

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



July 28, 2013

Lines in Pleasant Places

To David's mind, the ancient method of allotting land when Israel took Canaan was a fitting illustration of the permanence of his relationship with God. Life was good, no matter what happened.

“O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance” (Psa. 16:5-6).

When Israel conquered the land of Canaan, the territory was apportioned to the people first by tribe, then by family (Num. 26:55; 33:54). The primary means of apportioning these plots of ground was by casting lots. This purely random process ensured a fair and impartial distribution of the land among all parties involved. Once the apportionment was completed, the boundary lines marked each family's plot of ground and were considered sacred, never to be violated.

David used this imagery of a random allotment to illustrate how circumstances in his life had turned out to his benefit. The “inheritance” that David is speaking of here, however, refers not to a spread of land, but to his relationship with God. Just as the Levites received no land in the dividing of Canaan but had God as their inheritance, so David viewed his relationship with God as his

heritage. In reviewing all that God had done for him, he declared that “the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance.” Like a lucky draw in the real estate lottery, David realized that he had been extremely blessed in his life.

But David's cheerful message here seems problematic. Unless he wrote this Psalm very early in life, his description of this “good inheritance” seems a little out of sync with the facts. Consider all the hardships that he encountered at the hands of King Saul, or the tragic consequences of his sin with Bathsheba, and the family disasters that followed thereafter. Throughout his life, David was well acquainted with grief; so how could he write something so positive? Wasn't he being a little unrealistic?

Unlike many of us, David viewed his life through an intensely *spiritual* framework. He considered the daily circumstances of his existence, whether good or bad, to be merely fleeting images — experienced momentarily, then quickly receding in the rear-view mirror. What gave his life real meaning

was not these passing moments, but the knowledge that his life was in the hands of an all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present God. It was the *permanence* of that relationship that gave David a firm place to plant his feet, whatever might be swirling around him at a given moment. When the storms of persecution and heartache crashed upon him, David saw his relationship with God as an unshakable inheritance. Even during his worst days, David knew that ultimately the lines had fallen to him in pleasant places, and life was good.

Remember that David lived in an age when God's plan for humanity was still shrouded in mystery. The hope of eternal life was there, but only dimly. Today, with the work of God's son completed, we have even more reason to view God's blessings as a glorious inheritance. The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, too—but only if we are mentally prepared to see them.

When life becomes difficult, look beyond the pain of the moment and ponder all that God has done for you. You have a good inheritance; enjoy it!

— David King