

Swallowed Up!

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For you have made the Lord, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your tent. PSA 91:9-10

Psalm 46:1 says "God is our refuge and strength a very present help in time of trouble."

PRO 18:10 says "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe."

Psalm 91 says "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!' For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not approach you. You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked."

We are either in God's refuge swallowed up by His life being "hidden with Christ with God" or we are "swallowed up in a false refuge" and being covered by a false god. Of course, behind all false gods and idols is satan. Being "swallowed up" in a false refuge blocks healing and deliverance as a person who is "swallowed up" is dull of understanding which is necessary to having the knowledge that keeps you from perishing.

Recently a dear Christian man came to us for deliverance. When I asked him how we might be a blessing to him, he told me it had been suggested to him by a friend that because of his particular problems he could possibly be in the "land of forgetfulness" according to Psalm 88.

PSA 88:3-6 For my soul has had enough troubles, And my life has drawn near to Sheol. I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength, Forsaken among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom Thou dost remember no more, And they are cut off from Thy hand. Thou hast put me in the lowest pit, In dark places, in the depths.

PSA 88:8 Thou hast removed my acquaintances far from me; Thou hast made me an object of loathing to them; I am shut up and cannot go out.

PSA 88:11-12 Will Thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave, Thy faithfulness in Abaddon? Will Thy wonders be made known in the darkness? And Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

PSA 88:17 They have surrounded me like water all day long; They have encompassed me altogether. (Psalms 88). After reading the passage, I agreed. The Geneva Bible says, "oblivion", the Amplified Bible says, "where the dead forget and are forgotten."

He had been going through the motions performing as an upright and moral man. He was a licensed attorney who had never practiced in his profession and could not seem to find any direction as to what he wanted to do in life. It was as if the gifts, talents, powers and energies resident within him were unreachable and as if they had been locked away from him. He said. "In your seminars, when I ask the Lord to show me what he wants me to see or repent of, all I see is black." In a crowd of people, he would go unnoticed. It was as if a film, a mist, and a fog covered his life. Everything seemed dimmed, muted and hidden from him. He was shut up and could not get out. He was full of overcome with grief over what he considered the failures in his life.

As I began to question him as to how he grew up, he shared with me, "my mother had been mentally and physically ill and had spent a good portion of her time in bed. To escape her anger and unpredictable behavior, I stayed outside or in my room."

His dad was competitive and always had to win. He would play games with him as a little boy without giving him a handicap. Being constantly over-powered and defeated, feeling hopeless and helpless, he Lord revealed to me that he

had been "swallowed up", not only through the generational iniquities of his forefathers, but by the circumstances of his early life.

To protect himself from being hurt, he rebelled against life by retreating into a false refuge. To cope with life and avoid conflict, he took on the personalities of those around him. He didn't know who he was. It seemed to him that he was a non-person, a walking dead man.

The writer in Psalms 88 describes the calamities facing him in the crisis that threatened his life and expressed consternation concerning the things that were happening to him. In verse 3, it says,

"For my soul has had enough troubles and my life has drawn near to Sheol. I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit."

Notice he did not say he was in Sheol but he was like those who go down to the pit.

The Bible declares that Sheol is:

- a place of forgetfulness (Ps. 88:11-12),
- a place of darkness (Jb. 10:20,21),
- a place of silence (Ps. 94:19, 115:17),
- a place of those long dead (Ps. 143:3),
- a place void of praise (Ps. 6:5),
- a place whose inhabitants know nothing (Jb. 14:21),
- a place where there is no work, thought, knowledge or wisdom (Ecc. 9:5,10),
- a place of continued existence rather than annihilation but does not lie beyond the reach of God (Ps. 139:8),
- naked before God and has no covering (Jb. 26:6),
- underground (Num. 16:30),
- located in subterranean waters and its inhabitants tremble (Job 26:5),
- a place with gates (Is. 38:10).

In a large number of instances in the Old Testament, Sheol is spoken of as a place "down to" which one can go. Is it scriptural that a Christian can be swallowed up? In 1 Peter 5, it warns the Brethren that they can be. In verse 8 of that chapter it reads:

"Be sober be vigilant for your adversary, the devil, walks around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (drink down, gulp down and swallow up).

Some Biblical reasons why a person can be swallowed up are:

The Generational iniquities of the forefathers.

"And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him" (Heb. 7:9).

Levi actively participated in paying tithes in the loins of Abraham who was not his father but his great-grandfather. What does this have to say about generational iniquity and the negative events in the lives of our forefathers?

We can allow a medical doctor to take a family history from us easily believing that our problems can be in our genes but refuse to believe that we can be under curses as a result of the iniquities of our forefathers. God says,

"I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and fourth generations of those who hate me" (Deut. 5:9-11).

Disobedience

Psalm 81:15 says,

"Those who hate the Lord would pretend obedience to Him."

