

thoughts are distracted and we often judge rashly, being deceived by external appearance, but in solitude we can give to any subject a closer attention. The sense of shame does not then hinder a man from thinking without disguise of his own faults. David therefore exhorts his enemies to withdraw from those who witnessed and judged by their actions on the public stage of life and to be alone, in order that they might examine themselves more truthfully and honestly. This is an exhortation that we all need. There is nothing to which men are more prone than to deceive one another with empty applause until each man goes apart from all others and communes alone with his own heart. It is with the heart, in its relation to things unseen and eternal that we are to commune. This is a duty which is strictly specific in its relation to certain objects. These are the habits of a man's nature in reference to the truth, immortality, and whatever else constitutes him a moral and responsible being. There are some questions that we need to ask ourselves daily. What is our relation to God? What are our feelings toward Him? In what spirit and manner do we fulfill the obligations which He has laid on us? These are the questions which it is our highest interest to ask and which we can answer only when we know our hearts and know them well. When we have considered the influence of business and pleasure, our companions and our pursuits, exert on our moral nature, we see also how it stands affected toward what is higher and better. Our purpose in all of this is to judge ourselves spiritually. Our aim is not simply to become masters of our own thoughts and feelings; neither is it a desire to control the mind of others; we commune with our hearts that we may know what we are morally, and how we stand related to things that are unseen and eternal. This communing must be marked by uncompromising fidelity. It is better not to take this trust in hand than to be faithless to it. Honesty and impartiality should characterize our inquiries. We must not turn from them when they become painful because they awaken a slumbering conscience or are at war with some of our past activities. In our self-communing, Scripture should be our guide. Its aim is to lead the man who communes with himself; to seek communion with him in order that he might be transformed (Rom. 12:1-2).

F. "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness." This admonition is given in contrast to the sacrifices which Absalom offered at Hebron (read II Sam. 15:12). The sacrifices of Absalom were not of this kind. He pretended to be paying a vow which he had never vowed; to be serving God while he was preparing to take over the kingdom that God had given to David. Two things are important in the consideration of offering the sacrifice of righteousness: 1) it must be the sacrifice that God has appointed, in the way that He has appointed it, 2) it must be with a proper motivation, not such as the sacrifices which Absalom offered.

## V A QUESTION

"There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord,

lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." You will note here there were those who had followed Absalom that David realized would ask the question, "What is the good of following the Lord?" His answer is in the realization that blessings come from the hand of God and therefore the admonition or the appeal, "Lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." Read Numbers 6:26. Here is the significance of David's appeal for the Lord to lift up the light of His countenance upon them. You may check other passages that will indicate the significance of this phrase as it is used in the Old Testament.

## VI. AN ANSWER

"Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." In spite of the difficulties that David had been through during this period of time, his blessings had been far beyond those of his enemies. The gladness that God had put in his heart was far better than the increase of the corn and wine that his enemies had enjoyed. Material prosperity is no substitute for spiritual blessings and spiritual growth.

## VII A BLESSING

"I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."

- A. There are two great and equal necessities of man's nature — work and rest. A man cannot be happy without either. We must have work and we must have rest.
- B. Rest of body and mind. This is one of many verses in the Bible, and especially in the psalms, which brings a needed lesson to the heart of all of us if we read them in simple faith. It sets before us the most comforting and refreshing picture of a devout, sober, and honest person, his day's work ended, his passions kept in order, his sins repented of, his prayers seriously said, "laying himself down to his night's rest" in the full realization that he is neither alone nor unguarded. There is a merciful eye watching over him. A mighty hand stretched out to guard him through the dangers and the temptations of the day, so it will be with him in the night also. His eyelids sink in sleep, but the eyelids of the Lord never become heavy.
- C. This entire rest of God's faithful servants, when they lay down on their bed at night, is beautifully expressed in these words: "In peace will I lay me down to sleep." I will lay me down says the psalmist altogether. All my powers of mind and body agreeing one with another; not torn by violent passions, nor by desire on the one hand nor remorse on the other. The need of taking rest and sleep is a universal law of God's providence over men. In respect of it there is no difference in the highest and the lowest; therefore as death, so sleep may be called a great leveler. The greatest king and the meanest of his subjects, whatever difference there is between them at any given time of their waking moments, must alike forget themselves in sleep before a great many hours are over. To everyone of us, one as much as the other, there then will be but one chance of safety, that is that if God should be pleased to watch over us, be with us when we are away from ourselves.

(Cont'd on page 4)

D. THE REST OF THE SPIRIT. Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give rest (Matthew 11:28). Thus, the psalmist says, "Thou Lord alone makest me to dwell in safety." God is here revealed to us as exercising a personal care and there is something here which should be sweet to each Christian. This shows the minuteness of God's care, the individuality of His love, how He condescends and stoops in acts, not only in great, but also in little things; not only where glory might be procured from great results, but where naught is to be had save the ingratitude and love of a poor, feeble creature whose life has been protected and preserved in a period of helplessness and sleep. There is something inexpressably touching in this "lay me down" of the psalmist. And thus lying down, he vol-

untarily gave up any guardianship of himself; resigned himself into the hands of another. He did so completely, for in the absence of all care, he slept. There was here a perfect trust.

#### CONCLUSION:

The study of this psalm should indicate to us the value of prayer, some of the principles that are necessary if God is to hear our prayer, the importance of the recognition of our need of God's constant care, the multitude of blessings that are ours when we live day by day as faithful Christians, beginning the morning with a prayer such as indicated in Psalms 3 and closing the day with the attitude, disposition, aspirations, and petitions as found in this fourth psalm.

#### THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REDEMPTION

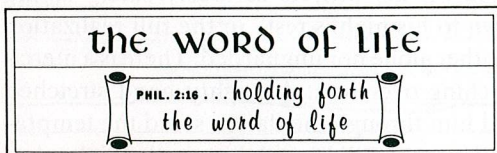
This book is ready for immediate delivery. The price is \$6.95. Send check along with your name and address and zip code to Franklin Camp, 309 Clermont, Birmingham, Ala. 35209.

Send \_\_\_\_\_ The Work of the Holy Spirit — \$6.95

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



Second Class Postage  
PAID  
at Birmingham, Ala.

THE WORD OF LIFE  
Published Monthly  
except December by  
Shades Mountain  
Church of Christ  
959 Alford Ave.  
P. O. Box 26156  
Birmingham, Alabama 35226  
Franklin Camp - Editor

JAMES MEADOWS  
4 CLAYMONT  
INMAN, SOUTH CAROLINA 29349



## What Is Man, That God Is Mindful of Him Psalms 8, Hebrews 2:6

### Introduction

1. As we come close to end of the second Millenium A.D. "the intriguing question of the nineties is "What does the future hold?" (Harold G. Taylor).
2. In the midst of man's search for the answer to the mysteries of the universe, he often overlooks the most important—who am I? Psalms 8 is God's answer.
3. Those who ignore the Bible definition of man:
  - a. Suffer an identity crisis. They do not know:
    - (1) Their origin.
    - (2) Their purpose on earth.
    - (3) Nor their destiny.
  - b. Have never answered the big question:
    - (1) What is the purpose of my life?
    - (2) What is its meaning?
    - (3) Why do I exist?
    - (4) What does it mean to be human?
    - (5) What is success?
    - (6) Who am I?
4. In this lesson I propose to study under these headings:
  - a. A brief exegesis of Psalms to show the greatness of God.
  - b. What is man that thou are mindful of him?
  - c. What is man from God's viewpoint?
  - d. What are some lessons for life?

### Discussion

#### I. Brief Exegesis of Psalms to Give the Context of the Question.

##### A. The fundamental thought and motive of the Psalm is the greatness of God (8:1-2).

1. He is worthy of the adoration and praise of every man because of His works of creation.
  - a. He has set his "glory above the heavens" (v. 1).
  - b. The heavens declare the glory of God (Psa. 19:1-5).
2. He is worthy of the adoration and praise of every man because he created man (Psa. 139:14).
3. He is worthy of the adoration and praise of every man because of his continuing acts of providence.

4. He is worthy of the adoration and praise of men because "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has thou ordained strength" (v. 2a).

a. Thomas Warren explains this verse thus: "In verse 2, the Psalmist affirms that even the most feeble of human beings (infants) constitute such evidence as to be conclusive as to the existence, power, and character of God" (Thomas Warren, *The Eighth Annual Southwest Lectures, "What is Man, That Thou Art Mindful of Him?"* [Pulaski, TN Sain Publications, 1989], p. 53). By their very existence with the power to think, grow, develop to maturity, etc.

b. Coffman gives at least three possible explanations:

1) Jesus quotes this in Matthew 23:16.

2) It may be a metaphor for all mankind, who in their frailty and weakness are as "babes and sucklings in God's eyes."

3) God's use of "babes" is another view. Moses and Christ--He destroyed the enemy and put to silence his adversaries.

B. The marvelous ways of God--Greatness of man (8:3-8).

1. The Psalmist is not speaking derogatory of man as some atheistic evolutionists do: "Men are insignificant 'specks' in an infinite physical universe."

2. The reasons for human dignity and the incredibly tremendous reasons why God is mindful of his human creation are:

- a. God is indeed mindful of him (v. 4a) <sup>(1)</sup> *"MAN" DENOTES WEAKNESS-FRAILITY* <sup>(2)</sup> *GOD'S CARE OF MAN--MT. 6:24-34*
- b. God has actually visited him (v. 4b; Lk. 1:78). *KINDLY VISIT--"LIKE A PHYSICIAN VISITS HIS PATIENT"--*
- c. God created him a little lower than himself (v. 5a).
- d. God crowned him with glory and honor (v. 5b). *ROYAL IN HIS CAPACITIES AND POSITION*
- e. God has put all his works of creation under him (vv. 6-8). *GEN. 1:26-28*

C. Verse 9 is a repetition of the opening exclamation of praise to God.

II. "What Is Man, that thou are mindful of him?"



A. Some questions to consider.

1. What claim has one so weak, and frail, and short-lived, to be remembered by thee?
2. What is there in man that entitles him for such notice?
3. Why has God bestowed on him so signal honour?
4. Why has he placed him over the works of his hands?
5. Why has he made so many arrangements for his comfort?
6. Why has he done so much to save him?

B. Some misconceptions about man.

1. He is only cannon--fodder to the warmonger.
2. He is the product of some lower form of life to the evolutionist.
3. He is by nature a child of Satan to many schools of religion--"positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal union, without defense or excuse" (Baptist Church Manual, J. M. Pendleton, p. 46).
4. To the world man is a law unto himself and he makes a thing right by thinking it right.
5. From another viewpoint man is very insignificant.
  - a. He does not compare favorably with the whale, in size.
  - b. There is no competition between him and the redwoods, in age.
  - c. He is no match for the elephant, in physical strength.

III. What Is Man From God's Viewpoint?

A. Man is the only part of God's creation created in his image (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7).

1. This refers to the spiritual image of God for he is spirit (Jn. 4:24; Cf. Lk. 24:39).

2. He was given an intellect with which he:
    - a. Thinks--Mt. 9:4.
    - b. Reasons--Mk. 2:8.
    - c. Understands--Mt. 13:15.
    - d. Believes (Rom. 10:10).
  3. He was endowed with emotions:
    - a. He despises (2 Sam. 6:16)
    - b. Desires (Rom. 10:1).
    - c. Loves (Mt. 22:37).
    - d. Trusts (Prov. 3:5).
  4. Man was given a will.
    - a. He purposes (Acts 11:23).
    - b. Obeys (Rom. 6:17).
    - c. <sup>"DECREE" (קצו)</sup> Determines (1 Cor. 7:37).
    - d. Intends (Heb. 4:12).
  5. He was given a conscience (1 Jn. 3:20-21; 1 Pet. 3:21; Heb. 9:14).
  6. Thus the Bible presents man as primarily a spiritual being.
    - a. He was endowed with a spirit (Zech. 12:1; Eccl. 12:7).
    - b. The spirit can exist independent of the body (man wears his body as his body wears clothes) (12:1-4; Jas. 2:26).
    - c. Paul calls it the "inward man" (2 Cor. 4:16).
    - d. On resurrection morn we will receive a new spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:51-58; Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:1-3).
- B. Man's position in God's creation is that of a tenant, but God has given it to man to use (Psa. 24:1; 1 Cor. 10:26; 1 Tim. 6:7,17).
- C. Man is a Sinner.
1. He is not a sinner by creation (Gen. 3:1-6; Eccl. 7:29).
  2. He is not a sinner by heredity (Ezek. 18:20).
  3. He is a sinner through disobedience (Rom. 3:23).
- D. He is a creature upon which God has set his heart.
1. Man sinned, but God still loved him (Rom. 5:8).
  2. Gave His Son a sacrifice (Jn. 3:16).
  3. Has given man the gospel (Rom. 1:16).
  4. Desires man's salvation (1 Tim. 2:3-4; Mt. 11:28-30).



E. Man is a Servant.

1. Of sin or righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18).
2. We must serve God (Rom. 6:23).

F. Man is worth more than the entire physical universe (Matt. 16:26; Jn. 3:16; Heb. 2:9ff).

1. This explains God's providential care of man.
2. This explains why God wants every person to be saved.

IV. What are some lessons for life?

A. Man must be devoted to a great cause.

1. As Christians we must live with a powerful purpose and be devoted to a great cause: the glory of God, his kingdom and his will (Matt. 6:9-10).
  - a. The kingdom is the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45-46).
  - b. We must seek the kingdom first (Matt. 6:33).
2. We must exchange things we cannot <sup>KEEP</sup>~~help~~ with things we cannot lose (Matt. 6:19-21).

B. Man must plan to live a short life.

1. We must confess we are strangers and pilgrims (Heb. 11:8-9; 1 Pet. 2:11).
2. We must live for the eternal, not the temporal (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
3. We must not love the world (1 Jn. 2:16-18).
4. We do not know when our life will end (Jas. 4:13-17).

C. Man has a triumphant hope.

1. Christians are people of the resurrection (Jn. 5:28-29).
2. We possess a triumphant hope (Rom. 8:31-39; Heb. 6:18-20).
3. Such a hope should bring us peace and spur us on to fervent labor for

Christ (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:11-14).

### Conclusion

1. The stability of the heavenly bodies begets confidence in God.
2. All of God's works and mercies should humble us. V. 4.
3. The great power God has given us over creatures should be exercised mercifully (Prov. 12:10; Dt. 22:6).
4. As we behold the heavens let us meditate on God and praise him.



Faith is the victory, we know, that overcomes the world.

His banner over us is love, our sword the Word of God;

We tread the road the saints above with shouts of triumph tread.

By faith, they like a whirlwind's breath, swept on o'er every field;

The faith by which they conquered death is still our shining shield.

On every hand the foe we find drawn up in dread array;

Let tents of ease be left behind, and—onward to the fray.

Salvation's helmet on each head, with truth all girt about,

The earth shall tremble 'neath our tread, and echo with our shout.

Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory! Oh, glorious victory,

That overcomes the world."

—John H. Yates

## What Is Man?

James D. Bales

The two fundamental sources of errors are to be found in ignorance of misconceptions of or denials concerning God and concerning man and his nature. Errors crop up in economic, political, social, and religious thinking which are rooted in such misunderstandings. For example, let us see some of the answers which are given to the question: What is man?

### MAN IS ENTIRELY A SPIRIT

There are those who maintain that man is a spirit, an idea, and a spirit or idea only. Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy said: "According to Christian Science, the only real senses of man are spiritual, emanating from divine Mind. Thought passes from God to man, but neither sensation nor report goes from material body to Mind. The intercommunication is always from God to his idea, man." (Science and Health, p. 284: 28.) Men and women are "co-existent and eternal with God." (p. 516: 21; 278: 16; 279: 6; 295: 28; 470: 32; 471: 15; 335: 8; 502; The Unity of God, pp. 61, 69.)

The Bible teaches that man did not exist eternally, but that God created man. (Gen. 1: 1, 26-27.) It further teaches that man's body is from the dust of the ground; and that man is body, soul and spirit. (Gen. 2: 7; 1 Thess. 5: 23; James 2: 26.) In *Science and Health*, the section on Genesis 2: 7, Mrs. Eddy said: "Is this addition to his creation real or unreal? Is it the truth, or is it a lie concerning man and God?"

"It must be a lie, for God presently curses the ground."

Although we realize that man is spirit, he is not spirit only. Sometimes some seem to forget this, and thus fail to take care of the body. They act as if they were exempt from the laws which regulate the body. But bread is necessary, and God knows we have need of things for the body. (Matt. 6: 32-33.)

### MAN IS ENTIRELY MATERIAL

Man is matter only, the materialists maintain. He is but a breathing physical body. When he dies he ceases to exist. If this were true, the Bible would be false. Furthermore, if man were matter only, man could live by bread alone; instead of also needing spiritual food. (Matt. 4: 4.) The fact that even materialists usually seek, in one way or another, for something beyond the material is proof that there is more to man than matter. A matter-machine does not have any spiritual, moral or religious needs or aspirations. It does not even have a problem of morale. Man does, and man's basic needs are an indication of something about the nature of man.

There are some religious people who view man as but breath and body, but they think God will resurrect man. However, the Bible teaches that something about man survives death. (Eccles. 12: 7; Matt. 22: 32.)

### MAN IS AN EVOLVED APE, WHO MAY HAVE A SPARK OF THE DIVINE

The hypothesis of evolution has hypnotized the minds of multitudes. Scientists, religious people, and politicians have had their view of man shaped by this hypothesis. For example, the world-famous Senator Fulbright said on May 30, 1967 that: "Psychologists of late have been restating the truism that man is a civilized animal. Their emphasis, however, is not on the fact that man has built a civilization—we all know that—but on the fact that he is an *animal* which has built a civilization. We *don't* all know that, at least not to the point of being really at peace in our own minds with our own anthropoid origins. We pay lip service to Darwin but, in our heart of hearts, how many of us really believe that we are not fallen gods but unusually precocious apes? Not many, I dare say. And why should we? Who wants to associate with chimpanzees when he has the words and the ideas which enable him to believe that he is only slightly lower than the angels?"

"It may be indeed that there is a spark of the divine in man. I do not wish to deny it; I do wish to make the point that overemphasis upon it, coupled with extreme resistance to the acknowledgement of our animal nature and instincts, fosters dangerous illusions in the human mind. It permits us to believe that our passions are principles, our ambitions noble causes, and our conflicts crusades." (*Congressional Record*, June 7, 1967, p. S7858.)

Man does not want to admit that he is a precocious ape, so he uses words and ideas to deceive himself into believing that he is a little lower than the angels. The Senator concludes that our animal nature, inherited from the apes, is the basic cause of wars; or at least a basic cause. The Biblical doctrine is that man was created by God (Gen. 1), and not evolved from the apes. Man is a little lower than the angels, and wars come from sin. (Rom. 7: 7-13; James 4: 1-10.)

### WHOLLY GOOD, WHOLLY BAD

There are those who believe that God created man, but who believe that through sin man has become to-

tally bad. The Bible teaches that man has sinned, and that some become hardened and depraved. And yet, it also teaches that there is in man the recognition of duty, of obligation, and that he is conscious of the struggle between good and evil in his life. This was true of the Gentile who was not under the law (Rom. 2), and it was true of the Jew who was under the law (Rom. 7: 7).

There are religious modernists who think that man evolved, and that he is almost wholly good; evil resides only in institutions. This concept underlies the social gospel of Rauschenbusch. As a leading liberal theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, points out: "Rauschenbusch, in his *Theology for the Social Gospel*, devotes a chapter to 'Original Sin' in an attempt to rehabilitate a doctrine which had become odious to his generation. He does this by attributing the universality of sin to the transmission of egoistic tendencies through faulty institutions. This leads inevitably to the Marxian hope of a radical change in the evil institutions, particularly the institution of property. Rauschenbusch never took the step toward Marxism except by implication. But many of his followers did, including many of us. A few even got caught in the toils of Stalinism. They did not realize that the nationalization of property would make for a monopoly of power for the oligarchy which managed the socialized property—a monopoly of power which the capitalist oligarchies possessed in the day when we were exercised about social injustice." (*Religion in Life*, Autumn 1958, p. 33.) Although Rauschenbusch was a socialist who was influenced by Marx, and although capitalists never possessed the power that the monopoly of political and economic power in the same hands brings, Niebuhr is right in saying that these people overlooked an important truth about man, i.e., that man is a sinner, and that he cannot excuse himself by pointing to faulty institutions. Ivor Thomas, a former socialist in Britain, has pointed out that socialism does not understand human nature. (See his *The Socialist Tragedy*, the chapter on socialism and human nature.)

We have not endeavored in this article to engage in an extensive discussion of what the Bible teaches about man. We have been trying to illustrate how important it is for us to study and be guided by the Biblical doctrine of man.

## The Man Who Refused a Pardon

V. P. Black

In 1829 George Wilson was sentenced to die by hanging for mail robbery and murder. Andrew Jackson after reviewing the case granted to Wilson a pardon which was rejected by Wilson. Being in doubt as to what course to pursue, they asked a ruling of the Supreme Court. The ruling was this: A pardon is only a piece of paper the value of which depends upon the acceptance of the one implicated. It is hardly conceivable that a man would reject a pardon, but millions are doing it every day.

God has given to man the remedy or a pardon but man through the ages has rejected this offer. Let us

notice this offer and remedy that are recorded in Isaiah 55: 6, 7: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

### 1. Here We Have an Order—to Seek.

Seeking has always been connected with salvation. "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them." (Isa. 34: 16.) Our Lord said, "Seek and ye shall find." When one is honest and sincere and wants the truth more than anything in the world one will find it. The reason many people never come to a knowledge of the truth, they are not seeking truth but seeking some verse to justify the conclusion that they have already reached. Let us be sure that we are seeking the truth, regardless of the subject we are studying.

### 2. The Object—The Lord.

Let us notice that the object of our searching is the Lord. Before we are able to find the true God we must give up all other gods, and this is not an easy thing to do. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Ex. 20:2-3.)

The reason the rich young ruler did not follow Jesus was because of his devotion to other gods. This ruler had many admirable traits such as honesty, sincerity, devotion to father and mother, good morals, but he also worshipped a god instead of the true God. Man must seek the Lord because he needs a mediator. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 2: 5.) Man is lost and he needs some one to show him the way. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14: 6.) Man needs spiritual blessings and all of these are in Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. 1: 3.)

### 3. An Opportunity—while He may be Found.

"Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." (Prov. 1: 28.) The context of this verse shows that these people had every opportunity to obey God, but like many today who just laugh at God by rejecting his word.

Many times in discussing the Bible with someone he will say, "I am not ready yet." This person needs to think about the fact that when he does get ready, God may not be ready. I have never subscribed to the theory that man can hear thousands of sermons and reject thousands of invitations, give his whole life to the devil and make fun of God all his life, and when he gets too old to do much work for the devil,



# Gospel Advocate

Published weekly at 110 Seventh Avenue, North, Nashville, Tenn.

ESTABLISHED 1855

Entered at post office at Nashville, Tenn., as second-class matter.

VOLUME XCV, No. 15

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, APRIL 9, 1953

\$3.00 PER YEAR, IN ADVANCE

## What Is Man?

GUY N. WOODS

This absorbing question inspiration not only raises (Psalm 8: 4; Heb. 2: 6), but it also answers (Gen. 2: 7; Job 32: 8; Dan. 1: 15; Zech. 12: 1). An induction of these passages reveals the important fact that man is a complex and composite being; he is possessed of a body derived immediately from his parents, but originally formed from the dust of the ground; and he is animated by a spirit infused in him by his Creator.

The view widely prevails that the process by which this union of body and spirit was first accomplished—in the formation of the first man, Adam—is set forth in the familiar words of Gen. 2: 7: "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." An examination of the facts involved will not support the popular view. This will become immediately apparent from an examination of the phrase, breath of life, popularly believed to be identified with the spirit—the immortal part of man. The phrase is translated from the Hebrew *ruach chaivim*, literally, breath of lives, occurring four times in the early chapters of Genesis. These instances, in the order of their occurrence, are:

Gen. 2: 7: "... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

Gen. 6: 17: "And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is in the earth shall die."

Gen. 7: 15: "And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh wherein is the breath of life."

Gen. 7: 22: "All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was on the dry land, died."

From the foregoing, it will be observed that three out of the four occurrences of the phrase are descriptive of the animal creation and not man. It follows, therefore, that the expression, "breath of life," merely denotes the animal life which man has in common with the lower creation, and was not designed to indicate the infusion of an immortal nature.

Here, indeed, is an unmistakable token of the distinction between the *soul* and the *spirit* of man. (Heb. 4: 12.) The word "spirit" is a specific term; as applied to man, it designates an entity not derived from the flesh, and hence, not corruptible or subject to death. The word *soul*, however, is a generic term; it has a wide variety of uses in the scripture, and the context must always be considered in determining its meaning in any given instance. For example, in its first two occurrences in the sacred writings, it is applied to fish, to birds, and to snakes: "And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures [literally, living souls], and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." (Gen. 1: 20.) "And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life [literally, a living soul], I have given every green herb for food: and it was so." (Gen. 1: 30.)

In seeking the answer to what constitutes man's nature, it must be recognized that Gen. 2: 7 does not contain the last word. The assumption that it does indicate the complete constitution of the nature of man has been shrewdly utilized by materialists. Their reasoning follows this pattern:

1. Man was formed.
2. Man was formed from the dust of the ground.
3. The breath thus infused into him gave him life.

But,

1. That into which God breathed—the fleshly body of man—was not conscious prior to the infusion of the breath which produced life.

2. The infusion of breath produced both consciousness and life.

3. Therefore, since life and consciousness came with the breath, when the breath leaves, life and consciousness leave!

Were the phrase, "breath of life," in Gen. 2: 7, to be identified with the "spirit"—the immortal nature of man—there would be some basis to this reasoning; in view of the fact that it was not Moses' design, in this passage, to indicate the manner in which man came into possession of his spirit, the conclusion of the materialist does not follow. Here, indeed, is the explanation of his effort to identify the breath of man with his spirit, on the assumption that Gen. 2: 7 reveals the entrance of the spirit into man, and that the spirit which entered him is simply his breath. It is for this reason that any reference which the Scriptures make to the spirit leaving the body they (the materialists) explain as the loss of breath by which life terminates.

The effort, to make the spirit of man no more than the breath, is surely the height of absurdity; yet, on this contention, materialism constructs its case.

1. Peter admonished the sisters to have "a meek and quiet spirit"; but since, in the view of the materialists (Adventists, Christadelphians, "Jehovah's Witnesses," etc.), the spirit is the breath, Peter was simply urging that they should not *snore*! (1 Pet. 3: 4.)

2. "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit." (Acts 23: 8.) That knocks the breath out of us all!

3. Jesus gave the disciples "authority over unclean spirits" (Matt. 10: 1), i.e., foul breath such as liquor, tobacco, halitosis, etc.

4. Paul besought the Corinthians to cleanse themselves from "all defilement of flesh and spirit" (2 Cor. 7: 1), and thus to use mouthwash for their bad breath!

Inasmuch as Gen. 2: 7 does not attempt to exhibit the full constitution of man, we must look elsewhere in the sacred writings for information thereon. This information the Scripture abundantly supplies: "But there is a spirit in man." (Job. 32: 8.) "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was grieved in the midst of my body." (Dan. 7: 15.) "Thus saith Jehovah, who ... formeth the spirit of man within him." (Zech. 12: 1.)

The spirit—the immortal nature which man receives from God—is derived directly: "Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12: 9.) On this, as on most matters of inspiration, men have been slow to accept the obvious conclusion to which these premises lead. Three prominent theories have been advanced as to the manner in which the spirit is derived.

1. The theory of *pre-existence*. This is a form of transmigration by which it is alleged that the spirit existed—as an accountable being—in another age. It was held by Plato in an effort to explain the soul's possession of ideas which he assumed were not received through the senses; by Philo to account for the spirit's imprisonment in the body; and by Origen to justify what he regarded as a vast difference in which men enter the world. In modern times it has been advocated by Kant and Muller in Germany and by Beecher in this country.

2. The theory of *traducianism*. This theory holds that the spirit was created in the same manner the body was, and that it is propagated in the same fashion, i.e., by generation. On this assumption,

(Continued on page 217)



# Gospel Advocate

Conducted for a Half Century by  
D. Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, F. D. Srygley, and J. C. McQuiddy  
B. C. GOODPASTURE, Editor  
and President of the Gospel Advocate Company



## Terms of Subscription

Three dollars per year in advance. To Canada or foreign countries, three dollars and fifty cents. The date on the label shows the time to which your paper is paid. The change of the label will serve as a receipt. If not changed in two weeks, write us.



## Club Rates

Five or more subscriptions sent by one person, two dollars and twenty-five cents each. Other countries, two dollars and seventy-five cents.



