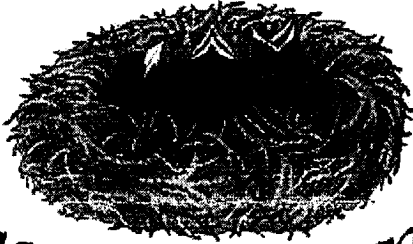
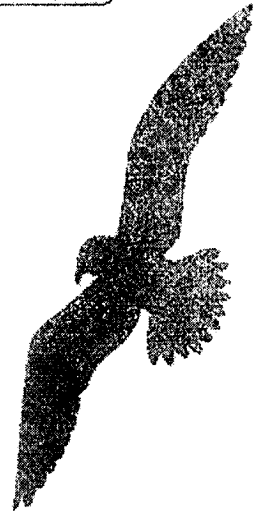


*'They shall
mount up...*

ON EAGLES' WINGS

*... with wings
as eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



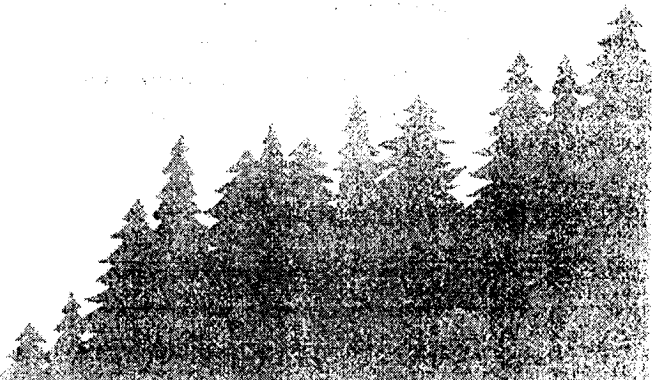
AERY NUGGETS

Psalm 56

Steven J. Faulkner

As I recently read the words of Psalm 56, I thought about a time when young David felt obliged to flee for his very life from the wrath of a jealous King Saul. David had been anointed to be the next king in Israel, but Saul yet sat on that throne, and apparently he feared David; he appeared determined to see to it that David would never be his successor. The jealousy of Saul towards David was unrighteous, because David had only ever been faithful and loyal to his master. Saul had certainly had his successes on the battlefield, but David had gained in the estimation of the people with even greater accomplishments. Those words, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Samuel 21:11) must have burned into Saul's jealous heart as he now hunted his faithful servant like a prey. David, to protect himself from this unrighteous persecution, fled Israel itself for a time as we read in 1 Samuel 21:10, "And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath."

In later days, David moved throughout wilderness areas, sometimes just steps ahead of his pursuers. He camped in desolate places, in wooded areas, in strongholds in the rocky highlands of Judah, and in mountainous recesses and caves. It must have seemed that wherever David looked, his enemies were around him, hunting and hounding him, always seeking to take his life. We read the words of this persecuted child of God in verses 1 and 2, "Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me. Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O Thou Most High." In verses 5 and 6 he continued, "Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul."





Did you ever feel surrounded by enemies who seemed relentlessly to hunt you; are there those now who seem determined to "swallow you up"? David's enemies were seemingly everywhere, and constant in their malicious pursuit. It may be that just now, you yourself seem to be surrounded by enemies and troubles. Perhaps you do not have actual armed men chasing you to take your life in a physical assault, but maybe your enemies are just as real, though less tangible. Doesn't it sometimes seem that troubles and trials mound up and threaten to overwhelm like the billows and waves of an angry sea? It must have seemed so for David. Yet, as a child of God, he did not need to fear men, though all seemed against him, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. In God I will praise His word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me," (verses 3,4). My dear friend, if you are a child of God, verses 3 and 4 are for you too, and they are just as true for you as for David of old. When you are afraid, you can trust in the very God of the universe whose eyes are upon you, and whose ears are open to your cries (Psalm 34:15). The child of God can say with David in verse 9, "When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me." Do you know that God is for you? He loves you so much that He once sent His own Son to die on a cross that you might have life. We read, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?," (Romans 8:31,32). If you are a Christian, then you can know with confidence that God, the very God of the universe, is on your side. You need not fear the malevolent schemes of Satan, nor the people or circumstances he would use to discourage you.

But, maybe just now, you are struggling with some really difficult circumstances which threaten to overwhelm you, and you feel very alone in the struggle. Perhaps the words of Psalm 56 seem to echo your own heart as you cry out in soul weariness and sorrow at the relentless assault of the enemy; perhaps those who once were friends have turned against you for unknown reasons, or perhaps those you work for seem to be plotting your demise; perhaps you have witnessed the decline of your own health, or that of a loved one, and the situation just doesn't improve no matter what you do. Verse 8 of this Psalm is such a lovely and encouraging verse for such a time:

"Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?? Just think of that—While David felt hunted and driven from place to place, God knew every step of his lonely wilderness journey; each of his steps were guarded, and every seeming retreat was covered by the One who saves and keeps His dear children. Every tear that fell from David's eyes was known by God, each being placed, as it were, in God's bottle; each written in His book. And so it is for each of His own. Perhaps you have felt compelled to wander from one wilderness refuge to another; perhaps some of your wanderings have been those painful skirmishes of the mind as your thoughts have been troubled in sleepless nights of restless churning, or your daytime thoughts absorbed with the silent struggles that no one around you sees. What a comfort to know that the Lord has noted every teardrop that you have shed, and each is numbered as are also the very hairs of your head by the One who loves your soul. May you find comfort in the One who is able to "deliver (your) feet from falling (verse 13).

Now, if you are reading these words, but you have never believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, then these thoughts will probably not be of much comfort to you. The good news is that God loves you, and He desires that you have life as we read in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". If you are weary and burdened by the load of sin, hear Jesus calling to you even now as we read in Matthew 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That rest is the rest of salvation, and it can be yours only through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Will you put your faith in Him just now and become a child of God? We read in John 1:12, "But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

"Hark it is the Savior calling, 'little children follow Me!' Jesus keep our feet from falling, teach us how to follow Thee!"

O do Thou who, meek and lowly, trod Thyself this vale of woe,

Make us Thine and make us holy, guard and guide us as we go!"

--Clesis #346, Hymns of Grace and Truth

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