

Christ, our Defender from Old

By

Elder Enoch Ofori Jnr
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Key text: Psalm 3

Righteous Life under Attack

The path of life is figuratively speaking “narrow” not only because it calls for self-denial and commitment to truth but also because it is assailed by many enemies. Many people would not tread that path because they would rather live for their lusts, but neither would they allow those who choose to go down that path do so in peace.

But let’s not be discouraged. We are walking the path of life, and nothing good comes easy.

Be that as it may, as a saint of God you will definitely at some point in your spiritual journey, if not severally, raise a cry of help to God in heaven for the sheer load of hatred:

“LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

“Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah” (Ps. 3:1-2).

The cry of the righteous, as verbalized by David, is situated in the context of the enemies that the righteous is bound to make because of his righteous stand. The Lord Jesus made this clear in His sermon on the Mount, but He added it’s a blessing to be hated for being righteous:

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake.

“Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matt. 5:10-12).

The ungodly will not let the righteous be – not for anything they had done against them but for being followers of righteousness! That’s the state of the kingdom of God on earth; it’s under constant attack, and one needs to be vigilant to take hold of it:

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt. 11:12).

The gratuitous hatred of the righteous is indicative of our presence in the hostile territory of this world where life is ordinarily ordered around ungodliness. “They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Ps. 14:3). That’s

why “many” are those who rise up against the righteous. And they try to demoralize us by their numerous acts of harassment and persecution and words of discouragement against us. They taunt us, “There is no help for Him in God.”

God, our Shield and Glory

In their taunts against us, the enemies demonstrate that they are blithely ignorant of the role of the living God in our lives:

“But Thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head” (v. 3).

Our God is not just a deity we direct our devotions to, but He is “a shield” for us who fends off the attacks of the enemy. He’s also our “glory” in the face of attempts to shame us. In this sense, He’s the lifter of our heads who prevents our heads from being bowed down in shame!

All these divine blessings – the Most High being our ‘shield’ and ‘glory’ – are ‘positional’ blessings in Christ. They are related to and rooted in our position in Christ by right of our spiritual union with Him. (See Eph. 1:3).

They are blessings to claim, especially at this time of intensified enemy attacks. That is where prayer comes in:

“I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy hill. Selah” (v. 4).

We cry out in prayer to God to make real the blessings of glory and protection using our own voices! There’s no substitute for personal earnest prayer. It’s not just the pastor’s intercessory prayer but praying in one’s own voice to the Father. God is able to recognize your cry for whom it belongs. The Almighty distinctly heard the cry of the Israelites in bondage in Egypt and remembered His covenant with them resulting in their deliverance (Ex. 6:5-7).

It’s a well-known fact that every parent is deeply moved by the anguished cry of his child, not another’s baby. So the heavenly Father wants to hear your own “voice” in prayer, and He will answer you from His holy hill! We read in Luke 11:9-13:

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

“For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

“If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

“Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”

The simple answer is that the heavenly Father can’t ignore your cry. “And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?” (Luke 18:7).

The Soul at Peace

The first effect of answered prayer is on the soul. The emotional and mental agitation ceases:

“I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me” (v. 5).

The soul is soothed – comforted in God. With our burdens offloaded to God in prayer (1 Pet. 5:7), we are now able to sleep soundly without turning and tossing in bed. Jesus is our peace in our hearts:

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

His peace is true; He is the “anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:19) keeping it stable and buoyant on the troubled seas of this life. He strengthens our inner man, giving us a sense of hope and assurance.

The fear is gone – no matter where it is coming from and by whom! “I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about” (v. 6), even if they are as numerous as the hair of my head (Ps. 69:4).

By God, one of us is able to chase a thousand and two of us ten thousand because their rock is not like our Rock, “even our enemies themselves being judges” (Deut. 32:30-31). Their numbers don’t count; it’s the enemies who flee from us on each occasion (Deut. 28:7; Jam. 4:7).

He Arises to Save

Here’s how Yahweh fights for His people: we let Him arise to our defence by asking Him in prayer to “Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly” (v. 7).

Yah has broken the power of the enemy; He has weakened them. They can no longer bite. “Affliction shall not arise the second time.” He has made a complete end of the enemy (Nahum 1:9).

The enemy can only stare at our progress and blessing in God. They can’t bite. They may bark and roar like a starving lion, but they can’t roll back the blessing. Yahweh has struck the enemy on the cheek bone!

His salvation has come to stay:

“Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Selah” (v. 8).

YHWH alone offers salvation and is irreversible. We can bank our life and whole future on it! His defence is sure He will be “a wall of fire” around us and give us peace and security without end!

“For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her” (Zech. 2:5). Amen!