## Bulk Rates

Bundle of ten or more, to a church or agent (no labels), for three and a half cents per copy. Under this plan churches may buy a copy for each family in the congregation at less than the subscription price, or an agent may sell at five cents per copy.



## Note to Solicitors of Club Subscriptions

When furnishing addresses, be sure to indicate zone numbers in the larger cities.



## Our Address

Send all communications to the Gospel Advocate Company, 110 Seventh Avenue, North, Nashville, Tennessee.

## Colleges and Church Autonomy

H. LEO BOLES

It is well to keep in the clear all issues that arise with respect to our colleges and the churches. A failure to do this results in much confusion. All should know the autonomy of the churches of Christ and should not violate the sanctity of the New Testament order of things. Many, it seems, have not taken the time to examine the New Testament with respect to the proper functioning of the church. Again, many enthusiastic advocates for the colleges transgress the rights both of the colleges and the churches. Each should know the place of these institutions and should seek to keep them in their proper places. They should be kept distinct as to their purpose or mission. The churches of Christ are divine institutions as local congregations. The colleges are human institutions and are regulated by human judgment. The churches are limited by the New Testament as to their mission, work, rights, and laws of government; but the colleges are founded by men, endowed and controlled by men as educational institutions. The colleges have no power except that derived from the human agencies which created them.

Nothing is taught more clearly in the New Testament than the independent functioning of the church as a local organization. The church is a simple, independent institution, having in itself all the power for filling its mission on earth. Christ, the head, has entrusted to the congregation the high privilege of self-government under him. The New Testament contains the charter, constitution, and discipline of each congregation and defines and limits the rights of each. Whatever power or right the church has has been expressly delegated to it in the New Testament. The assumption of other powers or rights is an unauthorized usurpation and is condemned. Each church is bound to retain the full possession of the rights and privileges committed to it by Christ, the head. No church has any right to increase its power nor diminish aught from that which has been committed to it by the head.

Furthermore, each church is independent of all other churches. The New Testament does not teach that one church is dependent on another. Each church possesses the right of discipline and correction of its members; it has all the power and authority over its members that may be exercised by any religious institution. There are no examples nor teachings of the New Testament which give one church any authority over another church. The fundamental law of discipline is found in the New Testament, and is restricted to the one congregation. Whatever is said of the rights and powers of one congregation is said of all others. Each congregation stands on an equal footing with all others. No church has any authority over another church; no "board of elders" has any control over any church. God has made each independent of the others in all of its work and worship. All the churches of Christ are regulated by the New Testament. This makes them equal and similar.

Since each congregation is independent in its operations, and since no other church can scripturally exercise any authority over another church, it may be taken for granted that no human institution can scripturally exercise any authority over any church. The moment that any church submits to the authority of a human, that moment the church proves itself unfaithful to Christ. No church can allow any human institution to exercise any authority over it. The church must stand or fall before its own Master; it must maintain integrity by remaining unnumbered by human machinery. If any human institution attempts to impose its authority on the church, the church must resist by all the authority of Christ such encroachment of authority. It matters not what organized foreign power may attempt to control a church, whether that be an educational institution, fraternal order, political government, or whatever may be the power, it must be resisted by the church. The church cannot surrender to any outside authority and still be true to its head.

The congregation has a right to discipline its members, to direct the work and worship, to take its funds and distribute them as it may seem best. Of course, no moral or spiritual principle is to be violated in any of its activities. The church controls its own affairs as a Christian may do. *Whatever may be right for a Christian to do may be right for a church, under certain restrictions and limitations, to do.* The Christian is independent and so is the church in their respective fields of operation. Both the individual Christian and the congregation are instructed and limited in their operations by the principles of the New Testament. Christians have a right to contribute of their means to colleges, orphan homes, old people's homes, and other good works; *churches have a right to contribute to these if they so desire.* (Italics mine.) No human institution has any right to enforce its support upon an individual Christian nor congregation. All "high-pressure methods" of colleges to bring churches under obligation to support them is a violation of the fundamental principle governing the autonomy of the church. Attention may be called to the good work that the colleges may be doing, but the church cannot be brought under obligation to support the colleges without surrendering its freedom to decide for itself.

No one has a right to organize any human institution, it matters not what may be the purpose or mission of that institution, and fasten it upon the churches of Christ. No one has a right as a Christian to form a corporation, educational institution, orphan home, or any other human agency and impose these upon the church for support. Churches must be left free to decide and act for themselves. No one has a right to coerce or attempt to coerce a church into supporting any human institution, it matters not how laudable may be the motive of that institution. "Field agents," "promoters," "high-pressure salesmen," or "humble beggars" have no right to demand that churches support them; even religious papers or journals have no authority to impose their support on any church. Again, let it be stated that the churches must be left free to act for themselves on these matters.

Some colleges promote "athletic programs" and other things which go with our "modern college life," but many good and thoughtful brethren are opposed to these activities of "our colleges." Surely the churches of Christ are not under obligation to support these colleges which foster such worldly amusement and give occasion to much wickedness. Any college that claims the patronage and support of churches should respect the good judgment of those churches. But the point here is emphasized that it matters not what may be the program of the colleges, they have no authority over the churches and have no just grounds for demanding that the churches support them. Let us keep the issues clear; let the colleges know their places and keep in their places; let them know that they are only human institutions and must not usurp authority over the churches; let the churches know their rights, and let them maintain these rights by resisting in every righteous way any attempt to violate the New Testament order of things. (Gospel Advocate, February 25, 1937, page 170.)

## Sermon Outline

FRANK L. COX

### Burden Bearing

GAL. 6: 1-5; PSALM 55: 22

Many are the burdens that fall upon us along the way of life. Some of these are light; others are heavy. Some we can bear alone; others we cannot bear without assistance. Our lesson has



If the time comes that we must stand condemned in the presence of God, it will not be because of any failure of God or Christ to love us, but simply because we have refused to abide in their love. There is nothing strange or mysterious about abiding in the love of Christ, for it comes as a result of obeying his commandments. Jesus said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." This is the reason for which you cannot afford to fail to do anything you know God wants you to do, and the urgent reason for constant study of his word to be sure that we are doing his will.



### The Eighth Psalm

This little poem, ascribed to David, presents a picture of man's dignity framed in the glory of the Lord. Like a jewel in its setting, man is encased in the greatness and goodness of his Creator and Keeper. "It is an evening song, the carol of the nightingale rejoicing in the sheen of the moon and the stars. Yet we may be sure that the soul of the singer was flooded with the sunlight of divine grace and favor. It is a lyrical episode to the grand lyric of the creation, touching it at the story of the fourth and sixth creative days." (Gen. 1.)

#### THE GLORY OF GOD

- 1 O Jehovah, our Lord,  
How excellent is thy name in all the earth,  
Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens!
- 2 Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength,  
Because of thine adversaries,  
That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

The psalmist had been beholding the beauty and magnificence of the heavens. He passed at once to children, little children. "But there is really no shock in this, for children are, as they have been justly and beautifully designated, 'little majesties.'" The stars above and the children below sing in unison the praises of God. How the children stilled the enemy and revengeful may be seen in our Lord's triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem. (Matt. 21: 15, 16.)

#### THE DIGNITY OF MAN

- 3 When I consider thy heavens, the works of thy fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
- 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him?  
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

- 5 For thou hast made him but little lower than God,  
And crownest him with glory and honor.
- 6 Thou makest him to make domination over the works of thy hands;  
Thou hast put all things under his feet:
- 7 All sheep and oxen,  
Yea, and the beasts of the field,
- 8 The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,  
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.

Evidently, as the psalmist wrote, two thoughts were struggling together in his mind—the littleness and the greatness of man. By these two thoughts may our attention be arrested.

1. His apparent littleness. (Verses 3, 4.) When he looked into the heavens, the psalmist was at first overwhelmed with a sense of his own littleness. Seemingly, man is but a grain of sand on a desert, a drop of water in the ocean, a mote in the sun. When we compare his physical being with the universe in which he lives, man seems so insignificant! Why should God think of him, or visit him with such marvelous mercy?

2. His greatness. (Verses 5-8.) "The race started high. At the beginning of his career man's moral and spiritual plane was but a little lower than Deity. Humanity is Jehovah's finest product. God's greatest work is not a planet, a shining sun, an ether sea, a potent law, a celestial city; it is not singing angels and shining seraphim, but man. At the summit of creation God made man but a little lower than God, stamped him with the Divine image, crowned him, and gave him dominion over all creation. This is the Bible doctrine of the origin of man, and it takes us to the heights. To be a member of the human race, the psalmist declares, is to come of a great line."

#### THE GLORY OF GOD

- 9 O Jehovah, our Lord  
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!

As the Psalm began, so it ends with adoring wonder and praise. It is the glory of his Maker which gives such dignity to man. The stars above, the children and men on earth—all give glory and honor to the name of God. It is only through the Son of God that we can ascribe to God the glory and the honor and the majesty that is justly due.

#### TO PROVOKE THOUGHT

1. To whom is the authorship of this Psalm ascribed?
2. Quote one verse by memory.
3. What is the theme of verses 1, 2? of verses 3-8? of verse 9?
4. In what sense is man so insignificant?
5. In what sense is he so important?
6. Point out the danger of downgrading ourselves.
7. What practical lessons have you learned?

#### Answers to:

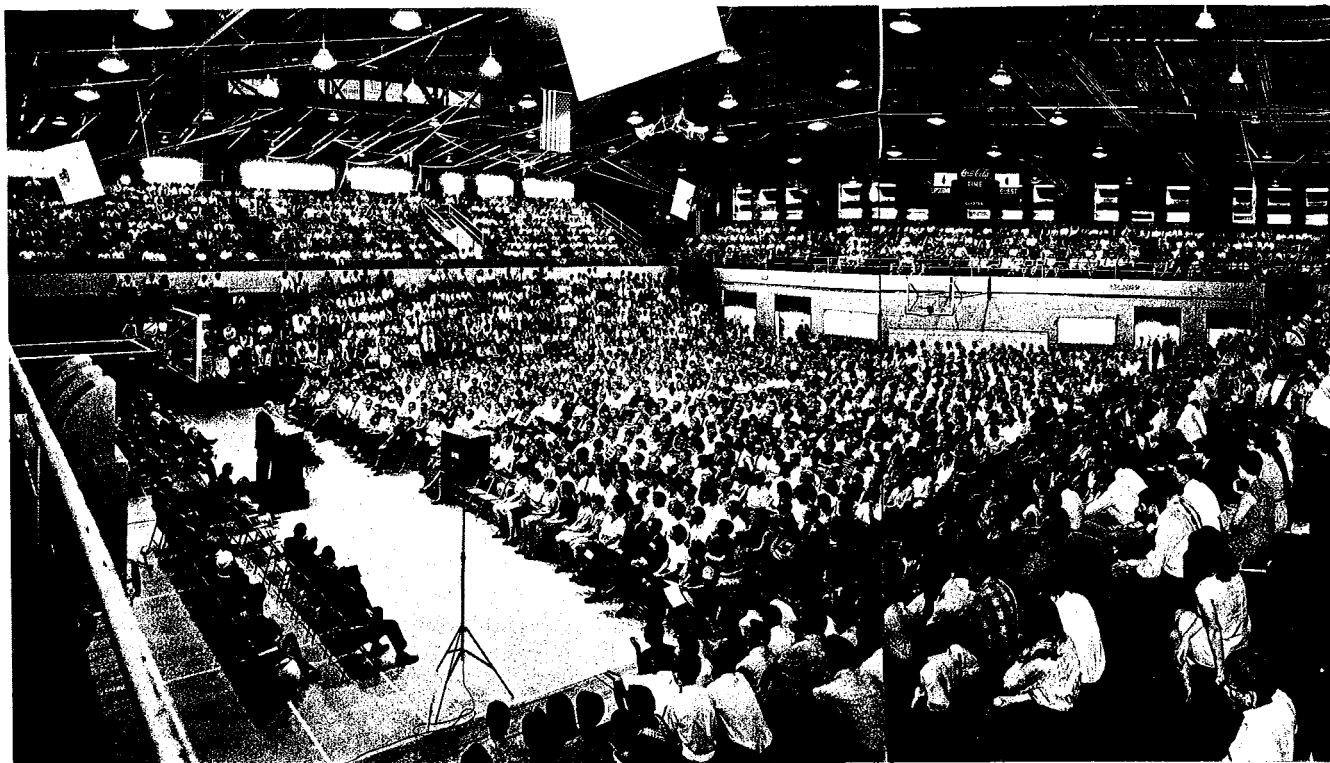
#### KNOW YOUR BIBLE

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Devil. (Rev. 12: 9.)       | 6. Edom. (Gen. 25: 30.)       |
| 2. Abraham. (Gen. 17: 5.)     | 7. Israel. (Gen. 32: 28.)     |
| 3. Sarah. (Gen. 17: 15.)      | 8. Elias. (Matt. 16: 14—KJV). |
| 4. Mara. (Ruth 1: 20.)        | 9. Cephas. (John 1: 42.)      |
| 5. Jerubbaal. (Judges 6: 32.) | 10. Paul. (Acts 13: 9.)       |



## Lipscomb Student Body Hears President's Opening Address

Willard Collins



President Athens Clay Pullias spoke to the largest student body in the history of David Lipscomb College—2,943—as he officially opened Lipscomb's seventy-seventh year on October 6, 1967.

"You more than 2,900 young people who are here today are, indeed, fortunate," he told the joint assembly of college, high school, and elementary school students and personnel.

"You have been endowed with great abilities and faculties. The very fact that you are in a student body of this kind means that you have talents and abilities above the average.

"The greatest contribution that you as a young person can make to humanity and to yourself is to develop the talents that God has given you, and the abilities with which you have been endowed, to the highest point of usefulness and power of which you are capable.

"The hope of mankind lies in the development of young people like you into Christian leaders of the future—Christian leaders in the home, in the church, in the community, in the nation, and in the world."

Lipscomb's total enrollment in the four college classes for fall is 2,068, a ten per cent increase over last year's 1,884.

Pullias said all at Lipscomb are "humbly grateful for this all-time record student body," especially since it means that on this campus nearly 3,000 boys and girls and young men and women are studying the Bible as a text every regular school day.

The total enrollment of 2,943 in the college, high school and elementary school compares to last year's previous record high of 2,752.

### The Success . . .

(Concluded from page 737)

sages rests upon Jesus Christ. A study of the epistles from those directed to Thessalonica in the early 50's to those written by the apostle of love perhaps three decades later reveals that the burden of their preaching is still Jesus. To the alien sinner they preached Jesus. To the redeemed sinner safely inside the ark of spiritual safety they continued to preach and teach of Jesus. The alien sinner needed him to become saved. The saved needed a lifetime diet of the "bread of life" to remain redeemed. Paul told Timothy to preach the word and to be urgent in season and out of season. (2 Tim. 4: 2.) This timely admonition means to preach when the season is convenient for proclamation and to preach when the season is inconvenient and favorable moments for gospel proclamation have to be created. Eternal ruin faces the unredeemed and with sleepless zeal they must be warned. Such they did in New Testament times. Should not the constancy of our proclaimed messages take on the same urgent earnestness characteristic of these first century pioneers?

The character of the proclaimers was of inestimable value in the impressive victories they won for Prince Immanuel. The character of the proclaimer

What Is Man, That God Is Mindful of Him  
Psalms 8, Hebrews 2:6

Introduction

1. As we come close to end of the second Millenium A.D. "the intriguing questions of the nineties is "What does the future hold?" (Harold G. Taylor).
2. In the midst of man's search for the answer to the mysteries of the universe, he often overlooks the most important—who am I? Psalms 8 is God's answer.
3. Those who ignore the Bible definition of man:
  - a. Suffer an identity crisis. They do not know:
    - (1) Their origin.
    - (2) Their purpose on earth.
    - (3) Nor their destiny.
  - b. Have never answered the big question:
    - (1) What is the purpose of my life?
    - (2) What is its meaning?
    - (3) Why do I exist?
    - (4) What does it mean to be human?
    - (5) What is success?
    - (6) Who am I?
4. In this lesson I propose to study under these headings:
  - a. A brief exegesis of Psalms to show the greatness of God.
  - b. What is man that thou are mindful of him?
  - c. What is man from God's viewpoint?
  - d. What are some lessons for life?

Discussion

I. Brief Exegesis of Psalms to Give the Context of the Question.

- A. The fundamental thought and motive of the Psalm is the greatness of God (8:1-2).
  1. He is worthy of the adoration and praise of every man because of His works of creation.
    - a. He has set his "glory above the heavens" (v. 1).
    - b. The heavens declare the glory of God (Psa. 19:1-5).
  2. He is worthy of the adoration and praise of every man because he created man (Psa. 139:14).
  3. He is worthy of the adoration and praise of every man because of his continuing acts of providence.

4. He is worthy of the adoration and praise of men because "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has thou ordained strength" (v. 2a).
  - a. Thomas Warren explains this verse thus: "In verse 2, the Psalmist affirms that even the most feeble of human beings (infants) constitute such evidence as to be conclusive as to the existence, power, and character of God" (Thomas Warren, *The Eighth Annual Southwest Lectures, "What is Man, That Thou Art Mindful of Him"?* [Pulaski, TN Sain Publications, 1989], p. 53). By their very existence with the power to think, grow, develop to maturity, etc.
  - b. Coffman gives at least three possible explanations:
    - 1) Jesus quotes this in Matthew 22:16.
    - 2) It may be a metaphor for all mankind, who in their frailty and weakness are as "babes and sucklings in God's eyes."
    - 3) God's use of "babes" is another view. Moses and Christ--He destroyed the enemy and put to silence his adversaries.

B. The marvelous ways of God--Greatness of man (8:3-8).

1. The Psalmist is not speaking derogatory of man as some atheistic evolutionists do: "Men are insignificant 'specks' in an infinite physical universe."
2. The reasons for human dignity and the incredibly tremendous reasons why God is mindful of his human creation are:
  - a. God is indeed mindful of him (v. 4a).
  - b. God has actually visited him (v. 4b; Lk. 1:78).
  - c. God created him a little lower than himself (v. 5a).
  - d. God crowned him with glory and honor (v. 5b).
  - e. God has put all his works of creation under him (vv. 6-8).

C. Verse 9 is a repetition of the opening exclamation of praise to God.

II. "What Is Man, that thou are mindful of him?"

A. Some questions to consider.

1. What claim has one so weak, and frail, and short-lived, to be remembered by thee?
2. What is there in man that entitles him for such notice?
3. Why has God bestowed on him so signal honour?
4. Why has he placed him over the works of his hands?
5. Why has he made so many arrangements for his comfort?
6. Why has he done so much to save him?

B. Some misconceptions about man.

1. He is only cannon--fodder to the warmonger.
2. He is the product of some lower form of life to the evolutionist.
3. He is by nature a child of Satan to many schools of religion--"positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal union, without defense or excuse" (Baptist Church Manual, J. M. Pendleton, p. 46).
4. To the world man is a law unto himself and he makes a thing right by thinking it right.
5. From another viewpoint man is very insignificant.
  - a. He does not compare favorably with the whale, in size.
  - b. There is no competition between him and the redwoods, in age.
  - c. He is no match for the elephant, in physical strength.

III. What Is Man From God's Viewpoint?

A. Man is the only part of God's creation created in his image (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7).

1. This refers to the spiritual image of God for he is spirit (Jn. 4:24; Cf. Lk. 24:39).

2. He was given an intellect with which he:

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Thinks--Mt. 9:4.  | c. Understands--Mt. 13:15. |
| b. Reasons--Mk. 2:8. | d. Believes (Rom. 10:10).  |

3. He was endowed with emotions:

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| a. He despises (2 Sam. 6:16). | c. Loves (Mt. 22:37).  |
| b. Desires (Rom. 10:1).       | d. Trusts (Prov. 3:5). |

4. Man was given a will.

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. He purposes (Acts 11:23). | c. Determines (1 Cor. 7:37). |
| b. Obeys (Rom. 6:17).        | d. Intends (Heb. 4:12).      |

5. He was given a conscience (1 Jn. 3:20-21; 1 Pet. 3:21; Heb. 9:14).

6. Thus the Bible presents man as primarily a spiritual being.

- a. He was endowed with a spirit (Zech. 12:1; Eccl. 12:7).
- b. The spirit can exist independent of the body (man wears his body as his body wears clothes) (12:1-4; Jas. 2:26).
- c. Paul calls it the "inward man" (2 Cor. 4:16).
- d. On resurrection morn we will receive a new spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:51-58; Phil. 3:21; 1 Jn. 3:1-3).

B. Man's position in God's creation is that of a tenant, but God has given it to man to use (Psa. 24:1; 1 Cor. 10:26; 1 Tim. 6:7,17).

C. Man is a Sinner.

1. He is not a sinner by creation (Gen. 3:1-6; Eccl. 7:29).
2. He is not a sinner by heredity (Ezek. 18:20).
3. He is a sinner through disobedience (Rom. 3:23).

D. He is a creature upon which God has set his heart.

1. Man sinned, but God still loved him (Rom. 5:8).
2. Gave His Son a sacrifice (Jn. 3:16).
3. Has given man the gospel (Rom. 1:16).
4. Desires man's salvation (1 Tim. 2:3-4; Mt. 11:28-30).



E. Man is a Servant.

1. Of sin or righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18).
2. We must serve God (Rom. 6:23).

F. Man is worth more than the entire physical universe (Matt. 16:26; Jn. 3:16; Heb. 2:9ff).

1. This explains God's providential care of man.
2. This explains why God wants every person to be saved.

IV. What are some lessons for life?

A. Man must be devoted to a great cause.

1. As Christians we must live with a powerful purpose and be devoted to a great cause: the glory of God, his kingdom and his will (Matt. 6:9-10).
  - a. The kingdom is the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45-46).
  - b. We must seek the kingdom first (Matt. 6:33).
2. We must exchange things we cannot <sup>KEEP</sup> help with things we cannot lose (Matt. 6:19-21).

B. Man must plan to live a short life.

1. We must confess we are strangers and pilgrims (Heb. 11:8-9; 1 Pet. 2:11).
2. We must live for the eternal, not the temporal (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
3. We must not love the world (1 Jn. 2:16-18).
4. We do not know when our life will end (Jas. 4:13-17).

C. Man has a triumphant hope.

1. Christians are people of the resurrection (Jn. 5:28-29).
2. We possess a triumphant hope (Rom. 8:31-39; Heb. 6:18-20).
3. Such a hope should bring us peace and spur us on to fervent labor for

Christ (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:11-14).

Conclusion

1. The stability of the heavenly bodies begets confidence in God.
2. All of God's works and mercies should humble us. V. 4.
3. The great power God has given us over creatures should be exercised mercifully (Prov. 12:10; Dt. 22:6).
4. As we behold the heavens let us meditate on God and praise him.



# *The Expositor*

EDITOR

WINFRED CLARK

"...and expounded the matter unto them in order." (Acts 11:4).

Volume 1

February, 1982

Number 9

## PSALMS II

### INTRODUCTION

We have no problem as which psalm this one is. Paul tells us that it is the second when he quotes from it. (Acts 13:33) David is the author and this is verified by the prayer of early Christians. (Acts 4:25)

There is to this psalm the Messianic tone. It is prophetic, pointing to Christ and his kingdom's establishment in spite of opposition. When one reads with this in mind it becomes all the more foolish for men to oppose God. Also, men were without excuse in not knowing God's plan when Christ came.

Among other things, this is a "Psalm of Voices". There are several speakers and what they say is quite revealing. Though we live in a world where we are bombarded by voices we would do well to hear what is said here.

### I. THERE IS THE VOICE OF ASTONISHMENT. (v.1-3)

A casual reading will show that the speaker is astonished at some things that are happening. It seems beyond all the bounds of reasoning that such as he describes should occur. Why men would dare what they are doing amazes the writer. He is astonished at several things and we shall try to note some, such as:

#### A. ANTAGONISM (v.1)

This shows itself in the foolish rage and false reasoning of the people he speaks of. Their attitude is one of anger and rage. They are unreasonable.

B. DISPLEASURE (v.5)  
He will show his displeasure by his wrath and these men like Pilate, Herod, and others cannot hope to escape.

C. DETERMINATION (v.6)  
The way of the Lord is settled and men are not going to stop it. God would set up his kingdom when Christ came regardless of the Jews. Their reception or rejection of him was not the determining factor. God has a determinate counsel. His word is sure and settled and men are not going to undo it.

### III. THE VOICE OF AFFIRMATION. (v.7-9)

The king declares his position in spite of what those who are in rebellion may do or say. The king who is set on the throne by God speaks of his:

A. PERSON (v.7)  
He lets us know who he is. He is none other than the Son of God. He lets men know that God said that is who he is. He identifies him as such.

Paul used this verse and refers to the resurrection of Jesus. (Acts 13:33) Also, he says he is declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom.1:4) So we don't have to wonder who he is who was to be king.

B. POSITION (v.8)  
He would be over the heathen, even those that rage, and his reign would be universal.

C. POWER (v.9)  
Since he is supreme and has power, it is foolish for anybody to oppose him. Those who set themselves up are no match for God and his annointed.

### IV. THE VOICE OF ADMONITION. (v.10-12)

The writer, by the Holy Spirit, appeals to those who oppose the Lord and his plan. They should know such



# *The Expositor*

EDITOR

WINFRED CLARK

"...and expounded the matter unto them in order," (Acts 11:4).

Volume 1

February, 1982

Number 9

## PSALMS II

### INTRODUCTION

We have no problem as which psalm this one is. Paul tells us that it is the second when he quotes from it. (Acts 13:33) David is the author and this is verified by the prayer of early Christians. (Acts 4:25)

There is to this psalm the Messianic tone. It is prophetic, pointing to Christ and his kingdom's establishment in spite of opposition. When one reads with this in mind it becomes all the more foolish for men to oppose God. Also, men were without excuse in not knowing God's plan when Christ came.

Among other things, this is a "Psalm of Voices". There are several speakers and what they say is quite revealing. Though we live in a world where we are bombarded by voices we would do well to hear what is said here.

### 1. THERE IS THE VOICE OF ASTONISHMENT. (v.1-3)

A casual reading will show that the speaker is astonished at some things that are happening. It seems beyond all the bounds of reasoning that such as he describes should occur. Why men would dare what they are doing amazes the writer. He is astonished at several things and we shall try to note some, such as:

#### A. ANTAGONISM (v.1)

This shows itself in the foolish rage and false reasoning of the people he speaks of. Their attitude is one of anger and rage. They are unreasonable.



It is interesting to note that the word for imagine here is from the same word as meditate in Psalms 1:2. One thing is of God, the other of nonsense. The latter one thinks of plans that will not work. So the writer is astonished and asks why people do as they do.

B. ARROGANCE (v.2)

The antagonism of verse one will show itself in a number of ways but one will be seen in the arrogance of verse two. Look at the positions these people take. They set themselves, which is equal to setting themselves up in places they have no right to. They feel self sufficient. Arrogance also shows itself in the plans they adopt. You see, their position and plans are against the Lord and his annointed. Surely one must be proud and puffed up to dare do this.

C. ASSUMPTIONS (v.3)

Not only is he astonished at the antagonism and arrogance, but look at the assumptions of these people. They declare that they will have liberty. They don't want God's restraints. They want to be free to live lawless lives. They assume that they could do such.

But, that crowd is still alive with one "lib" movement after another. They want to cast away the restraints also, and such ought to arouse voices of astonishment.

THE VOICE OF AUTHORITY. (v.4-6)

In spite of what kings, judges, and others may assume or say, there is one who has the last word. He is God. When the one who is really in control speaks, we see his:

A. DERISION (v.4)

Though they set themselves on earth to oppose him, God still sits in control in heaven. He, as it were, laughs at the puny efforts of man to snatch control. His will is sovereign and nobody will be able to unseat him.

B. DISPLEASURE (v.5)

He will show his displeasure by his wrath and these men like Pilate, Herod, and others cannot hope to escape.

C. DETERMINATION (v.6)

The way of the Lord is settled and men are not going to stop it. God would set up his kingdom when Christ came regardless of the Jews. Their reception or rejection of him was not the determining factor. God has a determinate counsel. His word is sure and settled and men are not going to undo it.

III. THE VOICE OF AFFIRMATION. (v.7-9)

The king declares his position in spite of what those who are in rebellion may do or say. The king who is set on the throne by God speaks of his:

A. PERSON (v.7)

He lets us know who he is. He is none other than the Son of God. He lets men know that God said that is who he is. He identifies him as such.

Paul used this verse and refers to the resurrection of Jesus. (Acts 13:33) Also, he says he is declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom.1:4) So we don't have to wonder who he is who was to be king.

B. POSITION (v.8)

He would be over the heathen, even those that rage, and his reign would be universal.

