

18th May 2023**Falleth Seven Times...****Proverbs 24:16**

Many thanks Brother Ken, for your good introduction, especially as you had the exhortation on Sunday as well.

The point you made about Jesus being tempted to the very limit of mankind, even delirious, seeing visions, is good... he had his mind so well trained that he did not succumb, but still he appreciates the power of the temptation, and what we have to endure. We do not have the strength of the Holy Spirit to endure days without food let alone 40 days!

Evidently the righteous fall more than seven times, as Peter asked Jesus how many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me seven times? Matthew 18:21,22, But Jesus said seventy times seven, yes, we can even fall or sin against our brother 490 times, even more, as this is just a number Jesus was saying. Yet forgiveness knows no number. Brother Ken you mentioned that the point is to confess our sin, and pray about it, and determine not to do it again. If there is a will, it must be a positive thing, but though the spirit is willing the flesh is weak. See Mark 14:38. Brother Ken said also that we have evil thoughts and are not perfect, but cannot use this as an excuse. It is true there is no excuse. But the truth is we do continue to fall. Because the flesh is weak. The point of the law of Moses was to show that. That it was not possible to be justified by the law – even Jesus was cursed by it!

Brother Ken, you spoke of the formula of rising from the fall, you spoke of James where he tells us to confess our sins – in James 5 to confess our faults to one another. You asked – are we to go about telling our faults to everyone? The answer is a definite no! It is confess to one another, not everyone. It is not right for someone to confess to us, and then we do not reciprocate, or explain to that person that actually we are just as vulnerable, and exposed to sin, and have our own cross to bear. It is not kind to act all smug, and superior and pat the brother on the head, or sister, and patronise them, because we are all as guilty – in fact the whole world is guilty before God. There is none righteous no not one!

Brother Ken, I also really liked the way you took us to Revelation 2 and 3. The righteous falls seven times and rises again. Those seven Ecclesias all fell. But Jesus knew that some would overcome. Some would rise. Yes, they will rise at the last trump, and be triumphant over death, that is the promise. Seven scenarios or different circumstances that befell the Ecclesias, and ways in which they could fall. But each time there was a solution. It is the same with the way the faithful fall in their lives, - there is always a way to bear the temptation a way of escape a solution if only we look for it.

The Proverb presents a comparison: the NET version is here for variety, and a slightly different way of saying it...

For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief. KJV

Indeed a righteous person will fall seven times, and then get up again, but the guilty will collapse in calamity. NET

It seems Eliaphaz said a similar thing in Job 5:18,19

18 For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. This is true, yes, it is.

He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. Er... is this true? Evil touched Job – boils, children dead, livelihood destroyed in a night! What was Eliaphaz saying here?

He said in verse 22 *At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.*

Does this mean that the righteous are always protected always rising after they fall? Not necessarily... Paul shows the words of Eliaphaz were not absolutely correct, because Paul the Apostle shows that it was possible and likely that the disciples of Jesus were fed to the lions see

1 Corinthians 15:32

If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what does it advantage me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

So troubles and difficulties do and will come upon the righteous BUT

Psalms 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

.....Eventually

Psalms 37:24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholds him with his hand.

Returning to the example of Paul who explains all the tribulation he endured – he concludes that he taught him that he could not even trust himself...

2 Corinthians 1:8-10 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

We are pressed out of measure, normally because of our own bad decisions, lack of motivation, aches and pains, old age, loads of excuses, more interesting things to do, can't be bothered attitudes, so we slide into the abyss of time wasting and prevarication and fall yet again.

How to rise again? "God be merciful to me a sinner"

Brother Terry