripture we can read, throughout their wilderness journey, they found forth with Moses and the God of Israel for the pathway, for the privations, for the distresses.
- Oh, how they complained, how they mourned, how they wished themselves back in Egypt. But this is not written to the rebellious.
- [2 : 55] It is not written to the, to those who have fallen in the wilderness. It is written for the people of God as a general blessing which was pronounced upon the Israel of God.
- Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord. And it was as if Moses could range in his mind at least across the peoples of the earth.
- However few or many there may have been in the time in which this was written. And yet there was not one who is, who could be compared to God's Israel.
- I've wondered sometimes, it would be beyond understanding I feel, at least beyond my understanding, that you might have such a view of the Church of Christ.
- For it is a nation within a nation, a world within a world, a people within a people. They are of themselves, the Church of Christ, a poor people.
- [4 : 09] They don't possess anything here. They are often needy and distressed and troubled. But they have a God in heaven.

And they have a Saviour in Jesus Christ. And they have a Teacher in the Holy Ghost. And though they are by numbers poor, and they always will be because the Church has always been a remnant, yet is there a people on the face of the earth who are better placed and better blessed than they?

It could be said surely of the Church of Christ, Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord.

and individually too. And I trust you do sometimes come into conversation with the true Israel of God.

Those humble walkers and followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. Well, they don't seem to possess much. They've got precious little to boast about.

[5 : 27] They don't wear their religion on their sleeve. They're often distressed. They're often in trials and in difficulties. But they are the most blessed people on the face of the earth.

And surely I believe this one mark of grace might be found, or may I say, in all of us, the Lord only knows.

But, you know, that line of a hymn sometimes is quoted, numbered with them, may I be, now and through eternity. Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord?

And who can you walk with and talk with in the things of God but those of spiritual Israel? Who knows the downs and ups in spiritual experiences than those who are in the like pathway that you are in?

Who is it that you, like Ruth of old, would live with and die with but the Lord's people? Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord?

[6 : 44] They are a blessed people. They have a blessed God. They have a faithful God. They, like Israel of old, is a people that is the subjects of the love of God.

They, like Israel of old, were chosen. And the difference, of course, is that they were chosen unto salvation. And they are also chosen as they are also called.

My friends, this is not necessarily a personal word to the personal pathway. We often are confronted with people who say that religion is a miserable existence.

And you've only got to look at the face of those who meet for worship and they don't look happy. But the word speaks of a people that is happy.

My friends, the wonder and mercy of grace, the astonishment and the amazement of the sovereignty of divine grace, will often make a joy known within which is not seen without.

[7 : 59] Happy art now, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord. Now, Israel, spiritually, is saved by the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a people that cannot save itself no more than Israel in Leib and Goshen. We spoke this morning of how Israel left Goshen under the shed blood, hastened out of Egypt and to be found in the wilderness journey for 40 years.

They came across many difficulties and many privations, they seemed to be holy and solely, dependent on their God for food and drink, for health and strength, for the way to be made.

There are people that are happy in this respect because they were a people that were led. They didn't have a map, but they had a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire.

They knew which way to take because they followed the divine direction. Happy art thou, O Israel. But they were saved from their enemies.

[9 : 16] The Lord appeared for them despite that he had to chase them, despite that he had to judge them for their wickedness and idolatry and murmurings. The Lord appeared them and saved them from their enemies.

Now, for the spiritual Israel of God, he has saved them eternally. It isn't a salvation that you'll enjoy in this time state only.

those who enjoy the knowledge of salvation here will eternally rejoice in that salvation in glory. You'll know how happy then it is to be saved by the Lord with an eternal salvation.

Saved by the Lord. The Lord appeared for his spiritual Israel and raised up a conqueror, raised up a deliverer, raised up a sacrifice, an acceptable sacrifice.

He raised up a sin-bearer and in the person of his only begotten Son. That misrepresented word of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John and chapter 3 where Jesus said, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but should have eternal life.