C. POWER (v.9)

Since he is supreme and has power, it is foolish for anybody to oppose him. Those who set themselves up are no match for God and his annointed.

IV. THE VOICE OF ADMONITION. (v.10-12)

The writer, by the Holy Spirit, appeals to those who oppose the Lord and his plan. They should know such

is foolish and unworthy. His appeal was they they might properly:

A. EXERCISE THE MIND. (v.10)

They need to do their own thinking and get their information from the right source. If only they would be instructed by those who would give proper counsel. Wasn't this what the Jews did not do when in ignorance they put Jesus to death?

B. EXERT THE WILL. (v.11)

They should determine that they are going to serve God with reverence rather than rebellion. Such service is bound to produce joy.

C. EXPRESS THEIR SUBMISSION. (v.12)

To kiss the Son is equal to showing submission to him rather than rebellion. Such a person would never think of throwing off the chords that bind him to the Lord.

CONCLUSION

The question of verse one would never have to be asked if people would listen to the voice of authority and accept the affirmation and admonition of the voices of verses four through twelve.

JWC

(SOME BACK ISSUES HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED.)

---

Published monthly by Hobbs  
Street Church of Christ,  
1602 W. Hobbs St., P.O.  
Box 506, Athens, AL 35611.  
Entered as second class  
mail at Athens, AL  
(USPS 601-170)

James L. Meadows  
P.O. Box 41804  
Memphis, TN 38104

Taught at  
Thames 12/15/99

## PSALM TWENTY-THREE JAMES MEADOWS

### Introduction

1. The "Nightingale among the Psalms," now three thousand years old, still dries tears and builds strong faith. The influence of David's six verses is underscored in the fact that a leading hymnal bases twelve songs wholly or in part on the Shepherd's Psalm.<sup>1</sup>
2. But, alas, among some of us this moving piece has been taken for granted, and even ignored.
  - a. One man remarked, "I have been a member of the church twenty-five years, but until today I have never heard a sermon on the 23rd Psalm."
  - b. And a lady responded, "I have been a member forty years, and this is my first time."

This writer learned the psalm as a 12-year-old lad, and forgot it. When he was 18, going forth with ministerial dignity to a preaching appointment at Acton, Tennessee, visiting the high school Bible class, on being advised that the class that day was studying the 23rd Psalm, was asked to quote it to the class. He could not, and was his face red!

3. Notes from H. Leo Boles Sermon (Sept. 2, 1930).
  - a. Psalm 23 (said Boles) will adorn and beautify us.
  - b. The Lord uses simple words to describe even great things.
  - c. Both a child and a philosopher can profit by this psalm, that is, if he is prepared to receive a blessing.
4. One might read the psalm emphasizing the shepherd, pointing out that one would find ten personal pronouns referring to the one caring for the sheep.
5. But, said Boles, the proper reading is an emphasis on the one being cared for, as one finds 17 personal pronouns referring to the sheep.
6. Don Morris, lecturing at OCC, told of an expert speaker reading Psalm 23 flawlessly and with vivid expression, receiving obvious attention and respect from a large audience. But when an old uneducated man, with a cracked voice, read the psalm the people were in tears. The expert, seeing the difference in audience reaction, remarked: "I read the poem as a piece of literature, but the old gentleman knows the Shepherd." Col. Robert Risener (in "Stars and Stripes" TV show of July 4, 1973) said that Psalm 23, written on toilet paper, became the "Prisoners' Psalm,"—"in the presence of my enemies."  
In verses 1-3 David uses the third person in talking about his shepherd. Then in verses 4-5 he employs the second person and talks directly to his shepherd. Finally in verse 6 he goes back to the third person in telling other people about his shepherd.

### Discussion

---

<sup>1</sup>In Great Songs of the Church are "Like a Shepherd, Tender, True"; "In Heavenly Love Abiding"; "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"; "The Lord My Shepherd Is"; "The Lord's Shepherd"; "Hark, Hark, My Soul!"; "We are Going Down the Valley"; "When Day's Shadows Lengthen"; and "Hark! 'Tis the Shepherd's Voice."

I. Some commentators see three pictures in the six verses:

- A. 1. A shepherd, 1-3a;  
2. A caravan leader or a camel driver, 3b-4;  
3. A bedouin host giving a banquet, 5-6.
- B. Other commentators see only two pictures:
  - 1. A shepherd, 1-4;
  - 2. A host giving a banquet, 5-6.
- C. Others see only one picture: a shepherd, 1-6.
  - 1. A Reader's Digest article of July 1960, "The Basque Shepherd and the Shepherd Psalm," is quite convincing on the third interpretation.
  - 2. "The sweet Psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. 23:1) knew the life of a shepherd (1 Sam. 17:34-36), and God used that experience to give us the world's greatest poem and song.

II. Faith, "The Lord is my shepherd." The first word David employed was God's name, Yahweh, or the Lord.

- A. Other titles (as, Creator, Almighty, Judge, Lord, etc.) would have been significant, but none so meaningful as the Father's personal and memorial name.
- B. As nearly as it can be reconstructed, David said, "Yahweh, the self-existent eternal being, is my shepherd."
  - 1. In David's day it was fitting and proper for the Israelite to magnify the name "Yahweh."
  - 2. But with the coming of Christianity, it has pleased the Father that all men should honor him by exalting the name of Jesus, "the name which is above every name" (Ph. 2:9).
    - a. With the passing of the Old Covenant, it is God's will that "all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.
    - b. He that honors not the Son honors not the Father who sent him" (John 5:23).
    - c. Thus the Christian, in studying Psalm 23, is reminded, even in the very first word, that it is Jewish scripture, that he must rightly divide the word of truth, and that his focus is not on Yahweh as such, but on Jesus as the Christian's shepherd.
    - ✓ d. Very properly therefore the Christian's mind transfers from Psalm 23 to John 10:1-17; Luke 15:3-7; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Rev. 7:16-17.

III. The use of the word "shepherd" is altogether pleasing, as it would be difficult to find any word more appealing and heart-touching, especially to those who know Palestinian shepherds.

- A. American shepherds take no personal interest in their sheep, and spend little time with them.
- B. But the shepherds of Palestine live with their flocks, give names to each sheep, and look after their every need.
  - 1. Too, though other psalms are collective (as, Psa. 46:1, "our"), yet Psalm



23 is distinctly singular: "my shepherd."

2. For the time being, there is only one sheep in the world, and he is thinking about the personal interest his shepherd has in him.

C. John 14:1; 1 Pet. 1:9.

IV. Assurance—"I shall not want."

A. Near-sighted (seeing only up to 15 yards) animals, sheep are innocent, guileless, harmless, and submissive.

1. A deep faith they have in their shepherd.
2. Instinctively they know he has planned their next day's grazing. "It may be he will take them back over the same range; it may be that he will go to a new grazing ground.
3. They do not worry. His guidance has been good in the past, and they have faith in the future because they knew he has their well-being in view."

B. Similarly, the Christian with a sheep's faith has confidence that no good thing will the heavenly Shepherd withhold (cf. Ps. 37:23; 84:11; Lk. 16:20-21; Ph. 4:12, 19).

1. He has confidence that when the grass is not green and tender there is a providential reason (Heb. 12:5-11).
2. Heb. 10:22; Acts 2:36.

V. Contentment—"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."

A. Sheep graze, walking steadily, from around 3:30 in the morning until about ten a.m.

1. Then the shepherd makes them lie down and rest.
2. For three or four hours they contentedly chew their cuds, and the shepherd knows they are putting on fat.

B. Phil. 4:11; 1 Tim. 6:8.

VI. Peace—"He leadeth me beside the still water."

A. When the time comes for a drink, the shepherd has seen to it that still water is available.

1. If necessary he will dam a stream, making a quiet pool for the sheep's drinking.
2. He knows that sheep will not drink gurgling water.
3. Perhaps instinctively the sheep knows that in swift water his wool will make him heavy and that he will be easily drowned.

B. Isa. 9:6; 1 Thess. 5:13.

VII. Life—"He restoreth my soul" (3a).

A. As regards the clause, "he restores my soul," among Palestinian flocks, once each day every sheep leaves its place and goes to the shepherd.

B. "The shepherd stretches out his hand and rubs the animal's nose and ears, scratches its chin, whispers affectionately into its ears. The sheep, meanwhile, rubs against his leg, or, if the shepherd is sitting down, nibbles at his ear and

rubs its cheek against his face. After a few minutes of this communion with the master, the sheep returns to its place."

C. John 5:25; 10:10.

VIII. Leadership—"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (3b).

- A. To be led in paths of righteousness to the sheep meant a straight or even track to follow, while to David it would mean a life of rectitude and justice.
- B. As the shepherd led the sheep, so the Holy Spirit leads Christians (Rom. 8:14), but not directly. The Holy Spirit leads Christians into righteous paths by a written (Psa. 73:24; 119:105; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Jn. 2:15) and a providential guidance (1 Th. 3:11).
- C. The reason specified in Psalm 23 for guidance into righteous paths is because God respects his name.
  - 1. "Holy and reverend is his name" (Psa. 111:9).
  - 2. For David to live ungodly would be to disgrace the shepherd's good name.
    - a. His sin with Bathsheba gave "great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme" (2 Sam. 12:14).
    - b. On that occasion David was not allowing the Lord to lead him in paths of righteousness; he was allowing the devil to be his guide (cf. 1 Jn. 3:8).
    - c. "The name of God is blasphemed" (Rom. 2:24) when anyone wearing God's name lives sinfully.
    - d. Once he stops laying up God's word in his heart, that by which God leads in paths of righteousness, he is certain to walk in paths of unrighteousness (cf. Psa. 119:11).
    - e. On the other hand, as long as he lets God do the leading ("his seed abides in him," 1 Jn. 3:9), he cannot keep on living a life of sin, for the Lord's word ("the seed is the word of God," Lk. 8:11) just does not lead people in that direction.
- D. Matt. 4:19; Jer. 10:23.

IX. Confidence—Courage—Companionship—Comfort - "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (4).

- A. As regards an actual valley of the shadow of death in Palestine, every shepherd knows of it:  
It is south of the Jericho road leading from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, and it is a narrow defile through a mountain range. Climatic and grazing conditions make it necessary for the sheep to be moved through this valley for seasonal feeding each year. The valley is four and a half miles long. Its side walls are over 1500 feet high in places, and it is only 10 or 12 feet wide at the bottom. Travel through this valley is dangerous because its floor has gullies seven or eight feet deep. Actual footing on solid rock is so narrow in many places that a sheep cannot turn around, and it is an unwritten law of shepherds that flocks must go up the valley in the morning hours and down toward the

eventide lest the flocks meet in the defile. About halfway through the valley the walk crosses from one side to the other at a place where the path is cut in two by an eight-foot gully. One side of the gully is about 18 inches higher than the other; the sheep must jump across it. The shepherd stands at this break and coaxes or forces the sheep to make the leap. If a sheep slips and lands in the gully, the shepherd's rod is brought into play. The old-style crook circles a large sheep's neck or a small sheep's chest, and the animal is lifted to safety.... Many wild dogs lurk in the shadows of the valley, looking for prey. The shepherd, skilled in throwing his staff, uses it as a weapon. Thus the sheep have learned to fear no evil even in the valley of the shadow of death, for their master is there to protect them from harm.

B. 2 Cor. 5:1,6; 2 Pet. 1:5; Eph. 6:10; Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5; 1 Th. 4:13; 2 Thess. 2:16.

X. Providence—"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (5a).

A. When the sheep have been delivered from the threatening gorge the shepherd leads them to another pasture.

1. Here he prepares a table, a grazing area, in the presence of the sheep's enemies.
2. Carefully he uproots noxious weeds that sheep never learn to avoid. He cuts off thorny thistles or cacti which would otherwise scratch the ears, eyes, nostrils, lips, tongue, legs, and other sensitive parts of the grazing animals.
3. Also, he uncovers the nests of snakes and scorpions, burning fat in the holes.
4. Then he checks the surrounding shrubbery and trees for lurking animals of prey.

B. Jim Maple in Kansas saw an eagle come out of a tree, lift a lamb, and drop him.

1. The eagle, spotting Jim running, flew away.
2. Jim found the lamb with deep claw wounds, a head wound from the eagle's beak, and two broken legs from the drop.
3. In his putting the eagle to flight Jim was preparing a table of safe grazing for the sheep in the presence of their enemies.

C. Mt. 6:25-30; Jas. 1:17.

XI. Favor—Joy - "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over" (4b,c).

A. David's sheep rejoiced in his head's being anointed with oil and his having a full cup.

B. The Basque shepherd says:

At every sheepfold there is a big earthen bowl of olive oil and a large jar of water. As the sheep come in for the night, they are led to a gate. The shepherd...examines for briars in the ears, snags in the cheek, or weeping of the eyes from dust or scratches. Each sheep's wounds are carefully cleansed. Then the shepherd dips his hand into the olive oil and anoints the injury. A

large cup is dipped into the jar of water....never half full but always overflowing. The sheep will sink its nose into the water clear to the eyes, if fevered, and drink until fully refreshed.

- C. Samuel Terrien, The Psalms and Their Meaning for Today, p. 233, gives this description:

At eventide, when the flock is gathered to the fold, the shepherd examines his sheep one by one as they file in. Bruised and bloody heads are anointed with oil, and the animals which are sick with fatigue and fright receive in an actual earthen "cup" a medicinal potion made usually of fermented hemp or barley mixed with honey and therapeutic herbs.

- D. Thus the true shepherd is on occasion a wolf-fighter, and then a nighttime nurser.

- E. Heb. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:8.

XII. Blessings—Immortality - "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (6).

- A. The goodness and mercy attending the sheep would appear to be general terms describing the specifics already mentioned: green grass, still waters, delivery from dangers, safe grazing, and medicinal care.

- B. The security of an enclosed sheepfold, with no exposure to danger, appears to be the background for David's "house of the Lord" for endless days.

- C. Rom. 11:22; Rom. 2:7.

Helps:

1. Hugo McCord, Notes on Psalms 23.
2. Sermons, Chapel talks and Debates by Arvy Glen Freed.
3. Other sources.

# **PSALMS 23**

## **FIFTEEN LOFTY THEMES**

- 1. FAITH**
- 2. ASSURANCE**
- 3. CONTENTMENT**
- 4. PEACE**
- 5. LIFE**
- 6. LEADERSHIP**
- 7. CONFIDENCE**
- 8. COURAGE**
- 9. COMPANIONSHIP**



**10. COMFORT**

**11. PROVIDENCE**

**12. FAVOR**

**13. JOY**

**14. BLESSINGS**

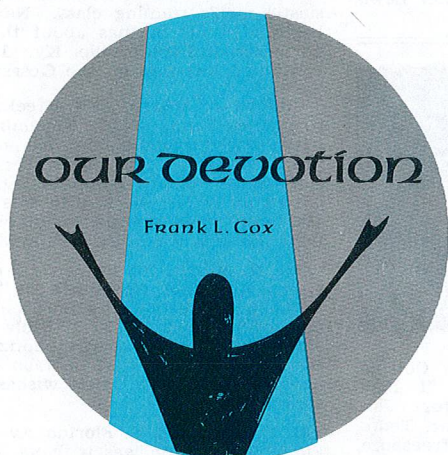
**15. IMMORTALITY**

Wallace . . .

(Concluded from page 791)

for life underwriters and managed large offices in Wichita, Willington, Hutchinson, and Dodge City, Kansas.

Brother Wallace considers as one of the highlights of this life the association with such great preachers as Foy E. Wallace, Jr., his father in the gospel, G. H. P. Showalter, Homer E. Moore, Rue Porter, Sterl Watson, N. B. Hardeman, H. Leo Boles, Gus Nichols, John T. Lewis, B. C. Goodpasture, Guy N. Woods, and Batsell Barrett Baxter. Brother Wallace states that "There was once a time when we had only a few great preachers but today three thousand preachers in the church could be lined up and there would not be enough difference between any of them to amount to anything."



### The Twenty-Third Psalm—I

This Psalm was written by one who had been a shepherd-boy on the sunny hills of Judea. It would be easier to deprive ourselves of many a large book than this precious little Psalm. The love of God for his people is the theme. As we read, we can feel the warmth of divine compassion. It falls into two parts. The first part sets forth the Lord as a shepherd, and his people as the sheep of his pasture; the second part sets forth the Lord as a host, and his people as guests at his table and dwellers in his house.

#### AS A SHEPHERD

- 1 Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;  
He leadeth me beside still waters.
- 3 He restoreth my soul:  
He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;  
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Verse 1 *Jehovah* [the living One, the self-existent Being, the great I AM] *is my shepherd*. "We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (Psalm 100: 3.) We belong to God; God belongs to us. Note the possessive pronoun, *my*. The child of God can say, "If he be a shepherd to no other person, he is a shepherd to me; for he feeds me, he keeps me, with tender care he

watches over me." We also note that the tense is present. The Lord *is my shepherd*. At this very moment, regardless of place or circumstances, he is to me a loving shepherd. Because this is true, *I shall not want*. He graciously supplies all my needs. When I am hungry, he feeds me; when I am weary, he gives me rest; when I am thirsty, he gives me drink.

Verse 2 *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures*. The haste, the hurry, and the strain of life cause us to become weary; but the good shepherd *maketh me to lie down*, to be still, to take my rest. (Matt. 11: 28, 29.) It is in *green pastures*—the place of plenty—that the sheep find sustenance and support. It is in *green pastures* of the Holy Scriptures that God's child finds nourishment. *He leadeth me beside still waters*, literally, *waters of stillness*, whose gentle, calm flow invites to repose. They are not the boisterous streams, neither are they the stagnant, offensive waters. There the sheep are refreshed. How very comforting and refreshing are the blessings of God! He is the God of comfort.

Verse 3 *He restoreth my soul*. In its carelessness, the sheep falls over a great precipice; a limb is broken. Or its body is torn by a wild beast. But the good shepherd binds up the broken limb, heals the lacerated parts. By some careless or foolish act, we stumble over a mighty precipice; we are terribly hurt; but the Lord binds up the broken heart and starts us on our way again. To our original purity, he restores us. O, the beauty and sweetness of restorative grace! *He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake*. This he does with his holy word, which is *a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*. He sees to it that we do not take a by-path, leading to the darkness of depravity. The paths of righteousness are paths of safety. Not in a bank account, not in a mountain cave, not in physical fitness, but in a life of godliness do we find our greatest security. All of this he does for *his name's sake*. The Lord has a name which he zealously guards. His people have it in their power to uphold or dishonor that sacred name.

Verse 4 *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil*. We do not walk *in* the valley, but *through* the valley. We walk through the valley to the light of immortality. It is not the valley of death, but the *valley of the shadow of death*, for death as a substance has been conquered, and only the shadow remains. Where there is a shadow there must be a light somewhere. That light is the risen Christ. Who fears a shadow? The shadow of a serpent cannot sting. The shadow of a beast cannot devour you. The shadow of death cannot hurt you. David did not say that *evil* will not come. *Evil* has come and *evil* will come to the good man. Life's greatest evils are those which exist only in our imagination. If we had no troubles but real troubles, we should not have one-half of our present difficulties. But with the Lord as our shepherd, we *will fear no evil*. *For thou art with me*.—The awareness of the divine presence is the secret of a courageous life. *Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me*.



## Psalms 34

- A. Thanksgiving for deliverance (34:1-6)
- B. Privilege of confidence (34:7-10)
- C. Special exhortation (34:11-14)
- D. God will protect the righteous (34:15-22)



## Psa. 37:1ff - Eight Statements About Evil Doers

1. Envious of the prosperity of evil doers -
  - a. Material blessings are temporary - 2 Cor 4:16-17.
  - b. Eccl. 11:7ff.
2. Trust in the Lord + do good
  - a. Prov. 3:5 -
  - b. He will take care of you - Lk 21:24-34.
  - c. 1 Tim. 6:8 -
  - d. The Bible is not only true and right, but it is practical.
3. Delight in the Lord - V. 4
  - a. How many know they are burdened by being a Christian.
  - b. One cannot trust in the Lord without ~~doing the~~ delighting in law of the Lord.
  - c. Psa. 1:1-6 - Psa. 137:6 - 1 Thess. 5:16 - Phil. 4:4.
  - d. And he shall give thee thy desires.

Q: List the things you want for yourself and then the things God wants for you. When both lists agree you will be happy.
4. Commit thy way unto the Lord - V. 5
  - a. Commitment to Lord will help one to overcome temptation because you are committed to the Lord.
  - b. Promise - He shall bring forth -
  - c. God



3. Rest in the Lord. V. 7.

- a. Anger because of the presence of others is a sin.
- b. The greatest blessing cannot be measured in dollars and cents.
- c. Rom. 12:19-21.
- d. Promise - V. 9 - next 17 verses enlarge on this promise.

6. Depart from evil and do good. V. 27.

- a. Tit. 2:12-14 -
- b. 8 of 10 commandments negative in nature.
- c. 2 Tim. 4:1-4 - negative & positive.
- d. Promise - V. 28-33.

7. Wait on the Lord & keep his word V. 34.

- a. What was David's condition at this time.
- b. Regardless of how righteous and just the end toward which we are striving it never right
- c. To do evil to reach the end.
- d. Promise - exhort thee to inherit this land.

8. Mark the perfect man - V. 37.

- a. Gen. 6:9 - Noah -
- b. Phil. 3:13-15.
- c. Josh. ~~10~~
- d. If God is not in first place he has no place.
- e. Promise - Peace - Phil. 4:4-6
- f. Mic. 3:11 -



# The Doctrine Of Original Sin And A Misapplied Passage

By Wayne Jackson

The doctrine of original sin—the notion that one is born into this world hereditarily totally depraved—is widely believed in the religious world. For example, the *Augsburg Confession of Faith* (1530), Lutheranism's creed, asserted that "all men, born according to nature, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without confidence towards God and with concupiscence, and that this original disease or flaw is truly a sin, bringing condemnation and also eternal death to those who are not reborn through baptism and the Holy Spirit" (Article II). This, of course, explains the practice of infant baptism as advocated by numerous sects.

Likely, the passage that is commonly appealed to in an attempt to justify the concept of original sin is Psalm 51:5. "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me." Does this verse provide a basis for the doctrine of original sin? Assuredly, it does not. But let us carefully study the matter.

Preliminary Principles. — First of all, it needs to be initially recognized that this passage is Hebrew poetry. And Hebrew poetry abounds with bold and imaginative figures of speech; it is frequently characterized by a freedom which departs from customary forms of expression. It is, therefore, a mistake of great magnitude to extract statements from poetical literature and thus employ them as a foundation for doctrinal schemes. This is precisely the error of the materialists (Watchtower Witnesses, Armstrongites, etc.) who dip into the Psalms, Job, etc., for their doctrines of "soul-sleeping," "annihilation of the wicked," etc.

Secondly, one of the primary rules of Biblical interpretation suggests that: "The language of Scripture may be regarded as figurative, if the literal interpretation will cause one passage to contradict another" (D. R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics*, p. 196). There are numerous Bible verses, in plain, literal language, that affirm the innocency of infants; and Psalm 51:5 must not be arrayed against these. Consider the following: (1) Scripture plainly teaches that sin is not inherited. ". . . the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father . . ." (Ezek. 18:20); every person is responsible for his own conduct (Rom. 14:12). (2) Human sinfulness commences in that period of one's life that is characterized as "youth" (Gen. 8:21; Jer. 3:25). (3) A child must reach a certain level of maturity before he is able to choose between evil and good (Isa. 7:15, 16). (4) The qualities of little children are set forth as models for those who would aspire to enter the kingdom (Matt. 18:3; 19:14), and for those already in the church (1 Cor. 14:20). Surely the Lord was not suggesting that we emulate little, totally corrupt sinners! (5) The human spirit is not inherited from one's parents; rather, it is given by God

(Eccl. 12:7; Heb. 12:9). Hence, at birth it must be as pure as the source from whence it comes. Clearly, babies are not born in sin.

*Psalm 51:5 Analyzed.* — Having shown what Psalm 51:5 cannot mean, we now turn to some possible views of the passage that do not violate portions of Scripture found elsewhere.

(1) Since Psalm 51 is one of David's penitent psalms revealing the anguish resulting from his adulterous conduct with Bathsheba, some have felt that verse 5 contains words that are figuratively put into the mouth of the child conceived by that illicit union (2 Sam. 11:5), thus acknowledging the sinfulness of that relationship. The sinfulness is therefore attributed to the parent and not the child. T. W. Brents commented: "Whatever may be the meaning of this passage, it can not be the imputation of sin to the child. 'In sin did my mother conceive me;' that is, she acted wickedly when I was conceived. Were the wife to say, 'In drunkenness my husband beat me,' or the child that 'in anger my father whipped me,' surely no one would attribute drunkenness to the wife or anger to the child; neither can they impute the sin of the mother to the child" (*The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, pp. 133, 134).

(2) Others have suggested that David alludes to an incident in his ancestral lineage, an adulterous affair (Gen. 38), whereby he was considered ceremonially defiled because he was of the 10th generation of that unlawful intercourse (Deut. 23:2). This is probably a rather remote possibility.

(3) Most likely, however, Psalm 51:5 merely refers to the fact that David was born into a sinful environment. We are all conceived in, and brought forth into, a sinful world; but we do not actually sin until we arrive at a stage of spiritual responsibility. Perhaps David also, by the use of dramatic language, alludes to the fact that sin had characterized his whole life, relatively speaking. In a similarly poetic section, for example, Job, in denying that he had neglected his benevolent responsibilities, affirmed that he had cared for the orphan and the widow from his mother's womb! Surely, no one believes that on day one of his existence that he was out ministering to the needy! In fact, the Hebrew parallelism of this verse (Job 31:18), clearly indicates that the word "womb" is used in the sense of "youth."

*A Concluding Problem.* — Those who employ Psalm 51:5 to buttress the doctrine that sin is inherited from one's mother are faced with a serious problem. Jesus was both conceived by and brought forth from a human mother (Lk. 1:31). If original sin is inherited from one's mother, Christ had it. If, however, someone should suggest that depravity is received only from the father, Psalm 51:5 cannot be used to prove it, for it mentions only the mother!

The truth of the matter is, the doctrine of original sin is not Biblical. It had its origin in the writings of the so-called "church fathers" in the post-apostolic era. Such men as Tertullian (160-220) and Cyprian (200-258) first formulated the doctrine and it was later popularized by Augustine and John Calvin. Those who accept the plain testimony of the sacred Scriptures will reject this error.

## Psalm 51:5—Was David A Sinner From Conception And Birth? Does This Passage Teach Total Hereditary Depravity?

*Note the following translations of Psalm 51:5 where, following his sin with Bathsheba, David says:* (1) "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (KJV). (2) "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" (NKJV; NASB). (3) "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me" (ASV; RSV). (4) "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (NIV). *Now, consider the following answer to the title question from the pen of Bro. Hugo McCord. (-dwe)*

This verse was never intended to be understood literally. The literal interpretation magnified by John Calvin (1509-1564), has done untold harm. He wrote: "The passage affords a striking testimony in proof of original sin entailed by Adam upon the whole human family (Commentary on the Book of Psalms, 5, 290).

John Wesley (1703-1792) accepted Calvin's error, and taught that infants should be baptized: infants need to be washed from original sin, ... the original stain cleaves to every child of man (Wesley's Works, II, 16).

The Methodist Discipline of 1894 instructed pastors, as they sprinkled babies, to say: "All men are conceived and born in sin."

A Nazarene pastor, in a debate at Carbon Hill, Ala. in 1932, said that the fact that a baby cries shows he is a sinner. The reply that Gus Nichols (sitting at the table with me) whispered was all that I needed: "If crying is sin, Jesus was a sinner, for Jesus wept" (John 11:35).

The doctrine of inherited sin contradicts plain passages of Scripture such as Matt. 19:14 and it slanders the Creator. For if God is love (1 John 4:8), he does not afflict a baby with the guilt of Adam's sin. Since God is "holy" (1 Pet. 1:16) and "without iniquity" (Deut. 32:4), every human being, from the moment of his conception, is "perfect" until he himself commits "iniquity" (Eze. 28:15).

A person's own sins separate him from God (Is. 59:1-2). Sin is personal and not transferable. "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

The doctrine of Mary's immaculate conception (proclaimed in a papal bull from Pius IX in 1854) was manufactured to make Mary sinless so she could give birth to a sinless baby. However, the babies, Mary and Jesus, were born sinless and pure just as all other babies are.

