

1 Samuel 22:23 (W. Noel Tomkins) 71365

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1 Sam. 22:23

“Abide thou with me, fear not, for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard” (1 Sam. 22:23). Such were the words spoken by David, God's anointed king, when Saul's persecution of him was so bitter that he speaks of himself as a “dead dog” and “a flea;” but, notwithstanding, he is able to promise security to one whose family had all been slain, and who sought David's protection. Blessed picture of Him who could say of those appointed to death and judgment, but who hear His word and receive Him, “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one” (John 10:28-31). Yet, “they took counsel together for to put him to death;” but when they came to take Him, and Himself the “I am” spoke, “they went backward and fell to the ground.” Still He, Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought, and who would give Himself up to the murderers in order to carry out His Father's will, commanded, “If therefore ye seek me let these go their way; that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none” (John 18:8, 9). No, not even Lazarus, whom the chief priests would so have liked to have put to death, but could not.

It is something to be in the present assured possession of eternal life, but there is that which, as a child of God called to His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, one needs here below, namely, preserving grace for the present, to keep us true to Him who has loved us at such a cost to Himself; and in this, the Christian, whilst distrustful of self, is entitled to have the fullest confidence, for “He is able also to save them to the uttermost [or, ‘completely’ margin R.V.] who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). Yea, and after such a fashion that we can adoringly say, “Unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power, forever and ever, Amen” (Jude 24, 25).

As far as we are concerned this can only be effectuated by keeping His commandments and abiding in His love, as He could say, “even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love” (John 15:10); and it yet remains true that “he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not” (1 John 5:18, R.V.); but we must give heed to and obey that to which we are commended even to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

Some seem to think there is safety in numbers; but how can this be in view of the approaching judgment of that which bears only the name of Christ, and stands but in nominal relationship to Him? God's ancient people were warned in view of the passing through and overflowing of the Assyrian “Associate yourselves... and ye shall be broken in pieces... take counsel together and it shall come to naught;” and were not to say, “A confederacy, to all to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary” (Isa. 8). So may those now, who would keep His word and not deny His name (Rev. 3:8), be assured of that sanctuary of His presence with them—few though they be—who would “call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). They find His “I will come to you” (whether individually, or collectively in the twos and threes) infinitely better than any attempted association could be, where His name, His person, and His work, as clearly revealed in Scripture, have not the first and paramount place. Thank God, “He will keep the feet of his saints... for by strength shall no man prevail” (1 Sam. 2:9). Be it ours then to be walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost (for the two go together), and be so safeguarded that “when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming” (1 John 2:28).

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