

The Lord Set Me in a Large Place

In Psalm 118:5 we read the words: *From my distress I called upon the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me in a large place.* I wonder what the psalmist meant by “a large place.” Why would that give him comfort? I suppose that at least part of the answer is that it is a place where one does not feel enclosed, especially by one’s enemies. When our enemies start to close in on us, whether they be people we encounter in this life, or just the circumstances of life, it would be good to be in a “large place,” would it not?

The psalmist makes it very clear that he understands the importance of Jehovah when it comes to his troubles. He says, *It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes* (Psalm 118:8, 9). Others we might turn to for help will never be able to help like Jehovah can. He can put us in a large place, even better than princes can. Sometimes those in authority can help us and sometimes they cannot, but God can always get us through.

Notice, too, that the psalmist was not just going through some minor inconveniences, but was threatened by major enemies. *They surrounded me like bees; they were extinguished as a fire of thorns; in the name of the Lord I will surely cut them off. You pushed me violently so that I was falling, but the Lord helped me* (Psalm 118:12, 13). His enemies were substantial enough that they caused his fall, or they would have had Jehovah not helped him. Sometimes our afflictions are like a swarm of bees in that they come from every direction and there is no getting rid of them. This passage lets us know that God is able to get us through even something as hopeless as that.

It may be that we do not see any way out of the problems we are suffering right now. Notice that even though he had suffered severely, the psalmist had not given up hope. *The Lord has disciplined me severely, but He has not given me over to death* (Psalm 118:18).

I do not want to make the things you suffer right now trivial because I know they are not. They are important to you. The pain is real and your suffering is real. Nevertheless, they are not bigger than God! It may be that He has disciplined you severely, but He has not given you over to death. And we should understand death here to mean being overcome instead of overcoming. In the New Testament we read that the Lord chastens those whom He loves (Hebrews 12:6). God is not going to give up on you. Do not give up on Him! He will always be there for you if you will remain faithful to Him.

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