Back in the eighties I thought some words were understood but not spoken by David. I put them in brackets and wrote Psalm 51:5 as "Behold, in [a world of] iniquity I was born, and in [a world of] sin my mother conceived me." Those words laid no sin on the infant, but placed him in a world where sin was, and left him to grow up and do his own sinning. Then, someone helped me with this parallel illustration:

*"In a potato patch I was born, and in a field of spuds my mother conceived me, but I was not born full of potatoes."*

Babies are born sinless, but Psalm 51 does not deal with the mistake was in looking at Psalm 51 as prose, not poetry. David was world of sin, but that was not on his mind. On his mind was the committed adultery with Bathsheba. Literally his words were not true sin" and nine months later "born in iniquity"), but the soul of a sinner man, overwhelmed in grief, holding nothing back, making no excuses poetically and figuratively true.

In the same psalm he used other words that were not literally you, you alone," he told God, "I have sinned" (Ps. 51:4), but he against Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Sam. 11:1-27; 12:1-14).

David prayed that God would purify him "with hyssop" (Psalm 51:7) not expect God to literally obtain a "labiate plant" called "hyssop through the wall" (1 Kings 4:33), dip it in "water" and animal "blood," and spit (Heb. 9:19).

Literally David did not mean that his "bones" could "rejoice," nor "broken" his "bones" (Psalm 51:8). Only figuratively could he say, hiding his "face" (Ps. 51:9), and of a sinner having a "broken" heart (1 Kings 3:21).

Many verses of Scripture are true only as hyperbole: exaggerated meant to be taken literally (Webster). Only by hyperbole, figures of speech David call God his "rock," his "fortress," his "shield," his "shepherd" (Psa. 18:1-2, 23:1).

False literally, but true by exaggeration, David prophetically spoke could say he was a "worm" and no man (Psa. 22:6), one who trusted in his "mother's breasts" (22:9), one who was surrounded by "bulls" (22:12), bones were "out of joint", and one whose "heart" had "melted within" (22:14).

Also, in other Bible books, figurative language is often used. Job had provided for widows "from my mother's womb" (31:16-18). W. H. H. says about Melchizedek literally was impossible: "fatherless without genealogy, having neither a beginning of days nor an end of life" (Heb. 7:3).

Jesus' words, "This is my body...my blood" (Matt. 26:26-28) interpreted by Martin Luther in his debate at Marburg with Ulrich transubstantiation and consubstantiation are based on literal interpretation.

Just as David's words ("born in iniquity," "conceived in sin") are "not meant to be taken literally," so are John's words as he closed his there are also many other things Jesus did, which, if each one was wrong the world itself would not have room for the books" (John 21:25).

A young man helped this old man by writing these words: "Psalm response to his sin with Bathsheba. He poured out his heart in acknowledgment and calling for God to forgive him. It would be contrary to the nature for David to have excused himself because he was born with the sin because he was born in a sinful world that influenced him. He was about the sinful world but about his own sin. David used hyperbole: sin as so great that it was as though he had been sinful from his very conception. Jackson, Gospel Advocate, Oct. 15, 1987).

*—condensed and adapted from an article by Bro. Hugo McCord the April 1997 issue of the Firm Foundation*



# Psalm 51

## Introduction

1. II Sam. 11-12
2. The place of Nathan in David's change of heart (Title of Psalm 51).
3. High-handed sin (IK. 15:5 & 9:4; 11:4; II Sam. 24:1-10).
3. God, sin and salvation are areas of major emphasis.
4. The Hebrew language is used with greater diversity here than in most of the Psalms.

## I. David's Appeal (1-2).

### A. Mercy

1.  $\text{חַנּוּן}$ , being gracious, inclining one's self toward another.
2. David is unworthy before God.

### B. Lovingkindness

1.  $\text{רַחֲמִים}$ , loyalty, mercy, love, steadfast-love, faithfulness.
2. A covenant word, God will be faithful to covenant provisions.

### C. Compassions, mercies of Gen. 43:30.

1.  $\text{רַחֲמֵי}$ , bowels, inmost being, a very emotional term.
2. God acts emotionally in conjunction with His legality.

### D. Blot out, Wash, Cleanse

1. Ex 32:32; Num. 5:23 with blot out

2. The ultimate cost (Col. 2:14).
3. wash has to do with clothing or washing clothes (cf. Lv. 15).

#### II. David's Confession (3-5)

A. David's sin rises up before him with dramatic accusation.

- vs. 2 1.  $\Pi \Pi \Delta$  cumulative debt (Isa. 44:22; Jer. 17:1).
- " 2.  $\text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ}$  washing requiring kneading  $\text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ}$  much washing
- " 3.  $\text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ}$  defects cleaning as leprosy (Lev. 13:6, 34).
- vs. 3 4.   $\Pi \Delta \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ}$  associated with sin offering.
- " 5.  $\text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ}$  rebellion, step beyond what is right.

B. His attitude has changed from one of covering his tracks to wondering how he could treat God so badly.

1. All sin is against God (Am. 39:9)
2. All  judgement by God is just (Lk. 23:41; Rom 3:4 cf. LXX).

C. Sin is the element in which life is lived, we are born into a world full of sin. (cf. Isa. 6:5).

1. in sin  $\text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ}$  a crowd dealing wondering
2. and in sin   $\Pi \Delta \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ}$  as a sin offering.
3. brought forth from  $\text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ} \text{ }^{\circ}$  a painful twisting

#### III. David's Restoration (6-9)

A. A great gulf exists between what God desires and what David has just confessed.

B. The following (66-86) expressions are "future" not "imperatives"

1. David sees himself as a leper <sup>ethr</sup> in need of cleansing (Lv. 14:6 ff.) or one who has contacted a dead body (Num. 19:16-19).
2. To be purged is to be "de-sunned" (Lv. 14:49; Nu. 19:19).
3. Only God can completely cleanse cf. Isa. 1:18.

### III. Inward Renewal (10-13)

1. Only God can "create"  $\Pi \overline{\Pi} \overline{\Pi}$   
a word used only of God.
2. Heart and spirit deal with the "springs of life" (Pr. 4:23)
3. David did not wish to suffer Saul's fate (I Sam. 16:14).
4. Holiness is a practice I Cor. 9:27; Jn. 15:6 cf. I Sam. 6:20.
5. David had lost the joy of service in his prosperity. He seeks to once again be the enthusiastic volunteer. (cf. 40:8).
6. David wants to be able to teach in integrity once again (cf. Ps. 22:32).

### IV. Humble Worship

- A. Worship can easily become a merely outward expression (Isa. 1:11, 15).
1. David does not seek to avoid consequences in the material realm; he desires to be free of guilt



2. The shame that silenced David's worship he seeks to have removed.
3. The "peace offering" and "burnt offering" dealt with communion and dedication respectively, David shows that God ~~wants~~ wants more — He wants all! cf Rom 12:1-2

Math. 5:

## VI. (18-19).

1. build up is from  $\pi \uparrow \uparrow$  which not only deals with building up from the ground but to finish building what was in the act of being built (Ps. 89:3) 1K. 3:1 may be the fulfillment of this prayer.
2. Sacrifices are commands but they are part of a bigger whole

→ Isa. 52:15 The fight is over, the opposition to God having been crushed, cf. Doom for contrite Ps. 44:19; 51:8.

# Why Do the Unrighteous Prosper?

Neil Richey

Sweetwater/ December 12, 1999

**Text:** Psalm 73

**Thesis:** I want the audience to know that giving up on the Lord is not the answer when one feels they are not prospering as others.

## **Introduction:**

- A. Some might forget that David is not the only one who had a message to convey in the psalms.
- B. In Psalm 73 it is a picture of a man named Asaph.
- C. His problem was that the wicked were prospering greatly, and his question to God was why.
- D. Asaph is an example of one who almost lost his faith and trust in God, because of his irrational thinking. This tells us that we need to think clearly, and keep in mind that God is just in all that he is.
- E. Listen as Asaph deals with a problem that most all of us face at some point in our lives.

## **Discussion:**

### **I. ASAPH SPEAKS AS ONE WHO KNOWS GOD (1).**

- A. Asaph begins his psalm by noting the goodness of God.
  - 1. Young people sometimes sing a song that begins like this, "God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, He's so good to me..."
  - 2. As that song continues, It names some reasons why our God is so good.
    - a. He sent his son.
    - b. He answers prayers.
    - c. He is sending his son back.
  - 3. We could probably make a list if we were so asked, all the ways that God has been so good to us.
- B. Literally, only God is good to Israel.
  - 1. It may help to keep in mind that all blessings come from God almighty.
  - 2. One may have the ability to be successful in business, whether a Christian or not, and it is God that allows that to be possible.
  - 3. One may be successful in any number of ways, and it is God that allows these things to take place.
  - 4. Ultimately, by the very nature that God created all and set all into motion, it is he that allows good to happen to all.
  - 5. By the very same token, bad that happens to Christians or non-Christians takes place by God's providential hand.

## **II. ASAPH SPEAKS AS ONE WHO IS ENVIOUS (2-12).**

- A. Asaph now begins to make the claim of the problem (2).
  - 1. What about me Lord?
  - 2. He is saying, look at me, I am in pitiful shape.
- B. Asaph is now envious of what the foolish are enjoying now.
  - 1. There are certain facts that cannot be changed.
  - 2. These wicked people were prospering greatly.
  - 3. One may not always understand why this takes place, but bear in mind that the righteous will be taken care of.
  - 4. See Psalms 37: 1-5
- C. Asaph says, Lord these ungodly are prospering greatly (4-12).
  - 1. They are described as not being in trouble with other men.
  - 2. They are puffed up and the desire of the heart for more is great.
  - 3. They speak as though from the heavens, being puffed up.
  - 4. In verse 10 they simply desire more and more, what they have is not enough.
  - 5. In verse 11 they place themselves above God by saying, God does not really know anything, is there even any knowledge there?
  - 6. Then Asaph says, and Lord, these are the ones who you allow to continue to prosper in this wicked world.
  - 7. See Psalms 10: 1ff

## **III. ASAPH SPEAKS AS ONE WHO IS IN DOUBT (13-16).**

- A. Asaph says that religion is not worth anything (13).
  - 1. Here he is talking about giving up.
  - 2. Maybe you know someone like this, who when confronted with something they do not like they say, "Well I will show them, I will just quit the church."
  - 3. Keep in mind that Asaph is not thinking clearly. For Asaph to quit his religion, it would be for him to quit God. He will realize this later.
- B. Asaph says to God, I am suffering (14).
  - 1. God never said that the righteous would never suffer.
  - 2. In 2 Timothy 3: 12 Paul said, "Yea and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
  - 3. Peter said in 1 Peter 4: 16, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
  - 4. One has said that suffering does four things for the individual.
    - a. It tests Character.
    - b. It purifies lives.
    - c. It unites believers.
    - d. It introduces one to a holy and blessed companionship (Eerdmans, XI p. 86).

- C. Asaph says, I do not want to offend your people God.
  - 1. In spite of the fact that Asaph was struggling, and was considering his religion to be in vain, he was concerned about others.
  - 2. Truly this man must have been a close follower of God.
  - 3. He talked to God about his deep problem for fear that he would cause others to stumble.
  - 4. We might mention at this point, that this does not mean it is wrong to go to brethren when we are struggling, and need some advice. However, do not fail to keep God in the picture.
- D. Asaph says, I have talked to God, but I am still having a problem with it (16).
  - 1. It would be helpful for us to note that we will not always understand God's judgment.
  - 2. We would also be aware of the fact that God is just in everything that he does.

#### IV. ASAPH SPEAKS AS ONE WHO IS WISE (17-28).

- A. He says that he made his judgments too soon (17).
- B. He realizes that all will receive their final reward at the judgment (18-20).
  - 1. One may have all that this life has to offer, but come sentencing time, you will have nothing to show for it.
  - 2. Brother Marshal Keeble was in Texas at one of the member's ranches. The owner of the ranch had a small airplane, and took brother Keeble up for a ride, and showed him his entire ranch. When they got back, this fellow asked, "So what do you think?" Brother Keeble replied, "It's all going to be burned up."
  - 3. There will be a great end for the wicked, but it will be a triumphant beginning for the righteous.
- C. Asaph says that he has spoken as one without understanding (21,22).
- D. Finally, Asaph says, I am still with you Lord (23-28).
  - 1. You are with me always (23,24).
    - a. Past
    - b. Present
    - c. Future
  - 2. God is his constant desire, and he has no one else (25).
  - 3. God is my strength in all the times of my struggles (26).
  - 4. The wicked will deny God, but I will ever draw near to thee (27,28).
  - 5. My trust is in God and no one else.

#### Conclusion:

- A. Which of the voices of Asaph best describes you?
- B. Do you know the goodness of God, and are you one who will acknowledge that goodness through your faith by obedience to the Gospel?

- C. Are you envious of the things that this world has to offer, and are you desirous of placing these things before your God?
- D. Have you been living as one who denies the glory of God and the true blessings of being a part of his family?
- E. Maybe you are best described by the wise voice of Asaph, who knows that God is just and righteous, and will you strive to forever draw nearer to God, as did Asaph?



## Psalm 73

The story of a painful search with a reward beyond all expectation. Such questions as are raised by this Psalm are considered in both Job and Jeremiah, but without the full glory of the ultimate answer.

### The destruction visited by envy 1-14

Vs. 1 a key to the entire Psalm. It tells what God can be to man. It shows the relative unimportance of circumstances when compared to attitudes.

attitudes are damaged by selfishness (3,13) & set free by love (25).

Pure means more than having a clean mind though it includes this; essentially it is being totally committed to God.

The heart is mentioned six times in the Psalm. It determines whether God will be seen innately as a friend or a foe.

Vs. 2-3 Doubt by merely physical apper. (cf. Isa. 11:3).

Vs. 4-9 The impressive picture of the proud, wicked. Contrast with Rom. 8:23; Heb. 12:8.

Vs. 10-14 The popular worship of success brings discontent from a deceiver. What did I get out of innocence? is the pathetic cry. This thought shocks the writer into a better frame of mind.

Vs. 15-28 The true glory of faith.

15-20 The dawn of truth in a turn from self-interest and self-pity to a remembrance of basic loyalty. He still has no answer, but he can now find it. What can compare with being a child of the king?

vs. 17 The answers come with a turn to God. When God is seen the selfish materialists are seen in their true light.

vs. 18-20 A personal rejection by God is the fate of the selfish. Shame and contempt are elements. cf. Dan. 12:2; Matt. 7:23. Ignored by God.

vs. 21-26 What only the righteous can have - the full understanding of glory. Envy blind as to God's glory. Perhaps this is the greatest record of man's response to God in all the Bible. With God material circumstances are no longer primary. "And having you, I desire nothing else on earth" (NEB). cf. Matt. 22:32; Num. 18:20; Ps. 16:56.

Vs 27-28

Nearness to the Creator who is Jehovah.  
cf. v. 1!

Vrs. 15-28 The true glory of faith.

15-20 The dawn of truth in a turn from self-interest and self-pity to a remembrance of basic loyalty. He still has no answer, but he can now find it. What can compare with being a child of the king?

Vrs. 17 The answers come with a turn to God. When God is seen the selfish materialists are seen in their true light.

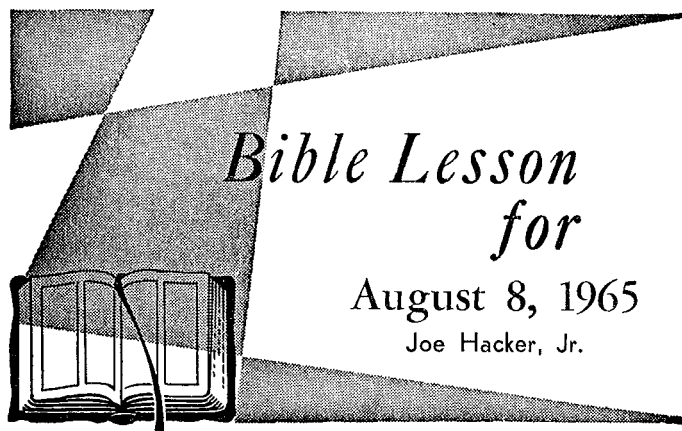
Vrs. 18-20 A personal rejection by God is the fate of the selfish. Shame and contempt are elements. cf. Dan. 11:2; Matt. 7:23. Ignored by God.

Vrs. 21-26 What only the righteous can have - the full understanding of glory. Envy blinks as to God's glory. Perhaps this is the greatest record of man's response to God in all the Bible. With God material circumstances are no longer primary. "And having you, I desire nothing else on earth" (NEB). cf. Matt. 22:32; Num. 18:20; Ps. 16:5-6.

Vrs 27-28

Nearness to the Creator who is Jehovah.

cf. v. 1!



## A Psalm of Praise

*Text:* PSALM 103: 6-22

Commentators generally refer to Psalm 103 with a string of superlatives. It captures the heart of the Christian in a manner similar to the "Shepherd Psalm." It is sublime both as a psalm of praise and as a psalm of gratitude. The heart of David was filled with the emotion of joy as he contemplated the character of the Lord and expressed himself bracketing the psalm in a declaration, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

Those who draw near to God daily are captivated by the expression of the character of the Lord revealed in these words of David. How wonderful it is to personally know and to feel the presence of such a one in life each day. Here are found statements of hope for the oppressed; mercy and forgiveness for the sinner; strength for the frail; love for the lonely; patience for the weak; tolerance for the abused; assurance for the faithful. Any one of these blessings would be sufficient to lead one to sing praise. Yet, our God possess all these qualities and more. Our Lord will grant them to any individual who will fear him and will keep his commandments. There is little wonder then, at one living in daily communion with the Lord exclaiming, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

The injustice of mankind upon his fellow man shall receive retribution at the hand of God. The psalmist recalls the groanings of oppressed Israel in Egyptian captivity and the deliverance which demonstrated the vindication of God upon the oppressor. One may read through the cycles of events in the Judges and see the benevolent hand of God. One prophet after another proclaims the mighty warning of God's final retribution upon the one who would take advantage of the widow, or who would rob the orphan of food and clothing failing to show mercy. Such thoughts lead one to the affirmation of James, "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the Fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." (James 1: 27.)

God's concern for mankind is best seen in the revelation of God to his creation. God alone can reveal

himself. In his goodness and mercy God has shown man the way of absolute truth and righteousness in his revelation and in the noble life of his Son. Through his acts of creation one is able to know of his power and wisdom. Through his acts in the history of Israel one learns of a providence which guides history toward a single moment outside the walls of Jerusalem. At that moment the acts of God are crowned with the crucifixion of a son of Abraham and the Son of God in one person on a guiltless cross declaring the supreme love and mercy of God.

The love of God is so profound that it cannot be offered indiscriminately. The mercy of God is beyond the measure of mankind. His grace abounds in a magnitude which is indescribable. Yet, because of such love and grace and mercy he will not keep his anger forever. the love and mercy of God demand the judgment of God upon our sins and upon our iniquities. His everlasting mercy is directed toward them that fear God, keep his covenant, and remember his commandments. Herein is captured the spirit of the words of Jesus, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14: 15.) The test of love is loyalty. The evidence of love is obedience. The mystery of love is judgment.

God is able to love and to forgive in a complete and absolute sense which pale the most noble efforts of mankind. His love for those who fear him is greater than the dimensions of the heavens. His forgiveness for those who obey him exceeds the limits of the earth itself. How difficult it is for one to comprehend such love and forgiveness. The psalmist compares it to the love of a father for his children, but this, too, is inadequate. He is God and we are dust. We are as the flowers of the field transient in nature, living the daily experience of death flourishing for a time to pass and then to be gone. He is steadfast in love, everlasting in righteousness: able to crown with eternal endowments those who fear him and obey him. He gives life to us who are dying daily and eternity to those who daily pass away.

These things are blessings, personal in their nature, showing that God is a God of the individual. He is a private God to be known, feared, loved, and worshiped in the cathedral of each individual heart. Indeed, he is not just the God of the Samaritans, nor of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. But of each person who will worship him in "spirit and in truth." (John 4: 24.) He is not a God to be worshiped by one class of people exclusive of other classes. Nor is he a God for one nation granting special benevolence upon them at the expense of other nations. This psalm praises a God which transcends national boundaries and rises above all human class distinctions. His throne and sovereignty are over all. How this passage does anticipate the fullness of God in the expression of the Great Commission, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel!" (Mark 16: 15.)



## Psalms 105

### Introduction

1. One often hears Christians express a desire for worship to be more meaningful.
  - a. The question is ~~how~~ <sup>what</sup> makes worship meaningful and how is that to be ~~achieved~~ achieved?
  - b. H. H. Rowley said, "The real meaning of worship derives in the first place from the God <sup>to</sup> whom <sup>it is</sup> directed."
  - c. Worship is to focus on God, not on the preferences and feelings of the worshippers.
2. The Psalms were important in Israel's worship.
  - a. They express a confidence in God as one who is steadfast in love and mercy.
  - b. There is balance between the holiness of God and the love of God.
3. One of the best ways to maintain a balanced view of God is to remember what he has done.
  - a. Philip McMillion wrote:

When God called Abraham and led him,  
God showed his love and protection. When  
he kept his covenant with Abraham,  
the Lord showed His steadfast love. God  
also showed His majesty and power,  
however, when He sent the plagues on the  
Egyptians and delivered Israel at the Red  
Sea. The memory of what God did for His  
people was crucial, and it inspired them



to respond to God in worship."

b. ~~The text~~ Did you ever wonder why the Psalms tell and retell what God had done for his people?

- (1) It was done to teach each new generation what God had done and appreciate it.
- (2) "When they remembered the Lord's actions, the coming generations would also respond with gratitude and praise."

### Discussion

I. "O give thanks unto the Lord..." (105:1-5)

A. For what were they to give thanks?

B. They were to give thanks for his deeds, along with his wonderful work and miracles.

II. Psalm 105 gives a summary of the deeds that God had done.

A. The Psalmist reviews the covenant that God made with the Patriarchs (vv. 7-15)

B. He recounts God's work through Joseph and Israel's oppression in Egypt (vv. 16-25),

C. The plagues on Egypt are reviewed (vv. 26-36),

D. He relates the great deliverance by God at the Exodus and his care for Israel in the wilderness (vv. 37-42),

E. The people rejoice at the blessing of the new land which they receive (~~ps~~ vv. 43-44)

F. The final line returns to them with which it began - "Praise ye the Lord" (v. 45).



### III. Lessons To Be Learned

A. The Psalm calls upon God's people to praise him, but it also relates what God had done.

1. Why do they praise God?
2. Because of what he had done.
3. If God's people were to praise him for what he had done it was crucial that they know the story of these past deeds.

B. We are God's people today (1 Pet. 2:9).

1. If it was important for Israel to know what God had done, in order to properly praise and worship him, can it be any less important for us today?
2. How can we worship God if we do not know the great things God ~~had~~ has done?
3. "In ancient Israel, they came to God with hearts full of thanksgiving and emotion, but that emotion was based on a knowledge of what God had done for them."

C. In our modern world there is often too little appreciation of the past.

1. With some what happened over two weeks ago is ancient history and has little relevance for us.
2. We must be careful that this attitude does not destroy our appreciation of all that God has done for us.
3. New Christians must be taught what God has done.

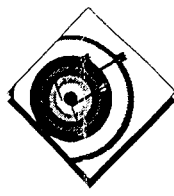


4. In order to praise God with hearts full of gratitude we must remember what he has done.

5. "The joy, thankfulness and emotion of our worship should always be grounded in our understanding and remembrance of God's action for us."

E. Such Psalms as 105, 106 and 136 should help us appreciate the importance of knowing God's history.

# On Target



## Thoughts from a Favorite Verse

*Of all the circumstances of life that demand our attention, one of the most compelling is time. We speak of its measurements, especially those of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, as if the future will always become the present and the present the past without interruption. James tells us, "You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow" (James 4:14). While that reminder has the potential of stimulating fear and uncertainty, the Bible allows us to balance that reality with another remarkable reminder: "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).*

*Since this is one of my favorite passages in scripture, let me suggest four great truths it teaches.*

(1) *The reality of the present—"This is the day." For all our talk about the wonders of the past and the mysteries of the future, we possess nothing but the present. We have inherited much from the past, but we cannot live there. Some try, but by doing so they reveal how unrealistic they are. Scripture reminds us, "Today is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). And again, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 3:7,8). The only reality is today. Today He calls. Today is the day we can be saved.*

(2) *The power of the Creator—"the Lord has made." We think of time merely moving forward automatically as the hands of the clock move or the pages of the calendar are turned. But each day is uniquely made by God. When James reminds us that "every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17), he wants us to consider the creative power of the God we serve. Just as He controls the movement of time, He is willing to take control of our lives. We make the choice to respect His power and grant Him that control.*

(3) *The joy of worship—"Let us rejoice." Reading the book of Luke, one must observe how often words such as "joy" and "rejoice" appear in the early pages of that account of Jesus. It is as if Luke focuses on the joy Jesus brought into the world by His coming. God never intended for our worship to be dull and lifeless. If so, how could we call it praise? An added significance to this part of the verse is the awareness that worship is not singular but collective. The psalmist says, "Let us rejoice." Much derives from blending our voices in song and prayer and our hearts in remembrance, giving, and hearing. In another psalm, collective worship is expressed. "I was glad when they said, "let us go into the house of the Lord." We discover the joy in praising God together.*

(4) *The gift of gladness—"and be glad in it." Surely the ultimate benefit from each day must be the gladness that results from our discovery of the reality of the present, the power of the Creator, and the joy of worship. What's left except to delight in the gift of gladness? If we cannot find in our service to God gladness of heart, something is surely wrong with our understanding and our expression. In one of the exile psalms, the poet exults, "The Lord had done great things for us; we are glad" (Psalm 126:3). How can we not be glad when we consider the great things God has done for us?*

*In reading the beauty of the words in God's message, consider also the lessons He teaches us.*

## News from the Mission Field

By Bob Sanders

Ghana West Africa  
News

**Well Drilling:** Dan McVey, who has worked in Ghana for over sixteen years, sent an exciting report about watching a new well being drilled. "...It was a big one! They hit an aquifer at about 70 feet. I thought we were going to get washed off the hillside! The rig is working beautifully right now."

This is one of five new wells the crews have drilled this past month. Because of these new wells, over 3,000 people will be drinking fresh, clean water. They will no longer be filled with the parasite Guinea Worm, nor will they have to suffer from Cholera and other bacteria. Fewer children will die before their fifth birthday, and parents will not have to make so many sad trips to the cemetery to bury their dead.

### Evangelist Christian

Nsoah reported some of the things the Project Timothy men have been doing. The students report that together they were able to start 27 new congregations converting 1087 souls. In the Salaga area, brothers Evans and Job, have started 5 new churches and baptized 153 souls into Christ. The evangelists have been going to many villages where we have drilled water wells and they have been preaching the word. Because of this, God is being glorified and souls taught and won!

Church of Christ  
Traverse City, MI

Dennis Loyd  
Nashville, TN

## New Members

### **Ray and Greeta Fox**

4231 Franklin Road, Nashville, TN 37204 (297-4240)

### **Matt L. Johnson**

DLU Box 598

Nashville, TN 37204 (269-1519)

### **Mrs. Dora Smith**

4209 Farrar Ave., Nashville, TN 37215 (298-2824)

## Scheduled to Serve - January 23, 2000

*Song Leader - Don Hudson    Speaker - Dale Jenkins*

*Welcome - Trae Kerr    Reading - Rick Tamble*

*Prayer - John Parker    Radio Comments - Dennis Loyd*

*Lord's Supper - Drew Charlton and Dan Bickel*

*Scripture (I Corinthians 11:23-29) - Bob Dilgard*

*Closing Remarks - Hoyte Snow*

*Closing Prayer - Jack Cochrane*

*P.M. Speaker - Dale Jenkins*

*P.M. Song Leader - Ron Eubanks*

*Control Room - Doug Burris*

*Pick up cups - Adults Class (room 213)*

*Close Building - Dennis Loyd and Andy Lane*

*Announcements - Kerry Anderson and Ron Eubanks*

*Prepare Communion - The Stevens Family*

*Coordinate Nursery Workers - Mary Curfman*

*Nursery A.M - Nancy Murphy and Faith Dodd*

*Nursery P.M. - Marcia Hughes*

### January Ushers

*Door 1 - Brian Rutz and Buford Hoskins*

*Door 2 - Rick Emrick and Charlie Butler*

*Door 3 - Ralph Hutton*

*Door 4 - Bill Price V*

### January Communion Servers

1S - Buzz Rice      4S - Josh Tumblin      6S - Phil Ellenburg

1N - Kyle Cochrane      4N - Brent Eubanks      6N - Don Hudson

2S - Andy Bedingfield      5S - Bob Curfman      7S - Charlie Butler

2N - Mike Cochrane      5N - Ron Eubanks      7N - Buford Hoskins

## **Growing Together**

Attendance January 16, 2000

Bible Classes 235      A.M. Worship 476

P.M. Worship 248

Wednesday (1/12/00)

A.M. class 32      P.M. classes 357

Contribution (1/16/00) \$ 10,578.75

Goal      \$11,000

AIM (USPS 010-040)

Church of Christ

3805 Granny White Pike

Nashville, TN 37204-3997

Periodicals postage paid  
at Nashville, TN

### *Schedule of Services*

#### **Sunday:**

Bible Study . . . . . 9:00 AM

Morning Worship . . . 10:00 AM

(Broadcast on WLAC, 1510 AM)

Evening Worship . . . . 6:00 PM

#### **Wednesday:**

Praise & Prayer . . . . . 5:45 PM

Bible Study . . . . . 7:00 PM

M/M James L. Meadows  
9102 Thayer Circle  
Knoxville, TN 37923

Published weekly by Church of Christ, 3805 Granny White Pike, Nashville, TN 37204-3997

Elders: Michael Cochrane, Dennis Loyd, John Parker, John R. Sanders, Hoyte Snow, Turney Stevens, James Ward.  
Deacons: Andy Bedingfield, Bayron Binkley, Phillip Ellenburg, Scott Ellis, Ronald Eubanks, Ronnie Farris, Chuck Hamar, Buford Hoskins, Donald Hudson, Larry Johnson, William King, George O'Connor, William Price, IV, Barry Thompson, James C. Wood.