Jesus said in John 14:15,

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

We can be swallowed up...

- Through not being sober, alert and vigilant (1 Pet. 5:8).
- Through not listening to God and observing His Word
- Through rebellion - A good example of this is the story of Jonah (Jon. 2). The only way he could have been thrown up from the belly of the whale was to say, "YES SIR!" See also Is. 42:20-25.
- Through spiritual harlotry and adultery; When we as Christians, who are to be the bride of Christ, allow our hearts to go after other gods (anything we love more than the Lord) (Jer. 51:34,44; Hos. 8:8; Prov.22:14, Lam. 2:2-7,16).
- Through spurning the Lord by rebelling against God's delegated authority (Num. 16:21,30).
- Through the lack of knowledge (Is. 5:14).
- Through making death wishes (Job. 3:11, 20:21).
- Through the lack of a shepherd (includes fathers) to rescue (Ezk. 34:1-11).
- Through biting and devouring others and being consumed by one another (Gal. 5:14-15).
- Through foolish lips. The lips of a fool consume him (Ecc. 10:12).
- Through running or escaping into a false refuge (Is. 28:15). - Some examples are: drugs, alcohol, sex, TV, internet evil, evil music, movies, spiritual and physical drunkenness, pornography, refusing to risk life, living after the flesh versus being hidden and swallowed up by God and His life.
- Through being spiritually naked and unclothed (2 Cor. 5:1-4).
- Through being the child who follows a miscarriage or abortion. - The womb becomes a death chamber and death swallows up life (1 Cor. 15:54).
- Through being under a curse (Lev.26:38, Deut. 28:26).
- Through not being covered with love (1 Pet. 4:8). - Some examples are parental neglect, lack of protection and nurture, sexual, physical, verbal and emotional abuse, domination and control by others (1 Sam. 15:23), the anger rage and violence of others which could cause a person out of fear to retreat into a false refuge.
- Through being in the occult.
- Through excessive sorrow (2 Cor. 2:7).
- Through consenting to be enticed by sinners, being ambushed and ambushing others (Pr. 1:10-19).
- Through making an idol out of ourselves or another person or thing. - PSA 135:16-18 "Those who make idols become like them. They neither see, hear, speak, walk, talk, breath. They have mouths, but they do not speak; They have eyes, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Nor is there any breath at all in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them, Yes, everyone who trusts in them."
- Being under a curse of Jezebel or Ahab. - 1KI 21:23-24 "And of Jezebel also has the Lord spoken, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.' 1KI 21:24 "The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs shall eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven shall eat."

In Ezekiel 37, God caused the prophet to see the dry, dead bones of the house of Israel; a picture of the state of the church today. God asked Ezekiel a question, "Son of man, can these bones live?" He replied, "O Lord God, You know." Then He commanded Ezekiel to prophesy (preach) to the breath and say "Come from the four winds and breathe on these who are slain that they might come to life."

In verse 12 God then again commanded Ezekiel to prophesy and say to them, "I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves...I will bring you into the land of Israel (the place of His presence)." God went on to say, He would deliver His people from double-mindedness and make them one kingdom instead of the two kingdoms they had been (light and darkness) and deliver them from their dwelling places where they had sinned. He said, They would no longer defile themselves with idols because where there had been two kings over them, there would now be only one, King Jesus. The nations would then know that He is the Lord who sanctifies them when His sanctuary (a Holy place, an asylum) is in their midst forever.

Daniel was described as a man "in whom was a spirit of the holy God, illumination, insight and wisdom, an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, dreams, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas, solving of difficult problems and a man who constantly served God" (Dan. 5:11-12, 6:16). His sober and fasted life-style before the Lord protected him from being swallowed up in the mouths of the Lions (Daniel 6:16-24).

God sent Jesus and appointed Him as a covenant to the people, "To be a light to the nations, to open blind eyes and bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from their prisons....(Is. 42:6) Everything Jesus

did, we as believers are commissioned to do because He said in John 14:12, "The works that I do shall you do also; and greater works shall you do; because I go to the Father."

People who are swallowed up are plundered and despoiled and trapped in caves and prisons. ISA 42:22 says

"But this is a people plundered and despoiled; All of them are trapped in caves, Or are hidden away in prisons; They have become a prey with none to deliver them, And a spoil, with none to say, "Give them back!"

We, through repentance, can be given back to Him and can say "give them back". We can be free and we can set the captive free.

Being outside of His refuge causes us to be devoured by the enemy and to be given over to pestilence. EZE 33:27 says

"Thus you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God,' As I live, surely those who are in the waste places will fall by the sword, and whoever is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured, and those who are in the strongholds and in the caves will die of pestilence."

The good news is that He will bring you "up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay; and He will set your feet upon a rock making your footsteps firm" (Ps.40:2)." You must ask Him, He knows the way out of all those places where you have been devoured by the enemy. Healing comes as we make Him our refuge.

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