

How God Cares for His Children

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Psalm 121:2-3, 8:4, 23:1, 65:9, 115:12; Matt. 10:30-31; Luke 12:30; Isa. 49:15; Psalm 103:13-14; Matt. 6:25-34; Gen. 28:15; 1Peter 5:7; John 3:16; Phil. 4:6-7; Ex. 14:13; Matt. 26:53-54
- B. And yet in spite of all of these assurances, faithful children of God are in need, in pain, and under trials.
 - 1. How do we reconcile the promises of God to care for His children in contrast with our present, apparent condition?
 - 2. Jesus gives a simple, yet deeply profound, answer - Mark 11:22-24

I. THE NEEDS

- A. Unquestioned service
 - There are times when we seem to be doing everything as we are instructed in the word of God. We attend worship services, commune, give of our means, conduct our lives in a moral manner. And still, we often find ourselves plagued with an ongoing series of needs and burdens.
 - 1. We shouldn't be surprised; Jesus said it would be this way.
 - a. John 16:30-33; Job 14:1; 1Peter 1:12-13
 - 2. Whoever said that life in this world will suddenly become easy and peaceful for Christians perpetrated a monstrous lie.
- B. Uncontrollable situations
 - 1. 1Kings 17 speaks of a drought that the Lord brought against Ahab and the idolatrous Israelites, and the poor widow of Zarephath and her little son were caught up in the circumstances
 - 2. The prophet Elijah had to eat food dropped by ravens, depending on wild, unclean birds to live
 - 3. Through no fault of our own, we find ourselves caught up in unpleasant situations that bring trouble to our lives. This shouldn't surprise us either
 - a. Matt. 5:45 - Often, pain, sorrow and trouble are just part of the human experience, and have nothing to do with our moral condition or the lack thereof.
- C. Untimely sorrow
 - 1. In the course of events, the widow's son died
 - 2. Where do the promises of God enter this scene?
 - 3. We sing and pray about the promises of God to care for His children, and think, "Surely it can't get any worse than this," and suddenly it does... tragically.

II. THE SUPPLY OF GOD

- A. We may have been surprised by the setback, but God is not surprised
 - 1. Rom. 8:22-23, 26-32 - God knew it was coming before the world began, and He made preparations for it
- B. God's past preparations

1. Thousands of years before Elijah needed a drink of water in the drought, the finger of God traced out the path of this little brook.
 2. God knows all about my troubles before they come, and since God created the world in which I experience my troubles, then I can trust that He has prepared a way for me to get through - Isa 45:7
 3. He never intended that this world would be the place where we experience our highest joy - 2Cor. 4:17; Rom. 8:18
 4. He also planned this from before the beginning - 1Cor. 2:9; Eph. 1:3-7
 5. Our role is to be patient in this world and wait to receive the promises in the world to come - Psalm 84:11
 6. Nowhere is God's provision more clearly seen than in our salvation.
- B. God's present supply
1. While God's means of supply to Elijah was miraculous, the supply is the same as is offered to all of humankind
 2. Lord has promised to meet our current needs - Phil. 4:19; Matt. 6:33
 3. It will be according to His wisdom and assessment of what we need at the time according to the best interests of our eternal soul
 4. Our role is to trust His judgment and be content with what He gives us in the present - Phil. 4:11-12
- C. God's promise for the future
1. 1Kings 17:14; Psalm 37:25; Heb. 13:5; Job 23:10; John 14:2
 2. God will meet our needs, but not necessarily our wants. Hagar wanted delivered from the desert; God gave her water instead - Gen. 21:19

III. THE NEEDS MET

- A. Faith in the will of God - Heb. 11:6; Mark 11:22
- B. Faith in the ways of God - God did not send a king to take care of Elijah; He sent carrion birds and an impoverished widow - Isa. 55:8-9
- C. Faith in the work of God - The widow was required to feed the foreign prophet before herself and her famine weakened son; she must trust the Lord
1. 1Kings 17:12-15
- D. Faith in the word of God - 1Kings 17:14 - "Thus says the LORD God of Israel"
1. Psalm 62:11, 119:105; Heb. 11:3; 2Tim. 3:16-17
- E. Faith in the wonders of God - Eph. 3:20

Conclusion:

- A. It is faith that enables us to see the promises of God fulfilled beyond our earthly expectations - Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Heb. 11:13
- B. This world is the shadow; the Divine realm is the true reality that cast the shadow; faith enables us to see through the shadows of the world and its temporary trials to the true realm and its eternal glory. That is the place where all of the promises of God to care for His children come to pass beyond our ability to imagine.