Minister . . . Dale Jenkins

Youth Intern . . . Trae Kerr

Intern Minister . . . David Salisbury

Editor . . . Dale Jenkins    Associate Editor . . . Dennis Loyd

Secretaries . . . Kathy Jarrell, Anne Marie Robertson, & Tommie Collins

Periodicals Postage Paid at Nashville, Tennessee

Postmaster: Send address changes to: AIM,

3805 Granny White Pike, Nashville, TN 37204-3997.

News Reports and Items of Interest:

Phone (615) 292-6679 Fax (615) 298-1237 Family Line (615) 292-6646

E-mail address: dale@edge.net



Peter. Where he was once fearful, now he was bold. Where he appeared as uneducated, now he appeared eloquent and persuasive. And, the effects of his life are now clear; he is committed to the teaching of the gospel; he is forthright in his condemnation of evil; his love for the souls of the lost is expressed positively; and his influence was only for good.

How many who profess to be Christ followers today can honestly say that being with Christ has made that kind of difference in their lives. Simple spiritual people who are above all committed to Christ can still have a tremendous impact in the world today. There is strength in commitment, a strength that attracts, identifies, impresses, and glorifies. You, too, can have this strength—this enabling power to lead others to the Lord—but nothing less than total commitment will produce it. Being with the Lord must make the difference in our lives!



### The One Hundred and Eighteenth Psalm

This Psalm is the last of the group constituting the Hallel. It seems clear enough to the mind of Bible scholars that it was written for the temple worship on the occasion of some great festival. (Verse 24.) But concerning the author of it and the particular occasion that caused it to be written, we have a diversity of opinions. It is often quoted in the New Testament and it has been called the *Psalm of Christ*. Jerome says that the ancient Jews so considered it, which is borne out by Matthew 21: 9. It is a very noble Psalm. It was the favorite Psalm of Martin Luther, who declared that he owed more to it than to "all the princes and friends who supported him." Though we should study the Psalm as a whole, our special comment is limited to verses 19-24.

#### THE GATES

- 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness:  
I will enter into them, I will give thanks unto Jehovah.  
20 This is the gate of Jehovah;  
The righteous shall enter into it.  
21 I will give thanks unto thee; for thou hast answered me,  
And art become my salvation.

The gates of the temple were called "the gates of righteousness" because the temple was the abode of God, the embodiment of all righteousness. The enclosure was God's house, where God's glory was mani-

festated, where his name was worshipped, where his people were blessed and strengthened. The Psalmist was crying for access to his God, for the privilege of fellowship with God. We are to picture in our mind a procession of worshippers drawing toward the temple in two columns. Verses 1 to 18 are sung alternately by the two halves of the procession as they move slowly up the hill to the temple gates. Then, upon their arrival, the leader of the procession demands: "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will enter into them," etc. We are to think of the following verse as the reply made by them on the inside, describing the character of people who are allowed to enter. None but the righteous shall enter the gates of the Lord. The words in verse 21 would be appropriately chanted as the long procession passed through the gates, which had been opened unto them.

#### THE STONE

- 22 The stone which the builders rejected  
Is become the head of the corner.  
23 This is Jehovah's doing;  
It is marvellous in our eyes.

"Israel is the stone, rejected as of no account in the political plan of those who were trying to shape the destiny of the eastern nations at their own pleasure, but in the purpose of God destined to a chief place in the building of history. The emblem applies with the fullest meaning to our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though rejected by the Jewish authorities, was nevertheless destined to unite both Jews and Gentiles to one vast and glorious spiritual building." (P. C.)

Whatever immediate and literal applications these verses may have received from various commentators, that application is now merged into a richer, larger, and more meaningful application to the Messiah. Perhaps, no Old Testament passage is more frequently quoted in the New Testament. Six or more times it is quoted word for word, and it always points to Christ as the one and only foundation of the church. (Acts 4: 8-12.) And the matter is not a myth or speculation; it is not the doing of men; it is not the doing of angels; but it is *Jehovah's doing*, and it is marvelous to behold, to contemplate.

#### THE DAY

- 24 This is the day which Jehovah hath made;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

"The day is that of the festival now in process, the joyful culmination of God's manifold deliverances. It is a day in which joy is duty, and no heart has a right to be too heavy to leap for gladness. Private sorrows enough many of the jubilant worshippers no doubt had, but the sight of the Stone laid as the head of the corner should bring joy even to such." (A. McLaren.) The "precious corner stone" was laid in Zion on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ from the tomb. Certainly, this was a "day which Jehovah hath made." It was indeed a day of supreme joy, when the gospel was first proclaimed in its fullness and three thousand souls were added to the



Every father and mother should seek to educate their children physically, mentally and morally. Christian schools and colleges do much to assist parents in the proper training of their children.

There are many reasons both high and holy why we should study the Bible. We suggest the following for our consideration:

(1) *We should study the Bible because it is the one living and eternal book.* The Word of God will outlast the heavens. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24: 35.) Peter said, "The Word of the Lord abideth for ever." (1 Pet. 1: 25.) Infidels throughout the ages have laughed, scoffed and mocked at the Word of God but it is still with us. In spite of all the combined talent and brains of the philosophers, scientists and rationalists, the Bible is still the best selling book in the world.

(2) *We should study the Bible because of the fruit it has borne, and is bearing, in the lives of people who have allowed the Word of God "to run and have free course in their lives."* The Word of God makes better homes. Where the Word of God is respected, you will find better fathers, mothers, servants and children. The principles of the Word of God have built our schools, orphanages, and founded institutions for the blind. Nations that have followed the principles of the Word of God are not Christian nations in the strictest sense of the Bible, but the influence of the Bible is what made them civilized. This fact is realized by observing the value of life in nations where the Word of God has not gone. The teachings of Christ has given woman a place in life that was designed for her by Jehovah. When Christ came, woman had a place not much better than the slave. When the early settlers came to America, the American Indian woman did all the hard work and took the coldest place in the wigwam. In the East Indies, the widow was burned alive on the funeral pyre of her husband until the laws of England forbade it. The princes in the Figi Islands were accustomed to building their palaces with each corner over a woman buried alive. Any book that could so transform the lives of people should have a prominent place in the study of every person.

(3) *We must study the Bible in order to know God.* God is not found at the Ouija Board nor in the laboratory. The knowledge of God is not founded in science. The scientist discovers a great law and he worships the law and not the God who made the law that was discovered. The knowledge of God is not found in the philosophies of men. In Athens, Paul encountered the great philosophers of that day and yet they did not know God. (Acts 17: 16-31.) These philosophers were the cultured people of that time. They spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. They did nothing but study but yet they were ignorant of God. We cannot come to know God through the wisdom of the world. Paul says, "The world through its wisdom knew not God." (1 Cor. 1: 21.)

The knowledge of God is not to be found in nature. It is true that the heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19: 1), but they do not reveal God. He who is left to the study of nature without revelation becomes a worshipper of nature. Primeval man learned that the sun dispelled the mist and fog and set all nature to singing so he fell down and worshipped the sun. The Egyptians, in the early days, worshipped the Nile River because the river contributed so much to their existence.

(4) *We should study the Bible because by it we will be judged.* Paul said, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ." (Rom. 2: 16.) Paul also said, "We know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practice such things." (Rom. 2: 2.) Jesus said, "Thy word is truth." (John 17: 17.) By the truth of God we will be judged. (Rev. 20: 12.) Since we will be judged by Christ, we must learn of his will through his word. (John 16: 14.) One cannot be saved without the knowledge of God and of Christ. Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." (John 17: 3.) To know God is to obey him. (1 John 2: 4.) John said, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Paul said Christ will come "rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel." (2 Thess. 1: 7-8.)

In order to be properly directed we must follow the guidebook of God. (Jer. 10: 23.) If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch. (Matt. 15: 14.) We cannot meet the approval by Jehovah unless we study his word. (2 Timothy 2: 15.)

## Have You Been with Christ?

Tom C. Brown

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they wondered; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus." (Acts 4: 13 RSV.)

What a glorious thought this verse contains for us today as we strive to be God's people. It teaches us the grand lesson that the lives of Christians ought to bear witness to Christ their Lord. For after all, have not we become new creatures? Have not we put off the old man of sin, and put on the new man of righteousness? Should not our demeanor, our language, our actions, even our attitudes testify to the fact that we are followers of the Way?

It was most certainly true of Peter and John, but can we truthfully say that it is so with us? Does the world around us recognize any meaningful difference in our lives? Do those around us understand that the foremost thing in our lives is our commitment to Christ and his mission for us in the world? Perhaps we need to go back and read again Luke 14: 33; 1 Corinthians 4: 1, 2; 2 Corinthians 5: 15, 18-20.

Being with Christ made a difference in the life of

INTRODUCTION

1. In 1888 Charles Spurgeon wrote in the Preface of Vol. VI on "The Treasury of David"

these words: "I have been all the longer over this portion of my task because I have been bewildered in the expanse of the One Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm, which makes up the bulk of this volume. Its dimensions and depth alike overcame me. It spread itself out before me like a vast, rolling prairie, to which I could see no bound, and this alone created a feeling of dismay. Its expanse was unbroken by a bluff or headland, and hence it threatened a monotonous task, although the fear has not been realized. This marvelous poem seemed to me a great sea of holy teaching, moving, in its many verses, wave upon wave; although without an island of special and remarkable statement to break it up. I confessed I hesitated to launch upon it. Other psalms have been mere lakes, but this is the main ocean. It is a continent of sacred thought, every inch of which is fertile as the garden of the Lord: it is an amazing abundance, a mighty stretch of harvest-fields. I have now crossed the great plain for myself, but not without persevering, and, I will add, Pleasurable, toil.... This great Psalm is a book in itself: instead of being one among psalms, it is worthy to be set forth by itself as a poem of surpassing excellence. Those who have never studied it may pronounce it commonplace and complain of its repetitions, but to the thoughtful student it is like the deep, full, so as never to be measured; and varied, so as never to weary the eyes. Its depth is as great as its length; it is mystery, not set forth as mystery, but concealed beneath the simplest statements....." (Charles Spurgeon, Vol. 6, Preface V, VI)

2. "In Matthew Henry's Account of the Life and Death of His Father, Philip Henry",  
he says: Once, pressing the Study of the Scriptures, he advised us to take a verse  
of this psalm every morning to meditate upon, and so go over the psalm twice in the  
year, and that, saith he, will bring you in love with all the rest of the Scriptures.  
 He often said, All grace grows as the love of the word of God grows." (Spurgeon, p. 3)
3. In our study of Psalms 119 we purpose to observe some general truths, a breakdown of  
each section, the inspiration of the word of God, the powers of God's word, etc.

## DISCUSSION

### I. SOME GENERAL TRUTHS ABOUT PSALMS 119

#### A. It is alphabetical in its arrangement.

1. Each section has eight verses.
2. Each section begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet until it goes through the twenty-two letters.
3. "According to this alphabetical series of eight stanzas, the word is the source of happiness to those who walk by it (aleph), of holiness to those who give heed to it (beth), of truth to those whose eyes the Lord opens.....(gimel), of law to those whose heart he renews (daleth), begets perseverance by its promise (he), reveals the mercy and salvation of the Lord (vau), awakens the comfort of hope in God (zayin), presents the Lord as the Portion of the trusting soul (cheth), makes affliction instructive and chastening (teth), begets fellowship in the fear of God (jod), and a longing for the full peace of salvation (kaph), is faithful and immutable (lamed), commands the approval of the heart (mem), is a light to the path (nun), from which to swerve is hateful (samek), warrents the plea of innocence (ayin), is a testimony to God's character and will (pe), is a law of rectitude (tsade), warrents the cry for salvation (qoph), and prayer for deliverance from affliction (resh), and from persecution without a cause (skin), and assures in due time (tau). There is here as much order as could be expected in a long alphabetical acrostic." (James G. Murphy, in a "Commentary on the Book of Psalms" 1875)

#### B. Its author is David.

1. It is Davidic in tone and expression
2. It tallies with David's experience in many interesting points.
3. Some have referred to it as "David's pocket book."

#### C. Its subject is the word of God.

1. "The one theme is the word of God." (Spurgeon)
2. "The 119th Psalm is the appropriate sermon, after Hallel, on the text which is its epitome (Ps. 1:1,2). "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel

of the ungodly.....but his delight is in the law of the Lord." Except in two verses (122, 132) the law is expressly extolled in every verse. (Andrew Robert Fausset, in Studies in the 119 Psalms, 1876)

3. "Every verse contains in it either a praise of God's word....."(William Cowper)

4. ".....The psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the Psalm, keeps his eye on it all along, and pursues it to the end.....God's law....."  
(Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758)

5. ".....Its theme is the word of God." (James Murphy)

D. It discusses the word of God under ten words.

1. "These are, doubtless, all designation of the Divine Law, but it was doing a deep injury to the cause of revealed truth to affirm that they are mere synonymous; in other words, that the sentiment of this compendium of heavenly wisdom are little better than a string of tautologies. The fact is, as some critics, both Jewish and Christian, have observed, that each of these terms designates the same law of God, but each under a different aspect, signifying the different moods of its promulgation, and of its reception." (John Jebb, 1846)

2. "Many superficial readers have imagined that it harps upon one string, and abounds in pious repetitions and redundancies; but this arises from the shallowness of the reader's own mind: those who have studied this devine hymn, and carefully noted each line of it, are amazed at the variety and profundity of the thought. Using only a few words, the writer has produced permutations and combinations of meaning which display his holy familiarity with his subject, and the sanctified ingenuity of his mind. He never repeats himself; for if the same sentiment recurs it is placed in a fresh connection, and so exhibits another interesting shade of meaning." (Charles Spurgeon, Vol. 6, p. 1)

3. "Law" (Torah)

a. It occurs 25 times.



- b. "It is the settling down of duties, how they are to be done." (Kinchi)
- c. "It is formed from a verb which means to direct, to guide, to aim, to shoot forwards. Its etymological meaning then, would be a rule of conduct.... It means God's law is general....." (John Jebb)
- d. "It is called law because it guides, directs, and instructs in the way of righteousness....." (A. Clarke)

#### 4. Testimonies ( Edah or eduth)

- a. Found in two forms, having the same derivation and the same signification - 23 times.
- b. Testimonies are more particularly God's revealed law: the witnesses and confirmation of his promises made to his people an earnest of his future salvation." ( John Jebb)
- c. " The things contained in the Scripture are called God's testimonies because they are solemnly declared to the world and attested beyond contradiction." (M. Henry)
- d. Clarke says the word is derived from one denoting "beyond, farther, all along, to bear witness or testimony. The rites and ceremonies of the law; because they point out matters beyond themselves, being types and representations of the good thing that were to come."

#### 5. Precepts (Piqqudim)

- a. It occurs 21 times in other Psalms and only 3 times in other places.
- b. It comes "from a word which means to place in trust, means something entrusted to man, that is committed; appointments of God....." (John Jebb)
- c. "Precepts signify that the will of God is imposed by the authority of our sovereign Law giver." (Dickson)
- d. "They are called precepts, because prescribed to us and not left indifferent." (Henry)
- e. "They are called precepts from a word signifying to take notice, or care of a thing, to attend, have respect to, to appoint, to visit; because they take

notice of our way, have respect to the whole of our life and conversation, superintend, overlook, and visit us in all the concerns and duties of life." (Clarke)

6. Statutes (Chuqqim)

- a. It is found once in the feminine (V. 11) and 19 times in the masculine.
- b. "The verb from which this word is formed means to engrave or inscribe, the word means a definite, prescribed, written law." (Jebb)
- c. "They are called statutes, because they are fixed, and determined, and of perpetual obligation." (Henry)
- d. "Statutes, from a word signifying to mark, trace out, describe and ordain; because they mark out our way, describe the line of conduct we are to pursue, and order or ordain what we are to observe." (Clarke)

7. Commandments (Mitsvah)

- a. It occurs 22 times.
- b. "The commandments are God's laws, not only exhibited, and revealed, and recommended, but positively enjoined." (Jebb)
- c. "God's commandments are so called because given with authority, as (as the word signifies) lodged with us as a trust." (Henry)
- d. "They are called commandments because they show us what we should do, and what we should leave undone, and exact our obedience." (Clarke)

8. Judgments (Mishpatim)

- a. It is found 23 times.
- b. "It is derived from a word signifying to govern, to judge or determine. Judgments mean judicial ordinances, and decisions; legal sanctions." (Jebb)
- c. "God's judgments are so called, because they proceed from the great Judge of the world, and are his judicial sentences to which all men must submit." (Pool)
- d. "They are called God's judgments, because framed in infinite wisdom and because by them we must both judge and be judged." (Henry)
- e. So called "because they judge concerning our words and works; show the rules by which they should be regulated; and cause us to discern what is right and wrong, and decide accordingly." (Clarke)

9. Word or Words (Dabas)

- a. Two terms quite distinct in the Hebrew, but both rendered word - appears 43 times.
- b. "The corresponding verb is rendered talk, speak, say, tell, promise, declare, pronounce, communes". (Plumes)
- c. "The Scripture is called God's word because it proceeds from his mouth, and

is revealed by him to us." (Poole)

d. "The Scripture is called God's word or saying, because it is the declaration of his mind, and Christ, the essential Eternal Word, is all in all, in it."

(Henry)

e. "In the revelation, God speaks to man, shows him in a clear concise, intelligible, and rational way, his interest, his duty, his privileges, and, in a word, the reasonable service he requires of him." (Clarke)

10. Way

a. It occurs 13 times.

b. "In some cases it clearly refers to the manners of life or the way that one walks (V. 5, 26, 29, 59, 168) but in (V. 1, 3, 14, 27, 30, 32, 33, 37) it points to the Scriptures." (Plumes)

c. "The word of God is called his way, as prescribed by him for us to walk in." (Pool)

d. "The Scriptures are called God's way because they are both the rule of his providence and of our obedience." (Henry)

e. "The revelation which God has given was called a way, because it was the way in which God goes in order to instruct and save man, the way in which man must tread in order to be safe, holy, and happy." (Clarke)

11. Truth or Faithfulness.

a. "Both words are given because both are employed by our translators in this Psalm and elsewhere as a fit rendering for a word cognate to Amen. It occurs in this Psalm 5 times, vv. 30, 75, 86, 90, 38.....It expresses the stability and fidelity with which God executes all he speaks." (Plumes)

b. "The principles upon which the divine law is built is eternal truths." (Henry)

12. Righteousness.

a. It occurs 2 times in the feminine and 12 times in the masculine.

b. In some cases it is rendered right, justice, righteous.

c. It clearly in several cases refers to God's word - vv. 7, 62, 75, 106, 123, 138, 144, 160, 164, 172.

d. As applied to Scripture "it signifieth that the word of God sheweth the way how a man shall be justified, to *act*, by faith, and how a justified man should approve himself to God and man, as justified by faith, and that every son of wisdom must and will justify this word of God as the perfect rule of righteousness." (Dickson)

e. "because it is all holy, just, and good, and the rule and standard of righteousness." (Henry)

E. Volumes have been written on Psalms 119.

1. In the 1860 to 1890 Charles Spurgeon wrote seven volumes on the Psalms. Volume six contains Psalms 119 and he wrote 398 pages on this one psalm.
2. In 1867 William S. Plumes finished a book of 1211 pages on Psalms and 75 pages were given to Psalms 119.
3. "It is well known that upon no portion of holy Scriptures, have so many practical commentaries been written.....It has been justly considered in all ages of the church as a storehouse of religious wisdom." (John Jebb)

F. The Psalmist continually pleads for "life." - "Let me live" (vv. 25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159, 116, 144). "The *Source* of life he finds in the law and promises of God (59, 93): and by "life" he means not simply preservation from death, but liberation from all, whether within or without, that crushes and paralyses life, and hinders its proper use and enjoyment; for "life" includes the ideas of light and joy and prosperity. It finds its fullest realisation in communion with God....very noteworthy is the Psalmist's enthusiastic love for the Law. The love which the Israelite was bidden to cherish for Jehovah (Deut. vi. 5, etc.) is kindled by the manifold revelation of His Will in the Law. "Oh how I love thy law; it is my meditation all the day" (97). It is no irksome restraint of his liberty, but his delight, his joy, his treasure, his comfort, the subject of his meditations by day and by night, the source of trust and hope amid all the



## A Breakdown of the Sections of Psalms 119

- A. 119:1-8 - The Perfect Law (Alpha). Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."
1. The first division sets forth the perfection of God's word.
  2. It is described in this division by seven different words - Law, testimonies, ways, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgments.
  3. "In the use of these varied phrases, and others yet to follow, there is revealed the perfection of God's will in its methods as well as its intentions" (G. Campbell Morgan).
  4. The New Testament likewise claims that God's word is perfect. II Tim. 3:16, 17; II Pet. 1:3,4; Jude 3; John 16:13.  
Principles to guide, Heb. 5:12-14.
- B. 119:9-16 - The Way of Cleansing (Beth) -
1. One can learn about the cleansed way (v. 9).
    - a. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."
    - b. Clean defined "free of dirt, unpolluted, free from obscenity or indecency" (Oxford Dictionary).
    - c. What is the cleansed way?
      - 1) Free from iniquity - Isa. 59:1-2.
      - 2) Separate from the world - 2 Cor. 6:14-17; Jas. 4:4.
      - 3) How can a person reach it - Acts 22:16; 1 Jn. 1:7; Rom. 6:4.
  2. One can learn about wholeheartedly seeking God (v. 10).
    - a. One cannot be half for God and half for the world (Mt. 6:23-24).
  3. We can learn to hide God's word in our heart (v. 11); 2 Tim. 2:15; Mt. 4:1-11; Eph. 4:22-32.
  4. We can learn that God teaches us his statutes (v. 12).
- C. 119:17-24 - The Fountain of Joy (Gimel). "Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word."
1. Peace and joy are never created by prosperous circumstances, neither can they be taken away by circumstances of difficulty, but the soul desiring, discovering and doing the will of God finds delight.
  2. Those who are following God's word will find joy and contentment (Phil. 4:4-11).
- D. 119:25-32 - The Strength of Trial (Daleth). "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy work."
1. His soul was in heaviness but he sought the comfort needed in the word of God.
  2. We seldom turn to the word of God for comfort and therein lies our mistake.
  3. Regardless of the trial and circumstances, the word of God has made a way of deliverance, I Cor. 10:12,13.
- E. 119:33-40 - The Medium of Guidance (He). "Teach me O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end."

1. The Psalmist makes an appeal for the clear manifestation of the meaning of the will of God.
2. Notice his petitions. "Give me understanding"; "Teach me"; "Make me to go"; "Incline my heart"; "Stablish thy word."
3. Let us all seek to know the meaning of God's will, John 7:17; Eph. 5:15-16; Heb. 5:12-14.

F. 119:41-48 - The Inspiration of Testimony (vow). "Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even thy salvation, according to thy word."

1. He desires to have the answer for these that reproach him and to know how.
2. Christians need to have the same desire, Col. 4:6; I Pet. 3:15.

G. 119:49-56 - The Comfort of Sorrow (Zayin). "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon whom thou hast caused me to hope."

1. God's word was his comfort in his affliction.
2. Quickened by the word of God he has a three-fold consciousness.
  - a. Loyalty in the presence of reproach (v. 51).
  - b. Hot indignation toward those that forsake his law (v. 53).
  - c. God's word is his songs.

H. 119:57-64 - The Medium of Fellowship (Heth) - "Thou are my portion, O Lord; I have said that I would keep thy words."

1. Look at 10 rules to live by as written by Wendell Winkler.
  - a. Resolve to keep the words of God in one's heart (v. 57).
  - b. Pray with the whole heart for God's merciful blessings (v. 58).
  - c. Examine one's life so as to be guided by God's truth (v. 59).
  - d. Overcome delay and hasten to keep his commandments (v. 60).
  - e. Learn to handle reverses without forgetting God's law (v. 61).
  - f. Be thankful at all times for the righteous judgments of God (v. 62).
  - g. Choose one's close companions with regard to their references for God and His precepts (v. 63).
  - h. Honor God for his mercy and cherish his instructions (v. 64). (Thoughts by Wendell Winkler)
2. Having declared that he has kept God's law, the outcome is that Jehovah himself is his possession.
3. Loyalty to the will of God is not only comfort in sorrow--but it is the medium of fellowship, John 14:21; I John 1:1-10; II John 9,10.

*Begin*

I. 119:65-72 - The Key of Affliction (Teth). "Thou hast dealt with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word."

1. Men have forged a lie against him but he declares his wholehearted obedience.
2. Having shown that God had dealt well with him, he explains:
  - a. Before he was afflicted he went astray (v. 67).
  - b. Affliction brought him closer to God and his word and made him realize that the law of God is better than all material wealth.
3. Affliction can be good for the loyal and obedient, Jas. 1:2-5; Jer. 12:5-6; Heb. 12:5-11.

- J. 119:73-80 - The Depths of Desire (Yodh) - "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding; that I may learn thy commandments."
1. The Psalmist recognized that he was made by God, therefore the deepest reason for surrendering one's self to God's will.
  2. He desires understanding in order that others may see and profit.
  3. He makes five requests, each beginning with "Let."
    - a. The first is for comfort, "according to thy word" (v. 76).
    - b. The second is for tender mercies, in order that he might live, and the reason urged is "Thy law is my delight."
    - c. The third is for vindication that "the proud may be ashamed."
    - d. The fourth is for the ability to strengthen others that turn unto him.
    - e. The fifth is that he may be perfect in God's statutes.
  4. We all must strongly desire God's word, Mt. 5:6; I Pet. 2:1-3.
- K. 119:81-88 - The Confidence of Darkness (Kaph) - "My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word."
1. He is in the darkest circumstances - "My soul fainteth (v. 81). "Like a bottle in the smoke" (v. 83); pits have been dug (v. 85); he was persecuted (v. 86).
  2. Yet through it all, notice his attitude - "I hope....I do not forget....All thy commandments are faithful....I forsook not thy precepts."
  3. In the darkest hour when God seems to be inactive, and the foes successful, the trusting soul still clings to God's will.
  4. God's promise and love are sure, Rom. 8:34-39; Acts 27:25; Heb. 13:4,5.
- L. 119:89-96 - The Foundation of Faith (Lamed) "Forever, O Lord thy word is settled in heaven."
1. The foundation of the Psalmist faith was the fact that God's word was settled in Heaven.
  2. God's faithfulness continues through all generations.
  3. Nature provides the evidence of all these things.
  4. God's word is sure, Mt. 18:18; 24:35; I Pet. 1:23-25.
- M. 119:97-104 - The Delight of Life (Mem) "O how I love thy law: it is my meditation all the day."
1. Trusting God's word even in darkness, assured of the solid foundation on which it stands, the Psalmist now sings the song of his heart's gladness.
  2. Knowing God's will, will make one:
    - a. Wiser than his enemies (v. 98).
    - b. With more understanding than his teachers (v. 99,100).
    - c. Refrain from evil (v. 101).
    - d. Recognize the value of God's word (v. 103).
  3. "What an aid to self examination we have in this part of the Psalm. Do we love God's law? Do we meditate on it? Do we study it? Are we wiser for it? Are we warned by it? Have we submitted to divine teaching. Do we read with more interest, the news of the day, or the letters of a friend, than we feel pursuing the sacred volume? Is our love of holiness increasing? Do we find Christ in all the Scriptures? Is he our life? If we are to lead new lives, it must be by the faith of

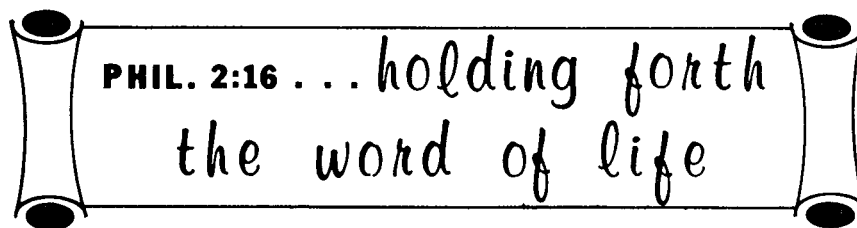
the Son of God" (Plumes, p. 1065).

