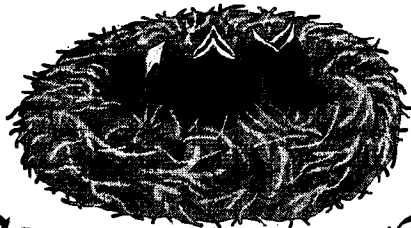
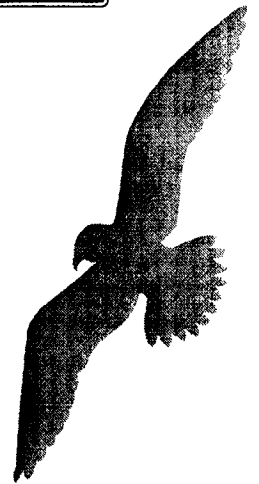


*"They shall
mount up...*

ON EAGLES' WINGS

*... with wings
as eagles."*

Isaiah 40:31



AERY NUGGETS

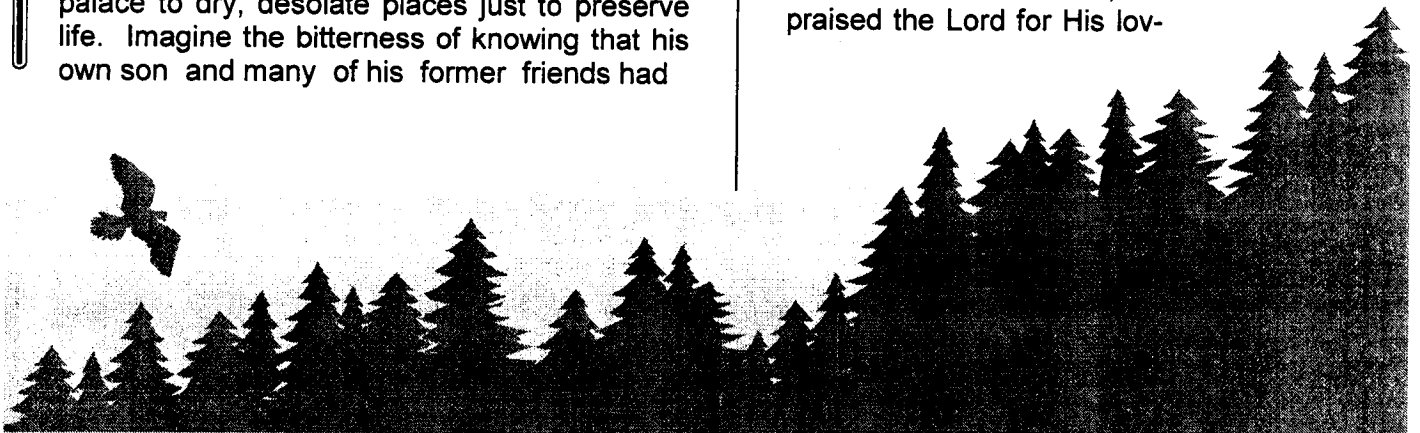
Psalm 63

Steven J. Faulkner

Have you ever experienced a time when someone close to you suddenly turned against you? Have you known the bitter disappointment and the piercing loneliness that resulted when former friends or loved ones became cold toward you and began acting more like enemies than like friends? Unfortunately, such troubling experiences must sometimes be endured by even the child of God as we walk through this fallen world. King David certainly knew such times. Psalm 63 is the response of his heart to a time when he had to flee for his very life to escape his own son. Absalom had stolen the hearts of many in Israel, and he was at that time advancing rapidly with an army of former loyal subjects to take the throne by force. Imagine the sorrow in the king's heart as he had to pack and tramp with all his household and those who yet served him, and flee from his palace to dry, desolate places just to preserve life. Imagine the bitterness of knowing that his own son and many of his former friends had

turned against him and now sought to violently depose him. Yet, as we read this psalm, we do not hear the outcry of bitterness or despair. We read instead the cry of a soul which sought the comfort and presence of God. In verses 1 and 2 we read: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

A "dry and thirsty land" is a pretty apt description of the world we live in today, wouldn't you agree? It is often difficult and cold in this life, with dangers and trials all around. It seems there is very little here to encourage the hearts of Christians, so that we sometimes cry out from the very depths of our being for refreshment and relief. For David, that refreshment and relief was to be found in God. His soul thirsted for God, and his flesh longed for Him. We do not hear David crying out for an easier path, or for the creature comforts he was certainly lacking at that moment. His heart's desire was to see the power and glory of the Lord. David had walked with God and had come to trust Him, so even with his life on the line, he praised the Lord for His lov-



ingkindness. In verse 3, we read: "Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." David could praise the Lord for His lovingkindness even though it might seem at that moment that all his world was turned upside down.

We read in verses 4-6, "Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." Perhaps you have experienced, as I have, that at nighttime our fears seem to come out and weigh on our troubled minds. It seems that when the lights go out, our thoughts can tend to focus on all the problems of the day, and our fears seem to be exaggerated after the room is dark and our eyes are closed. But oh, what comfort we miss if we spend our nights worrying! David had the perfect recipe for nightly peace of mind. Instead of spending his sleepless moments worrying, he spent time at night thinking on the Lord rather than on his very real problems; and I believe that God both comforted him and satisfied the longing of his soul during those hours of prayerful meditation. We Christians today can rest our cares upon the Lord too as we read in Philippians 4:6,7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

When the heart of a Christian is filled with thoughts of the Lord, we too will find that there isn't much room left for worry. Worry will be replaced by praise, and a sense of security in God's care over us will grow as we recall the faithfulness of our Lord, and consider the precious promises in His Word.

You might imagine that with the country turning against him, and himself fleeing for his life to the wilderness, that David would feel loneliness and despair. But, David knew by experience that God would not leave him on his own in desolate places to fend off the enemy by himself; he had confidence that he would yet have reason to joy in God: "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice, My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me," (verse 7,8). Now, how about you? Did you ever feel really alone and ignored or even despised in this world? If you are a child of God, that is not such a surprise when you think about it. This world is no friend of Grace. At work or at school, we may be hard pressed to find a single soul who takes our side. We may feel all alone in standing for truth

and Godliness. But, if we have Christ, we are never really alone. Our Lord Jesus, though now with the Father in glory, has promised us, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," (Hebrews 13:5). We know that the Lord Jesus once walked in this scene where we live, experiencing first hand the trials and infirmities of this life, yet without sin. He was rejected by the world, yet in love, He endured the afflictions of the cross for our sakes. This same Lord Jesus is in glory today while we walk through this dreary land, but His ear is ever inclined toward us, and he ever is ready to encourage us and intercede for us. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," (Hebrews 4:15,16).

Come what may in this world, we are never alone and without His loving care. In the final verses, we see that David had confidence that God's plan would unfold perfectly, and the wicked would not upset that plan. In verse 11, I believe that the Holy Spirit points us to a very encouraging thought: "But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory; but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped." Verse 11 might be seen to look forward to the time when the Great King, the Christ, will sit on the throne in Jerusalem, all His enemies having been defeated; and all of Israel will be blessed in Him. What a comfort for David to consider the blessings of those latter days. We too are rejoiced in these thoughts, for we will reign with Him! But, for David as for us, that day is still upon the road. David was, as we are now, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; yet we long for the presence of our Lord, and seek Him early for encouragement and refreshment. As we read in Psalm 5:3, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up".

Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.

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