[10 : 40] There's nothing more that will bring joy to your soul and mine, my friends, when you know you'll not perish when you come to die. There is nothing that will bring more joy and gladness to your heart when you have believing views of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is nothing more joyous and glad to your heart and your very soul when you're forgiven of your sins and you walk in a measure of peace and spiritual prosperity.

Oh, happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord. They need salvation and they are brought to need salvation.

They know that they are totally lost. They are aware of the condition of their soul that is nothing but sin. They have to say with that hymn we quoted this morning, nothing but sin I thee can give.

nothing but love shall I receive. And how wondrous is the sovereignty of God determined to save.

[11 : 48] He watched all my path when Satan's blind slave I sported with death. But he didn't leave you to sport with death, child of grace.

His way was the way of salvation. And what a mercy my friends is when he brings home to his people not only that they are lost, lost in themselves and lost in the Adam fall, but also saved in the Lord with that eternal salvation.

Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord. Don't ever, ever get into the pathway of the psalmist Asaph.

Pray against such a state and condition of soul. And indeed the word tells us how the Lord delivered him. Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

[13 : 09] For there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain, violence covereth them as a garment.

Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish. they are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression, they speak loftily, they set their mouth against the heavens and their tongue walketh through the earth.

That was Asaph's sin. But as I've often said, that changed when he went into the courts of God's house and he saw their end as being at the end of the wicked was destruction.

that the Lord mercifully showed him his end. And it was that he shall be taken to heaven. Oh people saved by the Lord.

The Lord saved his people from envy in the wicked and envy in the foolish. Oh people saved by the Lord.

[14 : 21] But there is something I also must say, my friends, which will bring some understanding of the happiness that is the lot of God's people.

It is indeed a spiritual happiness that is more important than anything else. But just consider for a second where this Israel was.

We quoted a hymn this morning and it speaks of it there, on the borders, of your land. Now surely that is a cause of happiness.

You find a worldly person or an ungodly person and they don't want to talk about the borders of the land, they don't want to talk about the day when they are done with time things.

They would spend fortunes to live another five minutes. happiness. But this is why the children of Israel spiritually now can be termed happy.

[15 : 28] It's because the prospect they have. The prospect they have. Oh, you look at the weak and the sinful and the distressed to the people of God.

You watch their pathway. It is a tribulation. they have numerous fears. They have an enemy in Satan. They have the world in their heart to trouble them.

And they have the world outside that hates them. Oh, it's a perplexing pathway. Oh, it's a most distressing pathway. It's one of tribulation. But look towards the prospect which is before them.

That is the blessing, my friends, you want to examine. When you speak about God's people as being a peculiar people, if they're not peculiar in their mind, they're a particular people.

Oh, what a blessed people they are. Happy art thou, O Israel, with the prospect of heaven. Would that not bring happiness? Would that not bring joy?

[16 : 34] Well, I remember once steeped in trouble, the Lord dropped these words in, Lord, pardon my complaint, I follow what thy call. The joy prepared for suffering saints will make immense for all.

The joy prepared. Well, there are some most peculiar views of what heaven is going to be like. Most peculiar views, all erroneous. For the majority of them are totally erroneous.

My friends, with this people whom Moses, speaking of course of spiritual Israel, he's speaking of a people that is happy. happy, O people, happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord.

My friends, the spiritual Israel of God, the church of Christ, the little flock, whatever way you want to call them, my friends, has got a prospect before them of glory.

It is Emmanuel's land, it is heaven, and whatever view people have and paint of heaven, you know, heaven can be described very simply, and that's the heaven I believe that the Lord's people seek for to know, to be found there, to be assured of a place there, to be comforted with the knowledge of it.

[17 : 54] My friends, not the heaven that people draw pictures of and draw pictures in their imaginations of, of what it must be to bask in the sunshine of heaven, my friends.