- N. 119:105-112 - The Light of Pilgrimage (Nun). "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
1. The Psalmist pictures himself as on a pilgrimage through a world of darkness and needing light.
  2. Man cannot direct his own steps, Jer. 10:23.
  3. We are just pilgrims passing through and we need the guidance of God's word, I Pet. 2:11.
- O. 119:113-120 - The Line of Beatitude (Samekh). "I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love."
1. He declares his hatred of all that are not loyal.
  2. He calls upon evil doers to depart from him.
  3. He declares that God sets at naught and causes each evil man to cease.
  4. There ought to be fear and trembling in the presence of God's holiness and in view of his judgments, Matt. 25:31,41,46; Acts 17:30,31; II Thess. 1:7-9.
- P. 119:121-128 - The Hope of Distress (Ayin). "I have done judgment and justice: Leave me not to mine oppressors."
1. He is truly in distress and greatly oppressed, but he rests his case with God.
  2. He calls upon God to work.
  3. He loved God's commandments above gold.
  4. We must not be weary in persecutions for deliverance will come.
- Q. 119:129-136 - The Light of Life (Pe). "Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them."
1. These verses deal with the power of God's word to illumine the inner life.
  2. The understanding of God's word giveth light.
  3. He earlier asked God's wrath on those that kept not his word, but he now shed tears for them.
  4. Jesus pronounced Jerusalem's doom and then wept over her, Mt. 23:37.
  5. II Corinthians 4:16,17; I Pet. 3:1-5.
- R. 119:137-144 - The Knowledge of God (Tsadhe). "Righteous are thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments."
1. He reveals his conception of God.
  2. But his consciousness of God's character comes from an acquaintance with his law, and his experiences in life, Rom. 1:20; I Cor. 1:17-20.
  3. God's law has always been truth (v. 142; of John 8:32; 17:17).
- S. 119:145-152 - The Inspiration of Devotion (Ooph). "I cried with my whole heart: hear me, O lord: I will keep thy statutes." *CRY FOR SALVATION*
1. "Thus the inspiration of the present devotion to the will of God is the experience won out of past devotion, wherein the faithfulness of Jehovah has been proved" (Morgan, p. 245).
  2. The Psalmist said, "Of old I have known" (v. 152).



3. In the dark day memory can become the lever of repentance and help (Psa. 137; Luke 15; Rev. 2:1-3).
  4. God's word cannot change. (*1 Pet. 1: 22-25*)
- T. 119:153-160 - The Principle of Life (Resh). "Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law." *CRY FOR DELIVERANCE FROM AFFLICTIONS*
1. Circumstances show that afflictions abound..."mine afflictions"; "my cause"; "my persecutors"; "mine adversaries."
  2. Every verse breathes the breadth and beneficence of the will of God...."Thy law"; "thy word"; "thy statutes"; "thy testimonies"; "thy precepts"; "thy lovingness."
- U. 119:161-168 - The True Wealth (Shin). "Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word." *PERSECUTION WITHOUT CAUSE*
1. This division contains no petition to God.
  2. This is a Psalm of thanksgiving.
  3. The heart is filled with awe.
  4. All the wealth which makes the singer's heart glad is a right relation to God's law.
  5. The greatest possession any life can hold is that of being able to sing, "all my ways are before Thee."
- V. 119:169-176 - The Perfect Law (Tau). "Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord: give me understanding according to thy word." *ANSWERS IN DUE TIME*
1. It sets forth anew the singer's consciousness of the perfections of the law of God.
  2. There is a consciousness of need, but throughout there is a profound conviction of the sufficiency of God's word.
  3. "The more perfectly acquainted a soul is with the good and acceptable and perfect will of God the more acute is the sense of personal unworthiness" (Morgan).
  4. Through it all the Psalmist is determined to remain loyal to God's word.

# the word of life



Volume IV

July, 1975

Number 7

## **“FOR THOU HAST MAGNIFIED THY WORD ABOVE ALL THY NAME”**

(Psalms 138:2)

This verse indicates that the word of God is designed to glorify God and to make Him known far above all of the works of creation and providence. Therefore, he speaks of the word of God as being exalted. The word of God has the power to convict and convert, sanctify and edify, but it has another power and province. The Bible is the mirror of its Author. It is intended to reveal, unveil, magnify, and glorify Him from whom it originally came forth. This high tribute found expression when as yet there was only the written word. There is no question but what the living word is a fuller unveiling of God's innermost self. In the incarnation the word was made flesh and dwelt among men as a living presence; therefore, Jesus said, "He that has seen me has seen the Father." But it still remains true that in the inspired Scriptures He has glorified His own name, or nature, revealing His mind, heart, will, His whole character, and especially His gracious attitude toward sinners in such a manner and measure as to make all other revelations of Himself in the creation of the material universe and the control of human history comparatively dim and indistinct.

One of the main uses of the word of God is to supply us with a divine standard of both doctrine and duty. For this reason, there is no substitute for God's written word. Men may turn in every direction seeking for something to take the place of the word of God, but when their search is ended, they are still left empty-handed.

The Old Testament warned against some things in which other nations prided themselves, such as fine arts, because these were so often the handmaids of polytheism and the promoters of idolatry, which ended up in glorifying image worship. For this reason, Jehovah required His people to be separate from the nations (Exodus 20:25, Isaiah 2:16).

In every department of life, the need for some exact and unvarying standard, as in weights, measures, and time, compels resort to the works of God for guidance, for here alone is found perfect forms and changeless models. Man's best timepieces have to be corrected by God's timepiece. He has appointed sun, moon, and stars for time and seasons. So from all human oracles, however selfconfident, we turn at last to the inspired Word,

where, instead of untrustworthy utterances, we find teaching that is distinct, definite, authoritative, and infallible.

One of the unique features of the word of God is its self-interpreting power. In the mastery of human books help is needful from large libraries and patient research in the realms of science and philosophy. Grammars, histories, biographies, lexicons, and encyclopedias often become necessary to furnish mere sidelights to interpret the terms in the sense of human literature. But in studying this divine Book, the crown of all literature, other writings, though often helpful, are never indispensable. To a remarkable degree, God's word explains and interprets its own content. It is its own grammar and lexicon, library and encyclopedia. Within itself may be found a philosophy which interprets its history and a history which illustrates its philosophy. The Bible is still the best commentary for understanding the most difficult passages. The humblest reader, shut up by circumstances of this one book, might, without any other guide than the Bible itself, by careful, prayerful searching, come to know the truth. Exploring its contents, he may become mighty in the Scripture.

The high secret of Bible study, however, is that teachable spirit, which is inseparable from obedience. Spiritual vision, like the physical, is bifocal. It depends upon both reason and conscience. If the intellectual faculties are clouded, the moral sense is apt to err in its decisions, and if the conscience is seared, the reason is blinded (1 Timothy 4:1-4). Christ said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine," (John 7:17). In other words, obedience is vital in understanding the Bible. Insight into the Scripture is never independent of the obedient frame of mind, but is conditioned upon actual conformity to their precepts and sympathy with their spirit. True Biblical learning is not only mental, it is also experimental, in that what is learned must be put into practice. There are professed teachers and preachers who no more grasp the truth which they hold than does the sparrow grasp the message that passes through the telegraph wire on which it is sitting. It is sometimes worse than vain to read, or even to search the Scriptures, with mere intellect, as

(Cont'd on page 2)

though they were mere literary productions to be examined and understood with no higher faculties than those which are associated with an unsanctified scholarship.

Many a man who has approached the word of God without prayer, without reverent attitude, or any ultimate end beyond a critical, intellectual analysis, has been left to grope his way blindly, while persuading himself that he had an unusual insight. On the other hand, many an humble and uneducated person has had his eyes opened to behold wondrous things out of God's law and become an expert in the things that are made known there (Psalms 119:18). Critical study is not to be discouraged. It is not only proper, but helpful in its proper sphere when conducted in the proper spirit. But there is a sort of analysis that is destructive, like taking a life and cutting in pieces, even so criticism may take the organic body of truth and sacrifice its life, but finally cut it up and leaves dead, disconnected fragments of what once was a living organism. The Bible is such a living organism (Hebrews 4:12). Its various parts are members of the common body. They have a vital connection and relation and must be examined, not in isolation and separation, but in union as integral parts of a great whole. Then criticism, instead of being arrogant and destructive, will be reverent and constructive.

In a conversation with a deacon at a negro church, the preacher drew out from him the fact that the people didn't like the preacher very much and when pressed for an explanation, the deacon added that the preacher told too many anecdotes in the pulpit. The questioner was surprised, saying that he had supposed the preacher to be a great Bible man. The deacon replied, "Well, I'll tell you how it is. He's the best man I ever seed to take the Bible apart, but he don't know how to put it together again." Modern critics have proved adept in pulling to pieces the word of God, but they are too much like those to whom Asaph referred, who had broken down the carved work of the sanctuary with axes and hammers and burned up the synagogue (Psalms 74:3-8). Jesus said, "The light of the body is the eye," because the condition on which depends the perception and the reception of all light is a healthy organ of vision, without which there is, in effect, no light. This is a thought of vital importance in Bible study. Objective testimony, or external evidence of truth, is never enough. There must be also the subjective capacity and the willingness to receive that which is studied. We must not be so absorbed in gathering proofs or evidence of Christianity as to overlook the need and value of a readiness of mind to receive and to feel the force of proof when furnished. The candid mind, the clean conscience, the obedient will are all necessary to the open eye. Their opposites are a prejudiced mind, corrupt conscience, perverse will, and in the Scriptures are compared to an eye that is veiled, or voluntarily closed. (See I. Corinthians 14:37, I John 2:27, I John 4:1, II Corinthians 3:14-18, John 3:19-21, Acts 26:18-19, 28:26-27, I Timothy 1:19, II Corinthians 4:3-4, II Corinthians 11:3).

A mind that is open to conviction, asking only to know what is true, and a will that is ready to obey and yield itself to truth, are things that are so often overlooked. The two evils of prejudice and self-interest are still as common and as effective hindrance as in our Lord's day. The Pharisees and Scribes were so prejudiced toward truth, and knew that to accept the teaching of Christ meant turning their little world up-side-down, upsetting the whole fabric of their individual, social, and religious life, and hence their invention of every possible pretext for opposing and

rejecting Him (John 11:47-48). Prejudice implies that a wrong or partial view has been formed which leads to antagonism. There is no longer a clear eye to see truth. Self-interest warps the whole mind so that conviction cannot fit the demands of truth even if recognized. Often, unconsciously, men devise excuses, or invent difficulties, which would at once disappear with a fair, impartial judgment.

While it is true that we are to learn the mind of God from the word of God, we must be prepared and be willing to be taught. The eunuch in the eighth chapter of Acts is a good example of the attitude of mind and heart that is necessary to know the truth. Cornelius, in the tenth chapter of Acts, is also another example. He was ready to hear whatever the Lord had to say through Peter. Christ rebuked the leaders among the Jews because, while claiming to be teachers of the law, they knew not the Scriptures, nor the power of God (Matthew 22:29). This reminds us of the necessity, if we are to have a proper understanding of the Scriptures, that we must feel the force of truth, not only as directly declared, but as taught in relation to life. This rebuke was especially to the Sadducees who denied both separate and spiritual existence apart from the body and the reality of the future state. Yet God had declared, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," referring to them, not as dead, but as living, and these Sadducees might have learned from this declaration the doctrine of the survival of the spirit in death and of the future state which they denied. We are to guard against false inferences that come from careless reasoning, but we must not forget that prejudice will blind us to truth and a clear understanding of the truth.

This unique peculiarity which characterizes the Bible needs to be illustrated. This is a convincing truth of the supernatural origin and shows the universal fitness of Scripture for man as man, while it both incites and inspires a reverent searching and study.

A rightly conducted examination of God's word will be found to yield, not only rich results, homiletics and hermeneutics, but also in apologetics. In the structure and the contents of the Bible may be found a triumphal answer to all assaults upon its inspirational authority as a divine book and the standard of doctrine and duty. The Bible is its own witness and whoever, turning from all external defenses of the book itself, will seek to make himself master of its contents, and enter sympathetically into its spirit will find himself lodged in a fortress where he laughs in derision at all, who, like Voltaire, threatened to overthrow it, while he holds in scarcely less contempt the timidity which fear such threats. The Ark of the Covenant needed no help from puny, human hands to steady it; nor was the Shekinah fire in danger of being quenched by those who blew upon it to put it out. Light needs only to be let shine to become its own witness. Let us imitate the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily. The word "searched" is emphatic, implying a thorough examination, a judicial investigation, like the work of a civil engineer mapping out a newly explored line. Search into the Scripture should be: 1) thorough, 2) systematic, and 3) habitual; lingering over peculiarities of conception and expression, emphatic words and phrases, and seeking to know the exact meaning and order of words as set forth in the Scriptures. It is important to realize that nothing is purposeless and to the great end of the whole, every part, however minute, makes a contribution to truth that saves.

(Cont'd on page 3)

## SOME LAWS, METHODS, AND PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY

As history teaches philosophy by example, both exhibiting and testing ethical principles, so practical results both manifest and prove the utility of methods. The word of God consists of form and substance, expression and conception, things that are external and things that are internal, and the natural and normal method in study will be from what is without to what is within. Wordsworth said that language is the incarnation of thought, which suggests that the ideas and words which embodied them are inseparable and cannot really be studied apart from each other. The shell of a pecan is so related to the kernel and adapted to its nature and use, that you could not take the kernel of a pecan and put it into the shell of a hickory nut. The same is true concerning the literal and the spiritual content of the Bible. Any idea that the spiritual can be separated from the literal is to misunderstand the Bible.

### THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

“These are the faithful and true sayings of God,” (Rev. 19:9, 22:6). Its divine authority and inspiration are primary. In the Scripture God is speaking to man in many parts and ways, at different times and by various human instruments (Hebrews 1:1). **Any theory of inspiration or interpretation which sacrifices or diminishes this majestic authority is fatal to the claims of the word of God, as such, upon man’s acceptance and obedience.** Revelation 5 gives a pictorial exhibit of the Author and the majesty of the Bible. A scroll, written within and on the backside and sealed with seven seals, is seen in the right hand of Him who is seated on the throne, and it partakes of His own glory. A seal in the Bible stands for sacredness, connected with authority, genuineness, and the fact that it is not to be tampered with. Whatever this particular scroll is, it represents some written word of God. We cannot escape the suggestion of divine sanction, or authority, as stamped upon the Holy Scriptures. There is the seal of authority, immutability, in its production, independent and irrespective of time and place, variety of matter, and diversity of human writers. There is the seal of sovereignty and majesty in the providential control of historic events. There is the seal of divine wisdom in its forecast of the future and its revelation of the events of the remote past. There is the seal of truth, of infallibility in its accuracy, not only in the ethical and spiritual realm, but in the whole sphere and domain of truth. There is the seal of righteousness and justice in its moral and spiritual standard of character, conduct, and administration. There is the seal of benevolence and love in its moral and spiritual transformation in relation to its purpose and promise of redemption. There is the seal of infiniteness and holiness in the superhuman revelation of the absolute perfection and the glory of its author. Such multiplied testimony puts upon the word of God the sanction of supreme authority. It asserts its divine origin with an emphasis to which nothing can be added.

The fifth chapter of Revelation shows God’s opinion of His own book. Even if the scroll here referred to is only that revelation given to John, what is true of this part is also true of the whole. In this chapter we see the unparalleled majesty of the Scriptures. No created intelligence, even though angelic, was worthy to open the seals, take the scroll in hand, or even to look upon it. The inseparable unity of the book and the Lamb, the

written word and the living word, He only is worthy to take the scroll, or capable of loosening the seals. The complex character of the person of Christ, Lion and Lamb in one, King and Priest, hence able to make us kings and priests. The power of the blood of Christ, which alone unloosens the seals and interprets the contents. Two thoughts pervade the word—Christ’s Priesthood and Kingship; the Lamb and the Lion explain both.

Inspiration means, “God inbreathed,” (II Timothy 3:16). The language suggests a body of language inbreathed with the spirit of divine life, somewhat as the body of the first man was when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Thus, this is a living book.

We need to distinguish between revelation, interpretation, and inspiration. Revelation is the divine impartation and communication of truth to the minds of selected men, whatever may have been its mode or channel (Ephesians 3:3-5, Amos 3:7). Interpretation is the science of discovering the true meaning of the Scriptures. It is a function of inspiration to enable a prophet or a teacher to give an authoritative meaning to divine utterance (Daniel 4:24-28, 5:17-18). Inspiration is the method of revelation, rendering its subject capable of receiving and transmitting revealed truth, communicating it to others without error, either by tongue or pen. And so it is obvious that the value of a written revelation must depend upon its inspiration. Inspiration rendered anyone that it controlled an adequate medium of God’s utterance; His mouthpiece or spokesman (Luke 1:70, Hebrews 1:1).

It is also important to define the measure of authority which inspiration carries. The Bible is in part a record, embracing narratives of fact, which form part of the history it records, and the sayings and doings of fallible and fallen human beings. In some cases inspiration assures only the essential accuracy of the narrative, not the sanction of God’s approval of the utterances or the conduct of the party. But in all cases where God speaks directly, in His own person or by His appointed agent, inspiration covers not only the truthfulness of the record, but the sanction of the statements expressed.

Verbal inspiration is a term much misunderstood. It does not, of course, mean that every word found in the Scripture is God’s word, or represents His mind, for some words record the acts of the erring and the ungodly, or their sayings and, in some instances, Satan is the speaker. Any theory would be absurd that clothed all words found in the Scripture with equal authority and importance. But whatever is meant to convey God’s thoughts is used with a purpose and adapted to its ends. So as the angel said to John, “These are the true sayings of God,” (Revelation 19:9). Every student of the Scripture must observe that. Satan’s words to Eve (Genesis 3:1-5), though accurately recorded, are false and misleading in intention and exactly contrary to the will of God. Inspiration assures us of the account being accurate, but shows that the words of Satan are not God’s will. We must, therefore, discriminate and distinguish two degrees of authority in the inspired record: 1) An authoritative narrative where sentiments and acts are not sanctioned and may be disowned as disapproved of God. 2) An authoritative narrative where the sentiments and acts are inspired and controlled by the spirit of God and therefore represent His mind and will. Lack of discrimination in matters such as these has often led to much confusion and misunderstanding concerning the nature of inspiration. But with

(Cont’d on page 4)



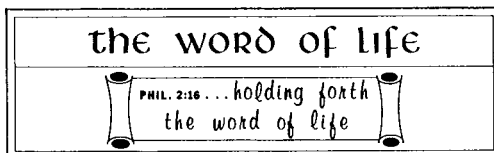
these careful limitations, verbal inspiration is an absolute necessity if, in any proper sense, there is to be divine inspiration at all. We might as well expect to have music without notes, mathematics without numbers, as to have an inspired book without words controlled by the spirit of God.

The more carefully the Bible is examined, the more exact do its choice and use of words appear, the more precise its phrases and terms, and even grammatical forms. It is of great importance to study the very language God employs to convey His mind, and in all the details which follow, a part of the purpose is both to demonstrate and illustrate the significance that every jot and tittle of the Bible is inspired. There's still some further important considerations to keep in mind. It is not necessary that the man inspired would always understand his message, for even the prophets inquired and searched diligently after the meaning of their own predictions (I Peter 1:11-12). Inspiration is affirmed only of the original documents. There may have been some mistakes made by copyists, and it's perfectly right for criticism to seek, by careful examination and comparison of all existing documents, to detect any errors and to restore the Scriptures to

their original purity. It is well to keep in mind that when all of these are considered, it is only a minor thing. Most so-called discrepancies disappear when the various records are regarded as partial rather than complete, as each of the four gospel narratives may present some features not found in the rest, but capable of being combined with the others in one full statement (John 20:30-31). For example, the full and complete inscription over the cross was, "THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH KING OF THE JEWS." Of this inscription of nine words, Matthew records eight, Mark five, Luke seven, John eight, and not the same in any two cases. But the full inscription includes all the words found in any record. There is therefore no contradiction. That which is essential in inspiration is the action of the mind of God upon the mind of man, in such a way and measure as to quicken and qualify the human medium for the true reception and revelation of the divine message. Revelation expresses the informing process and inspiration the imparting process.

(Continued next month)

page 4



THE WORD OF LIFE  
Published Monthly  
except December by  
Shades Mountain  
Church of Christ  
959 Alford Ave.  
P. O. Box 26156  
Birmingham, Alabama 35226  
Franklin Camp - Editor

Second Class Postage  
PAID  
at Birmingham, Ala.

JAMES MEADOWS  
4235 CHAFFEE ROAD  
SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA 29301

# the word of life

PHIL. 2:16 . . . holding forth  
the word of life

Volume IV

August, 1975

Number 8

## “FOR THOU HAST MAGNIFIED THY WORD ABOVE ALL THY NAME”

(Psalms 138:2)

Continued from last month

### THE HIGH LEVEL OF THE WORD OF GOD

Whatever has to do with God is of necessity, and in the nature of things, supernatural and superhuman, extraordinary and unique. It belongs on a level of its own standing, alone and apart, defying all competition and comparison. We should, therefore, expect both the sublime and the original, and that which transcends all limits of human thought. These characteristics, instead of being an obstacle to faith, are rather an argument for it. The workman is known by his work, and the more perfect the product, the fuller the exhibition of the producer. The Bible being God's workmanship, will, like the heavens, declare His glory and show forth His handiwork (Psalm 19).

God says, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts,” (Isaiah 55:8-9). This states a principle that covers the entire Scripture. The word “thoughts” literally means “weavings,” and this includes the whole fabric of Scripture conceptions. (Compare Psalms 33:10, 40:5, 62:5, and 94:11.) In the last reference, “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vanity,” is a designed contrast between man's devices and God's—man's being compared in the same prophecy of Isaiah (59:5-6)—“The cobwebs which never become garments.” His ideas, or ways of thinking, are as far above the level of man's as the heavens are above the earth—a distance that is beyond measure—and so of His ways of doing as His ways of thinking. The distance and the difference is infinite. Human thoughts fall short of God, as illustrated when the Jews conceived of the Messiah as a temporal King, and His Kingdom as an earthly one, and had no thought of the new man which was to make the Jew and the Gentile one in Christ (Ephesians 2:15). But even after the gospel was first preached, Peter was slow to understand it (Acts 10:9-35). God has His own unique constitution and being. He is the eternal God and therefore independent of all time

limits. He is the I AM to whom past, present, and future are equally today; who is without beginning or end, without succession of days or change of conditions. He is the omniscient one to whom all things are absolutely known; that there can be neither anything hidden from Him nor any increase of knowledge or intelligence (Hebrews 4:12-13). He is the omnipresent one, pervading all space and time with His presence, and it is only in an accommodated sense that He can be said to be at any appointed time or place anymore than any other. He is the immutable one who changes not. His absolute perfection at once forbids change for the worse, which would be a degeneration, or for the better, which would be improvement and imply imperfection, since perfection cannot be improved. Such a unique and solitary being must have His own ways both of thinking and doing. We shall find that He has His own lexicon, using language in a unique sense and defining His own terms; that He has His own mathematics, not limited to man's addition and multiplication tables. He has His own calendar, reckoning time in His own fashion and dividing all duration into ages and dispensations to suit His eternal plan. He has His own chronicles, writing up history according to methods of His own, leaving gaps of silence where He deems nothing related to His plan of redemption. He has His own grammar, using all the distinctions of conjugation and declension, voice and mood, tense and person, gender and number, with discrimination and design. In a word, everything about God and His methods shows that He lives on a different plane from man, and cannot either be restricted to man's notions or judged by man's standards. In the study of the Scripture, you come across many original and peculiar, divine thoughts and ways. Certain features appear prominent as connected with unique patterns, models, and standards. These are designed to arrest attention and teach permanent lessons. They should be grouped by themselves as both related one to another and contributing to one ultimate end. They are divine ideals,

(Cont'd on page 2)

expressing divine ideas; concrete forms for abstract truths, making them easier to understand and making a more lasting impression. There are three pictorial parables of higher truths, all needing higher explanations: 1) The tabernacle, the house which God planned and built; the temple being essentially on the same model. 2) The ceremonial, the order of worship and service connected with this house which He decreed. 3) The calendar, the one series of fasts, feasts, and festivals which He arranged and ordained. God intended for us to study these as they are illustrations of His thinking and of His ways. In the tabernacle there were such features as the brasen and golden altars, the lamp stand and the shewbread, the laver, the ark, and the mercy seat. In the ceremonial, the five offerings: burnt sin and trespass, meal and peace, and then the red heifer, first fruits and tithes. In the calendar, a sacred seventh day, week, month, year; a seven times seventh year, and seventy times seven, or four hundred ninety. There are the wonders connected with the exodus from Egypt, referred to over and over (Micah 7:15); the supreme marvel of raising Christ from the dead and exalting Him to His own right hand (Philippians 2:9-11). The phrase, "according to," so often used, suggests that His design is to give His people a standard by which to estimate both His ability and willingness to do great things for them. The wonders of Egypt are continually appealed to in the Old Testament. "I am Jehovah who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," and by this He rebuked their unbelief and stimulated their faith and fearlessness in the presence of their enemies. As to the resurrection and the exaltation of Christ, it went far beyond all dreams of even divine power, defying death and the Devil, invading the uniformity of the natural law, and annulling the power of gravitation. These three standards of power all have to do with an exodus: the first from Egypt is a land of bondage; the second, the return from Babylonian captivity and exile; the third, the Lord's exodus in the realm of death and the grave.

God also has His own scales for weights and standard of measure. Some things, which to man are small, to Him are great. What man accounts important, with God is so often unimportant. To attempt to crowd divine things into human standards is both to misunderstand God and belittle Him. It is necessary for us to accustom ourselves to His standards and to adopt them and adapt ourselves to them, and thus recognize them as far above our own. In doing this, we need a sense of proportion. The time element must be kept in its proper relation in the Scripture in the plans of God. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years one day. Human time measurements count nothing. What is eternal cannot be expressed or explained in terms of the temporal and what is celestial must essentially differ from what is terrestrial. (See I Corinthians 15.) If all that is divine could be understood by what is human, it would cease to be divine. Perfect understanding implies equality of intellect and intelligence. Such expressions as "God says," and, "the Lord spake, saying," "the Lord commanded," "the word of the Lord came unto me, saying," occur in the Pentateuch alone six hundred eighty times. How strange it would be if in all these nearly seven hundred statements from Jehovah, there was nothing too high for man to understand. Sin was born of presumptuous intelligence. All rationalism is the worship of human reasoning and a denial of any higher level in divine truth than man can attain. It is, in effect, a claim to man's equality with God and a virtual denial of any God at all. It is because the word of God

belongs to a superhuman level that man's investigation of it never reaches its limit of new discovery. Every new study of it brings new lessons. But this does not mean one cannot know truth and be certain of the truth he knows (John 8:32).

### **THE IDENTITY OF THE WRITTEN WORD AND THE LIVING WORD**

"In the volume of the book, it is written of me," (Hebrews 10:7). The Scriptures and the person of Christ are so bound together that whatever impairs the integrity and the authority of one also affects the other. The written word is the living word unfolded. The living word is the written word unfolded. Christ is the cornerstone of all faith. That cornerstone is laid in Scripture as a bedrock, and to disturb the scriptural authority, unsettles the foundation of faith and of the church itself. Jesus says, "Search the scriptures for they are they which testify of me. They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them, for if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me for he wrote of me, but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my word?" (John 5:39, 46, 47; Luke 16:31).

Here is progressive testimony. First, those who honestly search the Scriptures find in them sufficient testimony to Christ. Second, where there is faith in their witness, there will be faith in His words, and third, if men reject their testimony, even the miracle of the resurrection will fail to convince. Here, curiously enough, is an outline of the whole history of modern rationalistic criticism. It began by not believing Moses' writings, and then assailed the testimony of the prophets. Then it proceeded to undermine the authority of Christ's words and at last, the confidence in His resurrection from the dead. Christ, thus, in a few words, hinted the course of modernistic thought nineteen centuries later.