Heaven is that holy, happy place where sin no more defiles, but what else? When Jesus reveals his lovely face and smiles, that is heaven, that is heaven.

I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

That is heaven. It doesn't matter what fanciful pictures people interpret of what glory must be like. Heaven is where Christ is. If you've known him here, it's a little touch of heaven.

If you've seen him here, if you've heard his voice, if you've felt the influence of his love in your heart, that is a token of heaven. Now, heaven is the place, my friends, where indeed you will bask under the sunshine of his love.

[19 : 06] You will be in his immediate presence, and that forever. Oh, my friends, if ever there was a word that could describe the Israel of God, the spiritual people of God, the little flock, the flock of slaughter, the tried, the troubled, the distressed, the sin-burdened soul, those who cannot live without Jesus Christ, neither spiritually or temporarily.

My friends, they are indeed the most happiest people on the face of the earth, be it for the prospect that lies before them. Oh, this world to the world, of course, is its home.

It isn't a home to a child of God. It's his lodging place, and every night, as the poet reminds us, we're a day's march nearer home.

But, my friends, heaven will make commenced for all. Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee. You think of the countless millions that are on the face of the earth, that have no desire, concern, or care for their immortal soul.

You think of those on this earth that amass fortunes for the comforts of their life, and have no interest in Christ nor heaven.

[20 : 27] What is their lot, my friends, compared with that glorious provision that he's made in Christ Jesus, and that prepared place for a prepared people?

Oh, it's nothing. No wonder, my friends, is what you've sung this night is so suitable. Trifles are theirs, a kingdom yours, that will make you happy, that will bring joy to your heart.

If God assured you this night on your bed that it was well with your soul, that you only got to breathe the last of your body, and then you'd be taken to glory, you would be the happiest man or woman that lived on the face of the earth.

I told you the story, I'm sure, and it is a true story, of a dear old servant of God many years ago who laid in hospital. His wife was in one hospital, he said he was in another.

He had an accident off his bike, I think it was, or a motorcycle. And somebody said, one of the nurses said to him, why is it you're so happy?

[21 : 31] And he said, well my wife's in one hospital, I'm in another, there's about very little money, it was old currency obviously, but let us say there was only a few pence in his locker, and he said, and if you find me dead in the morning I shall be in glory.

That is why he was happy, that is why he was happy, the happy art now, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, a shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency.

My dear old friend who died a year or so ago at Stockfold, when they told him what he got wrong with him, and he was given two months to live, and the sister said to his wife, why is he so happy?

And she gave the honest answer, because he's going to heaven. Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord.

My friends, you come to a time in this year when you'll be thinking of the incarnation of Christ Jesus. Think about this at that blessed time. My friends, lose sight for a minute of all the mercies and blessings of the season, and think of this, that for the glory of heaven, that is the lot of his people, and for that joy which is prepared for his people in glory, the Son of God entered this world as a child, and grew up and lived for 33 years, and was crucified on a tree, and was laid in a grave, and rose triumphant.

[23 : 16] And upon what he has done stands their eternal happiness, their eternal happiness. And it doesn't need to be said, but eternal happiness has no change.

It cannot be changed. My friends, they are in glory and shall be in glory forever and forever. Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee.

My friends, I don't believe that. Change their lot for anybody. Oh, you look down the history of God's people, and those, of course, we must say in our own denomination.

But you look down their history, how they have been helped through, brought through, safely through. Oh, they have nothing to boast about, a hovel to live in perhaps.

Little or precious little food on the table, not knowing where the next meal's coming from. It's been like that in the history of this denomination. My friends, but in their heart lies a hope that nothing can shift.

- [24 : 24] My friends, they rest their soul on the finished work of Christ, and it brings joy and gladness to them in the prospect of heaven. Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, and are saved from their sins, and are saved from the just reward of their sins.

The reward of their sins rested upon the substitutional work of Christ Jesus. He bore the punishment instead.

And for their sins he died. Saved by the Lord. But it goes on, we must go on a little further.