In the interview that Christ had with the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27-44), He revealed what the Old Testament taught concerning Him and also the unity of the Old Testament. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Saying, "...that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me," (Luke 24:27, 44). He traced one progressive Messianic revelation through three popular divisions in which the Old Testament was arranged. To understand the New Testament records of Christ, then we must know the whole Testament from Genesis to Malachi, for the two are as closely related as it is possible for anything to be. The entire Bible is the mirror of Christ. In the prophetic, directly and indirectly, His image is forecast and foreshadowed (Genesis 3:15, Psalms 22, Psalms 60 and Isaiah 53). Under the covenant of the law, circumcision and sacrifices are shadows of Christ. The Levitical system, the tabernacle, the priesthood, with specific provisions and ordinances, Passover, the Day of Atonement, the red heifer, the leper's cleansing; the historical events like the flood, the exodus,

(Cont'd on page 3)



the journey in the desert, the conquest of Canaan; persons like Adam, Abel, Abraham, Melchisedec, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, and Solomon. His testimony concerning Himself, when the scattered fragments are gathered together, witness to Him as the Son of man and the Son of God—Prophet, Priest, and King—His parables and miracles forming part of His witnessing; above all, the crowning miracle, His resurrection. The writings of the New Testament generally, the epistles to the churches, to the Hebrews, the epistles to individuals in general, all center in Him and set forth His teaching and character. The Scriptures portray Christ in three great offices—Prophet, Priest and King. Each are incomplete without the other. Prophet to instruct and inform.

---

## GOD

The increase in modernism and atheism is one of the major causes of the decline in morality of our nation. Many schools openly and brazenly deny God and the Bible account of creation. More attention needs to be given to the study of Christian evidences. It shall be my purpose to show that the idea of God is not as out of date as some would have you believe.

The most profound problem that can confront the human mind is whether or not there is a supreme intelligence, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent—the creator of all things. This question lies at the foundation of man's religious beliefs. The question of man's responsibility, sin and salvation, immortality and man's future blessedness, the resurrection, the credibility of miracles are all bound up in the questions as to whether or not there is a God. Even our present happiness and the future welfare of our nation is tied to this question.

The Atheist asserts there is no God. The Agnostic professes that he cannot tell whether there is a God or not. The Materialist boast that he does not need God, and that he can run the universe without God. The (Bible) Fool wishes there was no God. The Christian answers that he cannot do without God.

The Atheist says there is no God. He asserts that there is no Heavenly Father watching over us. He claims that God is a baseless shadow of a wistful dream. But belief that there is no God does not demonstrate that there is no God. Neither does the belief that God is prove the proposition. The question must be settled on the basis of the testimony on which the Christian faith rest. Which is the most substantial, the basis of the Christian's faith or the Atheist ground of denial? It is here that the Atheist has manifest his fatal folly. He has never considered fairly the ground of the Christian's faith nor wrestled with the difficulties of his denial of God.

The Atheist rejects God because he cannot find Him in a test tube. He declares that reason cannot demonstrate the existence of God. But to look for God in a test tube is looking in the wrong place. The Atheist is expecting too much when he tries to find God by reason and then declares there is no God because reason did not locate Him. If God could be found in a test tube or discovered by reason there would have been no need for the Bible. While it is true that believing in God is not contrary to reason it is also true that God is not discovered by reason. But this argument also works against the Atheist. If reason cannot demonstrate the existence of God it cannot prove that he does not exist. In order for one to assert there is no God, he must arrogate to himself the wisdom of God. He must explore the entire universe to be sure that no God is there. "For man not to know God he has only to sink below the level of our common nature. But to deny God he must be God himself."

Priest to atone and intercede. King to subdue and control. The book of Matthew shows Christ fulfilling all three of these functions.

The battle of this decade will be fought on this field. The fundamental question of today is the inspiration, integrity, and authority of the Bible. The hour is late, the time is urgent, and the clarion call is for men who have an unfaltering faith in God's book, the Bible. There is a crying need for men who know the Scripture, whose lives are in tune with its message and in faithful will go forth to meet Modernism on every street corner, in the halls of higher education, using the sword of the Spirit to slay this proud enemy of God and His word.

The Bible states a fact when it says, "the world by its wisdom knew not God." (I Cor. 1:21) The wisdom of this world IS FOR THIS WORLD ONLY...not the world to come. Its proper sphere is the seen and tangible; the here and now, not the unseen and the eternal. The wisdom of man has passed out of its sphere when it invades the Invisible and Eternal. It has passed the boundary of the known, its only and proper sphere, when it assumes to deny the infinite God has revealed Himself in His word. We have the right to demand of the Wisdom of world by what authority it asserts that there is nothing above Nature. Why shall we give up all that men hold dear at the bidding of the Wisdom of the world whose highest and best and latest revelation is "a grave without a resurrection, and a universe without God." When the Atheist rejects the faith that rest upon the Bible he still has not solved his problem. When pressed to the ultimate end of his explanation of the world he must rest it upon faith—faith in a guess or theory of men. Paul was right when he said, "Through faith we understand that the world was framed." It is faith based on the Bible or the testimony of men. It cannot be knowledge.

The Agnostic says that he cannot tell whether there is a God or not. Without dogmatically affirming that there is no God, the Agnostic practically insinuates that whether there is a God or not, nobody can tell and it does not matter—that man with his powers of thought and reason cannot obtain reliable information concerning Him. The agnostic claims that all man can do is to build an imaginary picture or make a God in his own image without being sure there is any reality behind it. The Agnostic does not deny that behind the universe there may be a Power but whether that power is a Force or a person is something that cannot be known. The Agnostic leaves the question of God in the realm of speculation. While he says there may be a God he also says with equal force there may not be a God. He just does not know.

THE AGNOSTIC IGNORES THE SPIRITUAL FACTOR IN MANS NATURE. He denies the soul's existence altogether or views it merely as a function of the body. This is contradicted by both scripture and experience. It cannot be denied that man is conscious of being more than animated matter.

THE AGNOSTIC TAKES FOR GRANTED THAT THINGS CANNOT BE ADEQUATELY KNOWN UNLESS THEY ARE FULLY KNOWN. This proposition, however, cannot be sustained in Science or Philosophy. Science knows there are such things as life (vegetable and animal), and force (electricity) but confesses it's ignorance of what life and force are as to their essence. All they understand about them is their properties and effects. Philosophy can expound the laws of thought but is baffled to

(Cont'd on page 4)

unriddle the secret of thought itself. They do not know how thought is excited in the soul by nerve-movements caused by impression from without, and how it expresses itself by originating counter movements in the body. In ordinary life men know each other adequately for all practical purposes while aware that in each other there are depths which the other cannot know.

Man does not fully know himself. "Search me O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me." (Ps. 139:23, 24)

The Bible does not say that man can fully know God. It does teach that man can know God from the things he has made. "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." (Ps. 19:1-3) The Bible teaches that we can know God through Christ. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (John 14: 8, 9) Thus the Bible teaches that the man that fails to know God is without excuse. (Rom. 11:8-25)

The doctrine of the Agnostic undermines the foundations of morality. If one cannot tell whether there is a God or not, how

can he be sure there is such a thing as morality. Morality, like religion, cannot rest on uncertainties. If the Agnostic is right we have nothing certain. The Agnostic says:

We cannot know God fully.

What we cannot know fully cannot be known.

Therefore we do not know whether there is a God or not.

But we cannot know life fully.

What we cannot know fully cannot be known.

Therefore we cannot know whether there is life or not.

We cannot fully know ourselves.

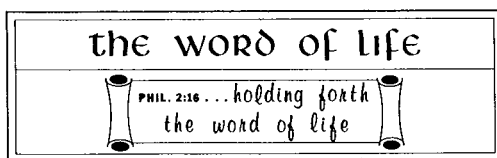
What we cannot know fully cannot be known.

Therefore we cannot know whether we exist or not.

Thus according to his reasoning he does not know whether there is life or whether he exists.

### RECOMMENDED READING

Pentecotalism is a false religion but it is growing and has even been accepted by some in the church. Ben Franklin who was one time a faithful gospel preacher embraced the false doctrine of Pentecostalism. Brother Guy N. Woods met Franklin in debate in Gadsden, Ala. in the spring of 1974. This debate is in print. Those who are interested in the truth need to obtain a copy of this debate. No preacher is more capable of exposing the falacies of Pentecostalism than brother Woods. The charts in the book are worth the price of the book. The book may be ordered from H. C. McCaghren, 100 Carlton Pl., Gadsden, Ala. 35901.



THE WORD OF LIFE  
Published Monthly  
except December by  
Shades Mountain  
Church of Christ  
959 Alford Ave.  
P. O. Box 26156  
Birmingham, Alabama 35226  
Franklin Camp - Editor

Second Class Postage  
PAID  
at Birmingham, Ala.

JAMES MEADOWS  
4235 CHAFFEE ROAD  
SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA 29301

## Psalms 139

- ① 1. Omniscience of God (vv. 1-6)
2. Omnipresence of God (vv. 7-12)
3. Praise to God (vv. 13-24)







## Psalm 145

### David Praise Four Things About God

1. His greatness (vv. 1-6)
2. His goodness (vv. 7-10)
3. His government (vv. 11-13)
4. His grace (vv. 14-21)







## Call To Praise God

146

1. Call to praise God (vv. 1-2)
2. Mortality of man - vanity of trusting in him (vv. 3-5)
3. Blessings of those who trust in God (vs. 5)
4. Reason for trust (6-10)





# An Introduction to the Book of Psalms

E. S. Jones

*Upstairs*

## I. Hebrew Poetry

### A. The Old Testament repeatedly expresses itself in poetry.

1. Hebrew poetry is very flexible.
2. Meter is not measured in "feet" and syllables are not arranged in complicated patterns.
3. The basic structure is a line and its answer.
4. Spontaneity is generously accommodated.
5. The basic unit of Hebrew poetry is two lines with three and sometimes four lines forming a unit.
6. Hebrew poetry is much more exalted than the sentimental and romantic examples of most English religious poetry.
7. Further elements of Hebrew poetry include:
  - a. Alliteration (similar sounds at beginning of words).
  - b. Assonance (similar internal sounds).
  - c. Paronomasia (puns, plays on words).
  - d. Onomatopoeia (words that sound the same but have different meanings).
  - e. All such characteristics are difficult to translate.

### B. The primary characteristic of Hebrew poetry is the matching of thoughts -- a sort of "thought rhyme" usually called "parallelism."

1. Synonymous (either identical or similar): Ps. 103:10; 63:1; 51:1; 19:1; 2:4; 83:14; 24:1; 19:2; Prov. 1:8; Job 22:3-11; Gen. 4:23; Ex. 15:4; Isa. 1:3; Amos 1:8; **Ps. 2:3**
2. Synthetic or Constructive (addition of a thought): Ps. 145:18; 29:1; Prov. 1:10; 3:27-30; Amos 1:7; Job 19:25; Deut. 33:27; Joel 1:4; Prov. 15:17; 26:4; Ps. 19:7; 1:1<sup>2</sup>; 2:3, 2:6.
3. Antithetical (contrast): Ps. 37:21; 1:6; 30:5; 90:6; 1:6; Prov. 10:1, 5, 7; 1:29; most of 10:1-22:16.
4. Comparative: Ps. 42:1; 63:8; Prov. 25:25; 11:22.
5. Analytical (second line gives the consequence of the first): Ps. 23:1; Deut. 32:4; Lam. 3:24.
6. Climatic (building to a climax): Ps. 95:1-3; 29:1<sup>2</sup>; Jud. 5:7; Ps. 121:1-8; **94:1, 3, 23**
7. Tautological (repetition of words): 94:3; **8:1, 9; 25:1-3/A-21**

### C. Early examples of Hebrew poetry.

1. Gen. 4:23-24; 9:25-27; 27:27-29; 39:4; 49:2-27.
2. Ex. 15:1-8; Ps. 90; Num. 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 15-24; Deut. 32:1-33:29.
3. Josh. 10:12-13.
4. Jud. 5:2-31.
5. I Sam. 2:1-10.

### D. Types of Hebrew Poetry

1. Lyric (the poetry of sentiment). The Psalms are chiefly lyric as are most poetic sections in the historical books and the Prophets.

2. Didactic (gnomic or teaching poems). Found primarily in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.
    - a. Not concerned with abstract reasoning.
    - b. Observations about life and morality and the order of the universe.
  3. Dramatic (the poetry of drama) Job and Song of Solomon represent this type.
    - a. The movement of ideas rather than people is stressed.
    - b. An interplay of thought provides the plot.
  4. Lament (the poetry of sorrow) Lamentations is the chief example of this kind of poetry.
- E. Additional Observations about Hebrew poetry.
1. Poetry is important to a religion that is deeply felt.
  2. Hebrew poetry gives us insight into the inner spiritual life of those most influenced by God.
  3. Hebrew poetry suffers less from translation than does almost any other form of national poetry. Parallels of sense rather than sound.

## II. The Basic Structure of the Book of Psalms.

- A. Book One (1-41).
- B. Book Two (42-72).
- C. Book Three (73-89).
- D. Book Four (90-106).
- E. Book Five (107-150).
- F. Each have similar endings (41:13; 72:18-19; 89:52; 106:48; 150:6).
- G. Both the Septuagint and the Book of Chronicles attest to the antiquity of those divisions (I Chron. 16:35-36).
  1. An orderly arrangement is thus ancient.
  2. However, the arrangement is an informal one with no clear-cut reasons for the various divisions.

## III. Modern Trends of Scholarship.

- A. Beginning with Gunkel's studies in 1904, a reappraisal of the Psalms was begun.
  1. Serious acceptance was restored.
  2. The negative influences of Wellhausen were undermined.
- B. Gunkel's research revealed some very practical insights.
  1. The Psalms reflected the same kind of material found in the rest of the Old Testament: hymns, laments, thanksgiving, prayers, situations associated with royalty.
  2. From this Gunkel concluded that the Psalms were the very kind of material one would expect to find arising from Hebrew culture.
  3. With this he pushed back the date of the Psalms.
  4. When they were then compared with ancient poems from neighboring cultures, the Psalms were demonstrated as being from a similar historical setting and literary expression. Especially is this true of the Ras Shamra tablets in Ugaritic.



5. The Psalms written in the Maccabean period are clearly different from Old Testament Psalms.

C. Mowinckel's work from 1921-1924 made a turn back to Wellhausen.

1. He tried to connect the Psalms to literature manufactured by the Cultic structures of Israel.
2. Temple services came to be the motivation for the composition of the Psalms.
3. Only one or two Psalms were seen to be from David.
4. Mowinckel's conclusions found ready acceptance and certain standard assumptions developed among many scholars.
  - a. The yearly enthronement of God was imagined.
  - b. More than 40 Psalms were associated with this supposed event (eg. 89, 24, 93, 81, 95, 96).
  - c. Ingathering and Tabernacles were the feasts wherein this enthronement was said to take place.

D. Speculations grew beyond the assumptions of Mowinckel.

1. Some felt the Psalms were primarily influenced by the Babylonian "akitu" festivals.
2. Others looked to Canaanite fertility rites.
3. A few looked to the king as playing the role of Yahveh's adopted son who acted out God's triumph over the cosmic forces.

E. Such speculations, however, failed to establish their case.

1. The imaginative New Year reconstructions went beyond historical identification.
2. The concept of a sacral kingship was, to say the least, precarious.
3. The evidence is that Israel had a far different pattern of kingship and worship than did her neighbors.
4. Anthropology, not the evidence from the Hebrew past, was the faulty basis of such speculations.
5. The whole idea of enthronement is not connected with Yahveh in the Psalms.
  - a. The clear teaching of the Psalms is that God reigns (Ps. 93:1).
  - b. The "day of the Lord" was not seen as a day of enthronement for God, but as a day of battle.

#### IV. Notations Within the Book of Psalms.

A. The titles of Psalms

1. The titles demonstrate that they were used rather than invented by Israel.
  - a. Many do not have an obvious connection.
  - b. If they were supplied, they would have undoubtedly assigned Psalms to more readily discernable relationships.

B. In the Hebrew Bible the titles to the Psalms are in the text.

1. This is why the Hebrew verse numbers are usually out of touch with ours in the Psalms.

2. The New Testament treats the headings as inspired (Mk. 12:35-37; Acts 2:29ff; 34ff; 13:35-37).
  3. We need look no further than this for their authentication (the NEB omits them all).
  4. The titles are old enough that their technical terms were meaningless to the Jews who translated the LXX.
  5. Being in the third person they were probably not from the writer of the Psalms, but from the pen of the inspired man or men who put the book in its final form.
- C. Various terms and descriptions found in the Psalms are quite difficult to understand and must be viewed in either a general way or with an admission of ignorance.
1. Mizmor (57 times): A psalm, a composed piece of music.
  2. Shir (29 times): a popular song, often unaccompanied.
  3. Mizmor Shir: A popular song that had taken on a formal status.
  4. Shiggaion: Comes from a word meaning "to wander or err." It might refer to a very emotional section (Ps. 7).
  5. Mikdam: May refer to a silent prayer (16, 56-60).
  6. Maskil: Comes from the verb meaning "to make wise or prudent." It could refer to either the content or the skill needed to write or sing the Psalm (32, 42, 44-45, 52-55, 74, 78, 88-89, 142).
  7. A prayer (17, 88, 90, 102, 142).
  8. A praise (145).
  9. Selah (71 times): Perhaps an interlude.
  10. Higgsaion: Perhaps a quieter playing of instruments (Ps. 9:16).
  11. Notes to the Choirmaster are found in 55 Psalms. The word means "to excell" and could refer to a superintendent having superior ability.
  12. According to Sheminith (6, 12), the word means an eighth and may refer to deeper voices (I Chron. 15:21).
  13. According to Alamoth "girls" (46 cf. I Chron. 15:20), higher voices.
  14. According to Gittith (8, 81, 84), the refers to a wine or olive press.
  15. According to Muth-labben (9) refers to the death of a son and probably refers to a particular tune.
  16. Other possible references to tunes the song is to be sung in would include:
    - a. According to Lilies (45,69).
    - b. According to Shushan Eduth (60).
    - c. According to Lilies, a testimony (80).
    - d. According to Mahalatt (53, 88).
    - e. According to The Dove on Far Off (56).
    - f. According to Do not Destroy (57-59, 75).
    - g. Song of Ascents (120-134, cf. Isa. 30:29).
- D. Davidic Episodes in the headings (3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142).
1. 59 and I Sam. 19:11 (esp. 59:12).
  2. 56 and I Sam. 21:10 (esp. 56:12).
  3. 34 and I Sam. 21:13 (esp. 34:6-8).
  4. 142 and I Sam. 22:1 (esp. 142:6).
  5. 52 and I Sam. 22:9 (esp. 52:3).

6. 54 and I Sam. 23:13 (esp. 54:3).
7. 57 and I Sam. 24:1 (esp. 57:6).
8. 7 and I Sam. 24:11, 12 (esp. 7:3, 8).
9. 18 and II Sam. 7 repeated II Sam. 22.
10. 60 and II Sam. 3:13-14; I Chron. 18:12, cf. I K. 11:15 (esp. 60:10).
11. 51 and II Sam. 12:13-14
12. 3 and II Sam. 15:16 (esp. 3:5).
13. 63 and II Sam. 16:2 (esp. 63:11).
14. 30 and II Sam. 24:2; 13-17; I Chron. 21:11-17; 22:1 (esp. 30:5,6).

## V. The Theology of the Psalms

- A. The Place of God is central to all Scripture and the Psalms delight in summoning the creation to sing His "praises",
  1. An appeal is made to exalt Yahveh (ie Ps. 33:1-3).
  2. The body of this type of Psalm then presents the grounds for the appeal with key, "for" (eg. 33:4) or ASHER, "who" (eg. 16:7).
  3. A conclusion will usually resume the initial appeal (eg. 103:20-22).
  4. The Psalms do not attempt to prove God exists.
    - a. To disregard the obvious fact of God is the chief concern of (Ps. 10, 14, 53).
    - b. Only a fool would deny God (Ps. 14:1)
- B. The transcendent EL or ELOHIM and the immanent and personal are the names for God that most commonly portray His character.
  1. His infinity of:
    - a. Time (90:2; 102:12).
    - b. Space (139:7-12, 18; 11:4; 68:7-8; 20:2; 27:4; 145:18).
    - c. Knowledge (139:1-6).
    - d. Power (139:13-18; 93-99).
  2. His changelessness (102:27)
  3. His adaptability (18:25-26).
  4. His righteousness (5; 86:11 [EMET, "truth" or "firmness" and TSADEQ "rightness" or "uprightness" establish that righteousness is a fidelity to what is right or truthful]).
  5. His goodness (103).
    - a. Mercy (17:7; 86:15).
    - b. Fatherhood (27:10; 89:26 cf. 57:1; 63:7).
    - c. CHESED or "steadfast love" which produces:
      - 1) MISHPAT, "judgment" (33:5).
      - 2) SHALOM, the "peace" of wholeness and integration.
      - 3) 85:10 has CHESED and EMET meeting so that TSADEQ and SHALOM "will kiss each other."
  6. The Psalms of praise focus on God's QADOSH "holiness" (cf. Lev. 20:26 and Ps. 99).
- C. God's relationship to nature is a further vehicle of praise (104, 50, 29, 65).
  1. Nature glorifies God (148).
  2. Nature points men to God (19:1; 8:3-4).
  3. It exists for the praise of God (104:33).
  4. It has a temporary role (102:26) in relation to man (104:10-23).



D. The Psalms show a particular interest in mankind and the problems of sin.

1. His sinfulness requires redemption through a covenant, (105: 8-10; 68:7-8).
2. The nation of Israel and its history portray this relationship between God and man (14, 44, 46-48, 53, 66, 68, 74, 76, 78-81, 83, 85, 87, 108, 122, 124-126, 129, 105-106).
3. The people could appeal to God through provisions of covenant (74:20) to have their fortunes restored (14:7) through forgiveness of sins (79:9; 85:2-3).

E. Several Psalms speak of man's origin, nature, purpose and destiny (100, 8, 139, 103, 78, 142, 146, 31, 77, 143, 41, 102, 55, 104, 93, 150, 119, 15, 27, 43, 1, 4, 39).

1. Man is a part of nature (104:4).
2. Man is special (100:3).
3. Adam was given sovereignty over the world (8:5-6) which came to be realized in Christ (Heb. 2:6-8) due to Adam's fall (I Cor. 15:45) and the fall of all men (Rom. 5:12).
4. Individuality and life begin in the womb (139:13, cf. Job 31:15).
5. God knows the paths of life (139:16; 31:15), but through foreknowledge rather than predestination (Rom. 8:29).
6. Man has a mortal body (103:14; 78:39), that is nevertheless wonderful (139:14).
7. Man is a being (soul, ~~NEPHESH~~) in the image of God (8:5); 82:6; Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 28
8. Man has a spirit ~~RUACH~~ that may represent:
  - a. Attitude (78:8; 142:3).
  - b. Life breath (104:29-30; 146:4).
  - c. An immortal essence (31:5).
  - d. The higher part of man (77:3, 6; 143:4, 7).
  - e. That which can live forever with God (41:12; 102:26-28).
9. Man is insignificant in one sense (103:13-14; 8:3-4).
10. Man can find security (4:8).
11. Man can have confidence (25:13).
12. Man can find aid from God (55:22).
13. Man is to love God (116:1; 107:1-3).
14. Man is to see his need for God (116:3, 4, 10, 11).
15. Express gratitude (116:5-8, 12, 15-16).
16. Seek to lead others to God (116:13-4, 17-19, cf. 107:8, 9, 15, 16, 21).
17. Glorify God (104:31; 95:6; 43:4; 150).
18. Delight in His Law (1:2; 4:7; 119).
19. Delight in God's presence in the sanctuary (15:1; 27:4; 43:3; 84).
20. Man is but a sojourner (~~ANIMUS~~) (39:1-13).
21. He is to conform to God's character (24:3-4).
22. Be humble (131:1-2).
23. Upright (15; 11:6-7).
24. Honest (101:7, cf. 10:7).
25. Truthful (15:2; 24:4).
26. Guard against failures in his words (12; 52; 120; 15:3-4; 19:14).
27. Enjoy friendship and love (133; 15:4; 45; 7:4).
28. Practice justice (82; 15:5; 72:1-4).
29. Seek peace (120:6-7).

30. Set godliness as a goal for the nations (33:12, cf. 20:7).
31. Practice financial integrity (15:5; 37:21).
32. Trust in God's justice (37:1-3; 73:12-14, 17-19, 24; 49:14-15; 17:14-15).

## VI. Major Classes of Psalms

- A. Imprecatory Psalms (35, 69, 109, 137, cf. 5, 7, 28, 54-55, 58-59, 79, 83, 101, 139).
  1. Jeremiah and Nehemiah mention some of these as from David (Jer. 15:15; 17:18; 18:21-23; 20:12; Neh. 6:14; 13:29).
  2. The New Testament has such material (Gal. 5:12; II Tim. 4:14; Rev. 6:10).
  3. Liberal critics say such statements belong to the "Old Testament spirit" or "the spirit of Elijah" and not of Christ.
  4. Several factors need to be considered before judgment can be made:
    - a. The New Testament does not condemn the "Old Testament spirit," it does on occasion condemn the practices of antibiblical Judaism that arose in the intertestament period. One taught hatred of enemies (**IQSi**, 3-9) the other did not (Ex. 23:4-5; Lev. 19:17-18).
    - b. Some statements were poetic hyperbole (68:21, 23; 58:10; 137:9; Jer. 13:14).
    - c. Some simply speak of the hatred for sin (Nah. 3:19; Ps. 50:21; 101:8; 139:21).
    - d. Some put vengeance in God's hands, as is proper (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19; I Sam. 25:22, 32-35, 36-39; Ps. 37:8-9; 104:34-35; 58:11).
    - e. Positive goals are often put beyond private vindication (109:2-5; 92:11, 15; 54:7; 52:6; 83:3-5; 137:8).
    - f. Prophecies of God's attitude toward sin (125:5; 55:2-3; 145:20, cf. Matt. 13:49-50; Jn. 5:29).
    - g. "Oh ye that love Yahveh, hate evil," is an exhortation that belongs, not to one age, but to all time (Lk. 18:7f; Mk. 11:14; 12:9; I Cor. 5:5).
    - h. And yet the "spirit of the age" must be considered in that the spiritual development of the people was not as great as became possible in Christ.
    - i. Some Psalms may simply record the feelings of someone in honest fashion (i.e., II Sam. 12:31).
    - j. Unrighteous deeds and thoughts are recorded throughout both Testaments, even when they come from otherwise good men.
    - k. The following verses can now be properly appraised (5:10; 10:15; 18:40-42; 28:4; 31:17; 35:3-8; 40:14; 55:9; 58:6-10; 59:12-15; 68:2; 69:22-25; 79:12; 83:9-17; 109:6-15; 137:7-9).
- B. Penitential Psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).
  1. Man is a sinner who needs mercy (130:3; 14:3; 143:2).
  2. Sin is a violation of the will of Yahveh (78:17-19)
    - a. Rebellion, **PESHA** (51:1).
    - b. Twistedness, **AZON** (51:2).
    - c. Missing the mark, **HATTAT** (51:2).
    - d. A violent disturbance of evil, **RA** (51:14).

3. Persistence in sin results in the inability to see one's sinfulness (19:12; 40:12).
4. God must act (102:10, 11; 73:27).
5. Forgiveness involves a variety of factors (130:3; 60:1; 108:12; 32:5; 65:3; 119:9).
  - a. God is loyal to His covenant (6:5; 25:7).
  - b. Sins must be blotted out (51:1,9) before a man can be reckoned as righteous (32:2).
  - c. Obedient faith is required (130:1,2; 143:1; 32:10; Heb. 11).
  - d. Mercy is sought (6:2).
  - e. Patience is to be practiced (130:5, 6; 37:7).
  - f. The sacrificial system and the heart both had roles to play (19:7; 40:6; 51:16; 51:19).
  - g. Forgiveness brought joy (51:12).
  - h. Exaltation (130).
  - i. Assurance (125:1; 23:6; 103:3, 12).
  - j. A desire to help others (32:8-11; 51:13).
  - k. Giving highest regard to spiritual things (16:11; 73:24).