The shield of thy help. Thou then, therefore, are people that are helpless. My friends, one of the things of a sword, one of the necessities or the uses of a shield, rather, is that there is a warfare.

You don't have shields for decoration. The armies of old times used to walk out, march out with shields and with swords.

- [25 : 45] The shield of thy help. What do you need a shield for as a Christian? And what would you need a sword for as a Christian?

As a poor, honest, humble believer in Jesus Christ, what would you need a shield for? My friends, the marks are the arrows of the enemy.

Oh, the many onslaughts of Satan and Satan's agents against the people of God. There are people then that are happy. There are people who are saved.

Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help. Now that's a comprehensive word, isn't it? The shield of thy help.

It is where you and I go to for help. We don't look to this man or that person. It is to this glorious person. The shield of thy help. Not only does he protect, but he provides.

- [26 : 52] Oh, those helps that have been by the way. You know, I suppose the gracious of this nation of the Jews that travelled from Goshen to the borders now of Canyon, that the prospect of entering into Canyon, they were to enter into an inheritance.

God promised it them, they shall receive it, and they did receive it, and today they still live there. The shield of thy help.

My friends, wonderful mercy for a poor sinner to have one who is not only the help of the helpless, who listens to the cries of the helpless, who attends to the prayers of the helpless, but is also a shield.

The shield of thy help. My friends, do you know what it is to be a mark for the enemy? Do you know what it is to be set up as a mark for those who hate you?

Who would indeed destroy you if they could? Satan and Satan's agents has one desire only, you know, is to destroy the people of God. When you look at the book of Job and you understand the book of Job a little more, you will find, my friends, that the intentions of Satan was to destroy him.

- [28 : 13] But Job was not to be destroyed because God was his help and God was his shield. And a shield is needed, my friends, in the time of warfare. You and I need a shield, a shield of faith, you say, but we need a shield, we need the Lord to preserve us.

I'm very conscious, my friends, even in a natural sense, how we need the Lord to preserve us. Preserve us in our going out and our coming in is one thing.

My friends, pray the Lord to preserve you from evil. Evil doesn't come necessarily in recognized ways, you know. Oh, in a moment, evil can enter the heart.

It's the spirit of evil. Oh, the Lord show you that you need a shield. The shield of thy help. When you're accused, my friends, of Satan, the Lord show you the precious blood of Christ.

The Lord show you that in Christ Jesus there is not only the captain of your salvation, but the war was won, the warfare was accomplished.

[29 : 20] The iniquity was pardoned. I'm quoting there without thinking from the 40th of Isaiah, where the promise unto the people of God was for pardon.

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand, double for all her sins, her warfare.

And you know, while you and I walk this wilderness journey, there'll be a warfare. It's a mark of grace, you know, to be the subjects of a warfare within as well as from without.

What makes a warfare? You can't have a war without two people or two companies. My friends, if you've got a warfare going on within, it's from the new man of grace and the old man of sin.

There's the warfare. That enemy of the soul of his people, Satan, who lives in hell and sends his agents to distress the people of God, there's a constant warfare.

[30 : 37] The shield of thy help. My friends, do you turn to that shield? Do you find yourself outnumbered? You will very certainly find yourself outnumbered if you fight this warfare alone.

My friends, but not with this shield. It covers. It covers. It defends. He defends his people. He is their help. God is our refuge and strength.

I don't know how many times I've not read that recently. God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in times of trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and so on.

My friends, there is the help of his people. A place where you and I can resort to a refuge for sinners the gospel makes known. It is found in the merits of Jesus alone.

The shield of thy help. My friends, a child of God may feel to be overcome. But, my friends, there is in Jesus Christ to be more than conquerors through him that loved us.

[31 : 43] Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency.

Oh, my friends, these are weapons of warfare. Because the pathway is a warfare. Because you cannot walk this pathway out without that the Lord shall graciously, mercifully, and wonderfully provide for you, and stand in the breach, as it were, between you and your enemies.

And what various ways the enemy is troublous. Various ways, you know, Satan doesn't always roar like a lion.

He whispers. He distresses the soul. He brings them into distress by even the very whisperings. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.

And every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

[32 : 51] The shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee. My friends, we have a wonderful contrast, a solemn contrast here.

Moses is speaking, of course, of his national people, Israel. And we try to speak of the spiritual Israel of God, and their pathway from this world below to that canyon above, to be in possession of what is possessed for them by Jesus Christ.

But you know, you must not lose sight of this truth, that while you walk below in this waste-toweling wilderness, you'll prove there'll be enemies.

There's a lovely desire, I was going to say, by the servant of God, David. In the last verse of the 86th Psalm, Show me a token for good, that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed, because thou, Lord, hast opened me, and comforted me.

Well, he wanted a token to close the mouth of his enemies, that they might be ashamed, those that hate me, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

[34 : 18] I want to come to the end, because we have the ordinance. But I want to say this, you know, how comforting and assuring is these truths for the flock of slaughter.

You know, if there's one thing that would distress God's spiritual people, it is when they are tempted that they shall not reach glory. They have been called and chosen, or chosen and called.

And they're brought into this way of a wilderness by grace in the soul. The world has lost its charms. And they're found in company with the people of God, in fellowship and in union, as a people that fear the Lord.

But you know, there is one trial above all trials, one temptation which is above all temptations, and that they shall never reach glory.

A dear old lady that looked after Cambridge Chapel, died on Friday night. We saw her a week or so before, and oh, she did want the Lord to visit her soul.

[35 : 37] She never made an open profession. But she did want the Lord to visit her soul to assure her that he's well. She looked back on a long life, 87 years.

87 years now, well, when we saw in deep affliction, deep affliction, it was only time, and then she'll be taken into eternity.

But her one desire, she had a home, she looked after the chapel, she had numerous friends who loved her, but her one desire was to be assured that it was well.

Now, no Job's comforter would do her good. None at all. You couldn't say to that dear lady, well, you've been at the chapel all your life, you've done this, that and the other for the Lord's servants and for the Lord's people.

Surely it must be well. Nothing of the sort. She was able to leave her home. She was able to leave the means of grace and everything. As she rested on her bed in that nursing home, one thing was her desire.

[36 : 45] As she faced eternity, that for her soul it was well. I know she knew many enemies within and without temptations were obviously that which plagued and troubled her.

But now I believe she's delivered from all that. She's entered into that glorious abode where Jesus is. She's now delivered forever from a body of sin and death and taken home, my friends.

That is what Canyon is to God's dear people. It's to be removed home. They have their homes in this life. They have their homes in a house of God.

It is their spiritual home. But it's only a temporal abode. The day will come when God will take them to their eternal home. Never to go out.

My friends, but what sore temptations arise as they draw near their journey's end. And they shall be found liars unto thee.

[37 : 48] And they shall tread upon their high places. We must leave it. We must leave it. Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

The announcement of the coming week by the followers. Our willing, there will be a prayer meeting on Tuesday evening. This means there will be no service on Wednesday.

The amount collected from the box of the door for the building fund in the month of November was £130.

Seen him, £988. Seen him, £130.

Happiness, thou lovely name, where's thy seat? O tell me where? Learning, pleasure, wealth, and fame, all cry out.

[39 : 36] It is not fear. Not the wisdom of the wise came for me where it lies. Not the grandeur of the grave and the bliss I seek to reign.

Hymn 988. Hymn 988. Hymn 988. Hymn 988.

Hymn 1088. Be contoured with the unknown and the decline in the UK is the biggest ■■■ where sentido the truth may be tierra-in-theinh and their defence.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[41 : 24] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[45 : 24] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[47 : 04] Thank you. Thank you. Lord, may he be present to bless. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit remain with us now and always.

Amen.