C. Messianic Psalm (Cf. I Sam. 10:1; 16:13).

1. Royalty 2, 8, 45, 72, 89, 110.
2. Priesthood 16, 22, 110, 69, 102, 109.
3. Prophet 22.
4. A priest-king (110, cf. Zech. 6:9-13; Isa. 61:1; 49:7; 53:12). **ISA. 6:1-3**
5. Jesus said the Psalms spoke of Him (Lk. 24:44).
  - a. The New Testament draws Messianic material from 15 Psalms.
  - b. However, they seemed to be tied to a larger group associated to three categories:
    - 1) Those Psalms applying to David that relate to similar New Testament ideas (18:43, cf. Eph. 2:11-12; 24:7; 21:4; 61:7, cf. Heb. 7:2).
    - 2) Similar to Old Testament passages noted in the New Testament (34:20 cf. Ex. 12:46; 97:7, cf. Deut. 32:43).
    - 3) Psalms of universal application (31:5/Lk. 23:46; 42:5, 11/Matt. 26:38; 44:22/Rom. 8:36; 38:11 and 88:8/Lk. 23:49; 116:10/II Cor. 4:13; 41:9/Jn. 13:18; 69:4, 21/Jn. 15:25; 19:28-30 and 78:2/Matt. 13:35). The phrase "that it might be fulfilled" can be understood simply as meaning "to illustrate further" cf. Jas. 2:23.
6. The Suffering Servant (69:22, 35, 40, 41, 109, 118; 69:4, 9, 21; 41:9; 35:19; 118:22; 22:7-8, 18; 109:8; 22:1; 31:5).

D. Psalms of Worship (26, 73, 84, 100, 116, 122)

E. Psalms of Suffering (37, 42-43, 49, 77, 90, 109, 137).

F. Psalms of Assurance (3, 4, 11, 16, 20, 23, 27, 31, 36, 46, 52, 57, 61-63, 85, 91, 108, 121, 125, 126).

G. Psalms of Praise (87, 103, 107, 114, 139, 150).



H. Complaints mixed with praise (9, 18, 30, 33, 34, 47, 48, 65-68, 79, 81, 92, 93, 95-99, 105, 106, 111, 113, 115, 117, 118, 124, 134-136, 138, 145, 146-150).

I. Liturgical Psalms

A. The sacrificial system is often mentioned in the Psalms (50:59; 51:16, 17; 4:5; 40:9; 141:2; 69:30, 31; 51:19; 50:12-13; 79:9; Heb. 10:4, 12; Ps. 15:1, 2; 24:3, 4).

B. Various aspects of the temple worship can be seen in the Psalms (100, 24).

1. Morning worship (3, 5, 93).
2. Evening worship (4, 141).
3. Night worship (4, 141).
4. Sabbath (92).
5. Responses from the people (I Chron. 16:36; Ps. 146-150; 136)
6. Feasts (42:4; 84:12; 68:25, cf. Lev. 23:14-17).
7. Sacrifices (66:13; 96:8; 50:14; 43:4; 51:7 with Lev. 14:4; 29:2; 96:9; 141:2).

J. National Psalms (46, 137).

K. Concerning the Word (19:7-14; 119).

L. Pilgrim Psalms (120-134).

M. Alphabetic (25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145).

N. Elohist (42-83).

O. Yahvistic (1-41; 84-150).

P. God's Reign (47, 93, 96-99).

Q. Theological Psalms

1. Historical summations (78, 105-106, 136).
2. Holy living (1, 119).
3. Creation (8, 19, 104).
4. Judgment (37, 49, 73).
5. God's care (103).
6. God's sovereignty (2, 110).

VII. The Authors of the Psalms

A. 73 have the note, "belonging to David."

1. This can mean "to" or "from" David.
2. That they were written by David is evident from the title of Ps. 18 and from various Bible citations (Acts 2:29; II Sam. 23:1-7; Am. 6:5; II Sam. 1:17-27).

3. David was well qualified to write poetry (I Sam. 16:16-18; Amos 6:5; II Sam. 1:19-27; 3:33-34; 22; 6:5, 16; I Chron. 15, 16, 25; II Chron. 7:6; 29:30; II Sam. 23:1-2; Mk. 12:36; Acts 1:16; 2:30-31; 4:25; Rom. 11:9; Matt. 22:44; Lk. 20:42).
- B. 72, 127 to Solomon.
- C. 42-49, 84-85, 87-88 are from the Sons of Korah (I Chron. 9:17ff, cf. Ps. 84:10; I Chron. 6:31, 33, 39, 44).
- D. 50, 73-83 are from Asaph (I Chron. 16:5; II Chron. 29:30).
- E. 89 goes with Ethan the Ezrahite, who was probably identical with Jeduthun who wrote 39, 62, 77 (I Chron. 15:19; II Chron. 5:12).
- F. Moses wrote 90 that echoes early sections of Genesis and relates to Deut. 32 and 33.

#### Conclusion

1. The Book of Psalms is the heartfelt theology of Israel as given by God.
2. From the common affairs of life to the hope of an afterlife (Ps. 16-17; 49, 73), this great book relates man to his God with a moving message of truth.

# Psalm to be Studied

\* 1

\* 2

\* 12

\* 15

18

\* 22

\* 23

\* 26

\* 32

37

45  
46

49

50

51

52

53

61  
54

72

\* 73

78

\* 89

92

102

103

\* 119

139



# Psalms 1

1. Introduction to the whole Psalter.
2. Shares with the principles of wisdom literature (cf. Prov. 2:12 ff., 20 ff.).
3. Compose with Jer. 17:5-8
4. 'יָשָׁר, blessed - from a word that means "well-ordered" cf. I K. 10:8
5. Uses of 'יָשָׁר in Psalm 1:1; 2:12; 32:1-2; 33:12; 34:8; 40:4; 41:1; 65:4; 84:4, 5, 12; 89:15; 94:12; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1, 2; 127:5; 128:1, 2; 137:8, 9; 144:15, 16; 146:3
6. The sermon on the Mt. on the happiness of being well-ordered.

~~Designed, way and road (consequently) are in the Hebrew perfect tense and do not suggest progress but, to thinking, behaving and belonging.~~

7. Verse one deals with <sup>active sinners</sup> ~~own~~ thinking, behaving and belonging - that which determines the loyalty and direction of life.

8. The <sup>LAX, unstable</sup> ungodly are those who listen to the world; the <sup>active sinners</sup> sinners those are in league with the world; the <sup>deal privily with evil things</sup> scorners are those ~~farthest~~ farthest from repentance - those who ridicule the things of God. The Hebrew perfect shows that the godly remain apart from such.
9. Verse Two has "the Law of the Lord" in opposition to the counsel of the wicked or ungodly. That which thinks thinks thinking <sup>proper</sup> life. (2:16 has the same word as "meditate" but there it is "plot." cf. Jer. 1:8, Law is "torah.")

1. יָשָׁר  
2. יָשָׁר  
3. יָשָׁר

10. One cannot be engaged in evil and meditate on the Law of the Lord.
11. Delight  $\gamma \delta \pi$  primarily deals with "firm adherence" cf. Job 40:17
12. There is a spiritual cause and effect illustrated in verse 3
13. Verses 4-5 show the lack of substance and weight that godliness characterizes cf. Jud. 9:4. Lovers can deceive cf. Ps. 37:35f.
14. Evil cannot fellowship with good, it cannot be with God; good men are, however, welcome among sinners. Evil has no standards cf.
15. The fall and banishment of evil is a powerful theme of Scripture (Isa. 2:10-21).
16. Gabriel's "knowing" is not simply being informed, it is a strong understanding and identification.
17. There are only two choices and they are direct opposites: strong trees or chaff.

➤ Ps. 31:7; Pr. 3:6 cf. Mat. 7:23; II Tim. 2:19  
A living knowledge of intimate relationship and loyal love.

## Psalm 2

Where Psalm 1 begins, "741 X (1:1); Psalm 2 ends (2:12). The goal of the Law of God is the Son of God. The most cited Psalm in the N.T. (Acts 4:25-28; Heb. 1:5; Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Rev. 19:15; 22:5).

Perhaps the type comes from II Sam. 10.

Verses 1-3 demonstrate man's constant movement from God and growing resentment against the restraints of God's Law. (Hos. 11:4; I Cor. 2:8ff; Acts 4:28). They battle ~~for~~ for freedom from God.

Verses 4-6 demonstrate divine derision (I Cor. 1:20; Col. 2:15; Rev. 11:18; 18:20). The laughing is over the folly of man's arrogance not the suffering the arrogance brings about.

① The Anointed One stands in quiet contrast to the forces of rebellion.

Verses 7-9 record a divine decree. A begetting into a royal existence is discussed. Dan. 7:13-14; II Sam. 7; Ps. 89

Verse 7 combines with Isa. 42:1 to give Matt. 3:17; 17:5; II Pet. 1:17. cf. Matt. 28:18 with Verse 8.

Vs. 9 Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15; Dan. 2:44; cf. Jer. 19:10f.; II Cor. 10:3ff.

Isa. 27:32; Eze. 20:37; Ps. 23:4; Gen. 49:10  
Vs. 10-12 invite the kings to come to the King!

To rejoice with trembling is a significant compensation. Job. 3:16, 18

What fear and pride view as slavery, love and humility see as security and bliss. There is no safety from Him: only in Him. Contrast Vs. 12 with "slow to anger" and the Daughter of verse 4 with Isa. 16:9. 63:9

## Psalm 12

Vs. 1 Good men are retreating!

\* Godly and faithful men are beset by those of the world (cf. Jn. 15:18-20; 7:7; I Jn. 3:13).  
Matt. 10:22; 24:9; 5:10-12; II Tim. 3:12).

Vs. 2

① Empty talk, smooth talk and double talk

Empty talk is untrue but also insincere and irresponsible. Such things cheapen and rot (Ps. 41:6; Hos. 10:4) Ex. 20:7

Smooth talk becomes addictive and brings false pleasure. (Is. 30:10; Jn. 5:44)

Vs. 3-4 Big talk is dangerous - the Lord must put it down (Dm. 7:20, 25; II Pet. 2; Rev. 13; 20:10). ISA. 28:15

Vs. 5-6

The Lord answers with solid, reliable, truthful words.

Vs. 7-8

God will keep His word and protect His people.

"generation" refers to "type" (J. 14:5; 24:6; Pr. 30:11-14 Heb.).

Vileness involves being cheap or worthless Jer. 15:19 as well as shameful excess Pr. 23:20; Pt. 21:20

When vain and shallow values are accepted the wicked are exalted and they walk openly among men.

To lose the battle of words is to allow the enemy in.

T<sup>a</sup> O<sup>a</sup> T<sup>a</sup>

X<sup>a</sup> S<sup>a</sup> T<sup>a</sup>

T<sup>a</sup> I<sup>a</sup> P<sup>a</sup> T<sup>a</sup> T<sup>a</sup>

Our mouths are  
not our own



## Psalm 15

Cf. Ps. 24:3-6; Isa. 33:14-17

vs. 1.

God is here pictured as man's host  
(cf. 23:6; 27:4-5; 84:1 ff).

- 2-5 Man seems to be the guest of God.  
Qualifications are necessary (cf. Ps. 24;  
Isa. 33; I Cor. 13). A man of integrity  
2. whole-hearted, right and truth

Rightness gives a concrete character to O.T.  
morality. Many ethical systems are based on  
what promotes happiness or self-fulfillment —  
not the Hebrew moral system.

truth deals not only with what is correct, but  
with what can be trusted. The man under consideration  
has oneness of self and speech. cf. ~~Ps. 12:2~~ 12:2; Isa. 29:13  
3. slander derive from the thought of  
"going around" scandal may be more correct.  
friend simply means "another person."

takes up a reproach deals with a slur or  
attempt to discredit.

4. This person declares what he admires and knows where  
he stands cf. Gen. 14:17-24.

- He would rather lose than cause loss (however consider  
Prov. 6:1-5; I Cor. 1:15-23).

- 5 Lending money at interest was wrong only when  
the misfortune of a brother was exploited (cf. 23:20;  
Mt. 25:27; Dt. 23:19-20; Lev. 25:35-38). Ex. 23:9;  
Lv. 19:33 ff).

Such a person of integrity can reside with God.

He need not fear being "moved" (10:6; 13:4), for he had put his trust in the Lord (16:8; 46:5; 62:2, 6).

The person of true integrity is not moved, ever!

Psalm 22 (cf. Heb. 2:12)

1-21 I/me section: 1-2, 6-8, 11-18; you  
sections: 3-5, 9-10, 19-21. At verse 22  
praise and vision will take over.

vs. 1-2 (Gal. 3:13 *inhabits*)

vs. 3-5 God "enthroned on the praises of Israel"  
gives the inner meaning of Israel's institution  
(cf. Ps. 51:17; Isa. 66:1-2)

The fathers had trusted in God and found  
deliverance.

vs. 6-8 Jesus felt the pain. Both Jesus and  
David were far from being stoics.

cf. Matt. 27:39, 43 with 22:7-8. Note the  
view of God that He is there for our  
convenience (cf. the temptation)

vs. 9-10 God is no casual acquaintance for  
only occasional help (cf. 139:13-16; Job 10:8-12).

vs. 11-18

The crowd is pictured as bulls, lions, dogs,  
wild open. The strong move in on the weak.

Their reasons include:

1. resentment of those who are openly righteous (8)
2. mob mentality (12, 16a cf. Ex. 23:2)
3. greed for even trivial gain (18)
4. perverted taste (17)
5. sinful attitudes (Jn. 8:44)

vs. 19-21

A last plea for help with an answer  
received.

vs. 22-31 The spreading of the joy of deliverance  
vs. 22-26 a return feast

verses 25-26 picture the keeping of a vow  
by sharing God's gracious gifts (Lev. 7:16; Deut.  
12:17-19). cf. 40:9-10; 116:14; 34:3.

Verse 22 is applied to Jesus (Heb. 2:12) cf.  
Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:

vs. 27-31

Universal praise of God because  
of Jesus.



## Psalm 23

Escape is not the way of peace nor is complacency the source of contentment. Evil is faced with confidence by the one whose goal is heavenly.

vs. 1-4 The Shepherd

vs. 1 Relationship and caring between the Lord and the faithful.

The word Shepherd is the most intimate metaphor of the Psalm (guide, physician, protector).

vs. 2 cf. Num. 10:33. The Shepherd seeks good and pleasant things for the flock — the best He can give.

vs. 3. Both physical and spiritual renewal are included (Ps. 19:7; Isa. 49:5; Isa. 58:12; Prov. 25:13; Lam. 1:11, 16, 19).

There are paths for men to follow, the Shepherd leads (Jer. 10:23) cf. Prov. 11:5; Ezek. 36:22-32. His guidance results in a following the bring God glory (Matt. 5:16).

vs. 4

Dark paths must be part of the walk with God. We are not alone. I Cor. 15: Here the shepherd walk alongside the sheep. Only the Good Shepherd can lead through death.

v2 5-6 The Friend

v1. 5. Death leads to victory. (Rom. 8: 31-39, 6: 3-4). Judgement Day will give the final vindication (Rev. 6: ).

v2. 6

Meals are important to covenant (Ex. 24: 8-12; I Cor. 11: 25). This meal is one where the guest stays forever. cf. Ps. 27: 4; 65: 4.

A firm kind loyalty that is vigorous in nature. "Follow" means "pursue" here.

The "length of days" is with the Lord eternal (Mt. 22: 32; Rom. 8: 39).

## Psalms 26

1-2 An insistence that God examine David for sincerity.

There is nothing to hide. cf. 1 Cor. 4:3-5; 1 Kings 9:4

Compare with 139:23-24.

Truth in the O.T. usually deals with faithfulness, in verse 3 it is probably God's faithfulness.

4-5. This is not arrogance. The classes mentioned could

be used as allies or avoided as enemies, David had made a clear choice based on principles.

The choice was not a matter of social preference, but spiritual alignment.

6-8. Here the rules of temple worship changes from dry precision to vibrant worship. The laver was between altar and tent and was for washing hands and feet. cf. Isa. 1:15; 33:15; 1 Tim. 2:8

A song of thanksgiving accompanied accompanied sacrifices (Leviticus 7:12-14 cf. Ps. 40; 116; 78; 105)

The past should enrich the present

Love, or hate (vs. 5), is a matter of choice.

The tabernacle was a marvel of God's dwelling with men, how much more Christ! (Jn. 1:14f.)

9-10. David does not want to be cast in the company of sinners.

11-12. Whole-heartedness (Deut 6:4-5). Compare "will walk" with vs. 1 and "have walked." Not self-righteousness, redemption needed

## Psalm 32

a penitential Psalm (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).

1-2 Removing (forgiveness) and concealing (covering) shows that it is not a matter still present or unresolved.

Roman 4:6-8 draws from this verse. Trusting response, not self-righteousness is the key. Gen. 15:6 and James 2:21-24 explain the principle. We are as if we never sinned in God's sight if we have an obedience of faith. Christ makes this possible (Rom. 3:21-26).

3-5 Denying sin is the most destructive attitude a child of God can have (I Jn. 1:7-9; I Cor. 11:30). The benefits of repentance far outweigh the cost of repentance.

6-7 Song "Hide Me, O My Savior Hide Me". Deliverance brings shouts of joy - never regret.

8-9 If forgiveness is good, fellowship is better. The gentle touch that follows a heavy hand is needed indeed (Prov. 8:31-39).

Stubbornness is seen in all its foolishness when forgiveness and fellowship are seen. Willing obedience is a must.

10-11 Spiritual well-being cannot be over stated.



## Psalm 37

The best exposition of Matt. 5:5 cf. vs. 11. A wisdom Psalm similar to thoughts in Proverbs.

1-11 Do not get heated cf. Prov. 24:19 is followed by reasons (also Prov. 23:17-18; 24:1-2).

Look ahead! vs. 2 and 10 cf. Isa. 40:8; I Jn. 2:17 vs. 7 and 9.

Look up! vs. 3-7. Obsession with rivals cannot just be switched off, it must be ended by a new focus. The focus on the Lord is what brings true liberation.

Be constructive vs. 3, 8 cf. Jas. 1:20; Rom. 12:21 Lk. 6:27; Prov. 25:21.

5 Commit = "roll," use as a synonym for entrust (Pro. 16:3) or trust (Ps. 22:8).

7. Be still or rest in = be silent (62:5), the thought being one of a patient waiting.

11. Best definition of the meek is provided by the context = they are those who choose the way of patient faith instead of self-assertion. See vs. 3, 9, 11, 22, 29, 34. The Lord broadens the scope from the land to the earth. Because the wicked will perish the inheritance will belong to the meek.

12-26 Prior to these verses the war has been in the mind of the believer who is exasperated at the brazenness of the wicked. Now the two types of people are examined from the outside.

12-15 The wicked cannot win. The faithful cannot lose!

16-20 ~~16~~ Having nothing the faithful never-the-less possess everything.

16 cf. Prov. 28:16

17-19 Matt. 6:31-33. 19:29. I Tim. 6:17

21-22 Show true gain. Righteousness expresses itself in generosity of Ps. 112; II Cor. 8+9.

cf. Gen. 12:2-3.

23-24 Security for the faithful

27-40 The "big picture."

27-34 Doing good carries a reward from God and from life.

35-36 cf. Job 5:3; Prov. 7:6ff.; 24:30ff.; Ecc. 2:1ff

37-38 Future generations are affected by present behavior both in life and in death.

39-40 Quiet trust closes the book

## Psalm 89

Gen. 49:10; Ezek. 21:25-27

I Chron. 17: 1-17; II Sam. 7: 1-29

I Chron. 28: 1-8

IK. 2: 1-4

IK. 5: 1-6

Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!

Introduction:

1. The main feature of Psalm 119 is the glorification of God's Word.
2. In this the longest of the Psalms only verse 122 does not discuss the Scriptures.

I. Eight Basic Words for God's Word

A. אֱדוּת, "testimonies," from עֵד "witness."  
**EDOT** **ED**

1. Deuteronomy 31:26.
2. Can be used as a testimony against sin or testimony for God.
3. In the case of "testimonies," they bear witness to God's nature and character.
4. 2, 14, 22, 24, 31, 36, 46, 59, 79, 95, 99, 111, 119, 125, 129, 138, 144, 146, 152, 157, 167, 168.

B. תּוֹרָה **TORAH**, the chief Hebrew term for God's word. Teaching, direction and instruction are intended.

1. Often translated law, but carries a much richer meaning than the English word "law."
2. 1, 18, 29, 34, 44, 51, 53, 55, 61, 70, 71, 77, 85, 92, 97, 109, 113, 126, 136, 142, 150, 153, 163, 165, 174.

C. פִּקּוּדִים, "precepts."  
**PIQQUDIM**

1. Describes what an overseer does when he investigates the facts and then takes action (Jer. 23:2).
2. The Lord has good reasons behind the precepts of His law.
3. 4, 15, 27, 40, 45, 56, 63, 69, 78, 87, 93, 94, 100, 104, 110, 128, 134, 141, 159, 168, 173.

D. חֻקִּים, "statutes."  
**CHUQQI**

1. This deals with matters that have a binding force or permanence.
2. 5, 8, 12, 16, 23, 26, 33, 48, 54, 64, 68, 71, 80, 83, 112, 117, 118, 124, 135, 145, 155, 171.

E. מִצְוֹת, "Commandments."  
**MITSVOT**

1. This word emphasizes authority, the right to command.
2. 6, 10, 19, 21, 32, 35, 47, 48, 60, 66, 73, 86, 98, 115, 127, 131, 143, 151, 166, 172, 176.

F. מִשְׁפָּטִים, "ordinances," or "judgments."  
**MISHPPATIM**

1. The fair standard for all dealings.
2. 13, 20, 30, 39, 43, 52, 62, 91, 102, 106, 108, 149, 156, 160, 164, 175.

G. דְּבָרִים, "word," or "thing."  
**DABAR**

1. This is the most general term, meaning anything God says.
2. Singular: 9, 11, 16, 17, 25, 28, 42, 43, 49, 65, 74, 81, 89, 101, 105, 107, 114, 160, 169.  
Plural: 57, 130, 139, 147, 161.



H. **נִצָּחַן**, "promise," or "word."  
**IMRAH**

1. 11, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 154, 158, 162, 170, 172.
2. The meaning of promise, while not usually at the forefront, is often a feature of God's word in that God is bound by His word (Fs. 119:38, 41, 50).

## II. Qualities of the Scriptures

### A. Delight

1. Festive: 14, 111, 162.
2. Quiet: 16, 24, 77, 92, 143, 174.

B. Love: 47, 48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 132, 140, 159, 163, 165, 167.

C. Awesome: 126, 161.

D. Righteous: 7, 75, 123, 138, 144, 172.

E. Dependable: 43, 142, 86, 151, 160.

F. Unshakable: 89-91, 152.

G. Inexhaustible: 18, 27, 129, 96.

## III. Benefits of Scripture

A. Liberation: 45, 133.

B. Light: 34, 66, 73, 98-100, 105, 125, 128, 144, 169.

C. Life: 25, 37, 40, 50, 93, 107, 144-159.

D. Stability: 23, 49, 50, 76, 89-92, 95, 114-118, 165.

## IV. The Types of People in Psalm 119.

A. Loyal to God: 63, 74.

B. Skeptics: 126.

C. Uncommitted: 113.

D. Wicked: 95.

E. Scoffers: 22.

F. Slanderers: 69.

G. Plotters: 23, 85.

H. Corrupt officials: 87, 109.

I. The Psalmist: 9, 25, 26, 28, 32, 36, 39, 4-44, 46, 54, 55, 61, 62, 67, 71, 75, 79, 81-83, 99, 100, 110, 136, 147, 148, 158, 162, 164, 176.

# HEBREW ALPHABET USED TO DIVIDE PSALM 119

- X Fidelity to God's Word.
- ⌒ Service from the heart of a young man.
- 7 A prayer for enlightenment in the midst of scoffers.
- ┐ The need for strength.
- ⌒ The need for preservation.
- ⌒ A proper confession.
- ⌒ The primacy of God's Word.
- ⌒ Love for those who love God.
- ⌒ Humility.
- ⌒ The need for comfort.
- ⌒ How long?
- ⌒ God's sure word dispells despair.
- ⌒ The word is his wisdom in difficult times.
- ⌒ A vow of faithfulness.
- ⌒ He will abhor apostasy.
- ⌒ God will protect him.
- ⌒ He will not be overcome by sadness and trouble.
- ⌒ His zeal ebbs.
- ⌒ God is asked to hear.
- ⌒ He asks to be revived.
- ⌒ Princes persecute him.
- ⌒ He asks for help for he fears he is drifting away.



# Understanding the SONGS OF



MENACHEM BOAS

A/P

SKYLINE OF J

NAHUM M. SARNA

**T**he Hebrew Bible has three parts: the Law (Torah), the Prophets (Nevi'im) and the Writings (Kethuvim). The Book of Psalms is part of the Writings. In the Law and the Prophets, God reaches out to man. The initiative is his. The message is his. He communicates, we receive. Our God-given free will allows us to be receptive, to be accepting, or to

turn a deaf ear, to reject. In the Psalms, human beings reach out to God. The initiative is human. The language is human. We make an effort to communicate. He receives. He chooses to respond or not, according to his inscrutable wisdom. He gives his assent or withholds it.

In the Psalms, the human soul extends itself beyond its confining, sheltering, impermanent house of clay. It strives for contact with the ultimate source of all life. It gropes for an experience of the divine presence. The biblical psalms are essentially a record of the human quest for God;



Here is how the leftovers are prepared:

"There must also be the meat from a leg of lamb. Prepare the water. Add fat, [break in the text], vinegar, beer, onions, [an herb called] spiney, coriander, *samīdu* [a spice plant or vegetable], cumin [a spice that has retained its ancient name to this day] and beetroot. Then crush garlic and leeks and add them [break in the text]. Let the whole cook into a stew, onto which you sprinkle coriander and *shuhutinnu*."<sup>13</sup>

If this isn't a recipe for leftovers, it should be!

By modern standards all of these recipes are tantalizingly brief. Even when we can identify the ingredients, we are still faced with many unclear steps that are left to the imagination or, more likely, to an oral tradition that probably accompanied these written instructions. Most notably we are left in the dark as to the quantities of ingredients or the yields to be expected. Perhaps, like some modern cooks, you just added a pinch of this and a smidgen of that. Not even the longest recipes provide such instructions—or the time taken to cook anything.

Cookbook (or tablet) B is bigger than Cookbook A by a good 40 percent. It contains at least 245 lines of text compared to only 75 for tablet A. It is inscribed in two columns on each face. Yet it contains only seven recipes. Each is written out in lavish detail. All of them seem to deal with one sort of fowl or another, including the unidentified *kippu*, which was served in our banquet at Yale for the American Oriental Society. (If the word is a loanword from Sumerian *ki-ib* or *kib*, it could be a seagull or a swallow or even a cormorant.<sup>14</sup>) We resolved the problem of identifying the *kippu* by substituting chicken for the uncertain word of the recipe, perhaps in the silent hope that we could compare the Dutch word for chicken, which is *kip*! Possibly we also chose this recipe because it is the shortest in this otherwise prolix tablet. For the recipe, in Bottéro's translation,<sup>15</sup> see "Kippu Stew," right.

The third Yale tablet, Cookbook C, is the smallest and most fragmentary of the three and has the least to add to our knowledge.

For whom were these recipes written and who dined on such elaborate fare in the age of Hammurabi? Hardly the common man, who barely eked out a subsistence level of nutrition to judge by the abundant indications of ration lists that have survived. Nor yet the priesthood, for the accounts of sacrificial offerings such as those with which I began are far more modest. Perhaps it was the aristocracy—or even the king himself. We know of royal repasts that were little short of astounding in quantity if not in quality. Here for example is the menu for a royal banquet hosted by Yasmah-Addu of Mari,

a contemporary of Hammurabi:

"900 liters of KUM-bread, 60 liters of bread made with *sammidatum*-flour; 2,020 liters of sour bread made of *burrum*-cereal, 950 liters of cake, 2,185 liters of sour bread made of barley, 940 liters of mead, 100 liters of chick-peas, 11 liters of fine flour, 6 liters of semolina, 3 liters of *sammidatum*-flour, 70 liters of (linseed) oil, 3 liters of honey (or date-syrup), 4 liters of linseed, 5 liters of dates—meal of the king and his men in Mari on the fourth day of the eleventh month."<sup>16</sup>

This record of gluttony can be matched nearly a millennium later at the dedication of the palace of Assurnasirpal in the capital city of Kalah (Nimrud) in 879 B.C.E. It included 10,000 doves and an

## KIPPU STEW

*"If you want to cook kippu in a stew, then prepare them as you would agarukku. First, clean them and rinse them in cold water and place them in an open pot. Then put the pot back on the flame and add some cold water to it and flavor it with vinegar. Next, crush together mint and salt and rub the kippu with the mixture. After this, strain (?) the liquid in the kettle and add mint to this sauce. Place the kippu back into it. Finally, add a bit more cold water and turn the entire mixture into a pot. To be presented and then dished out."*

equal number of turtledoves, other small birds, fish, gerbils, eggs, loaves of bread, measures of beer and skins of wine, to mention only part of the menu.<sup>17</sup> Two centuries later, the last great king of Assyria, Assurbanipal (668-627 B.C.E.) decorated the walls of his palace at Nineveh with scenes of the royal cuisine—of the service at the royal table (see photo, p. 26), as well as of the preparation of the food in the royal kitchens.

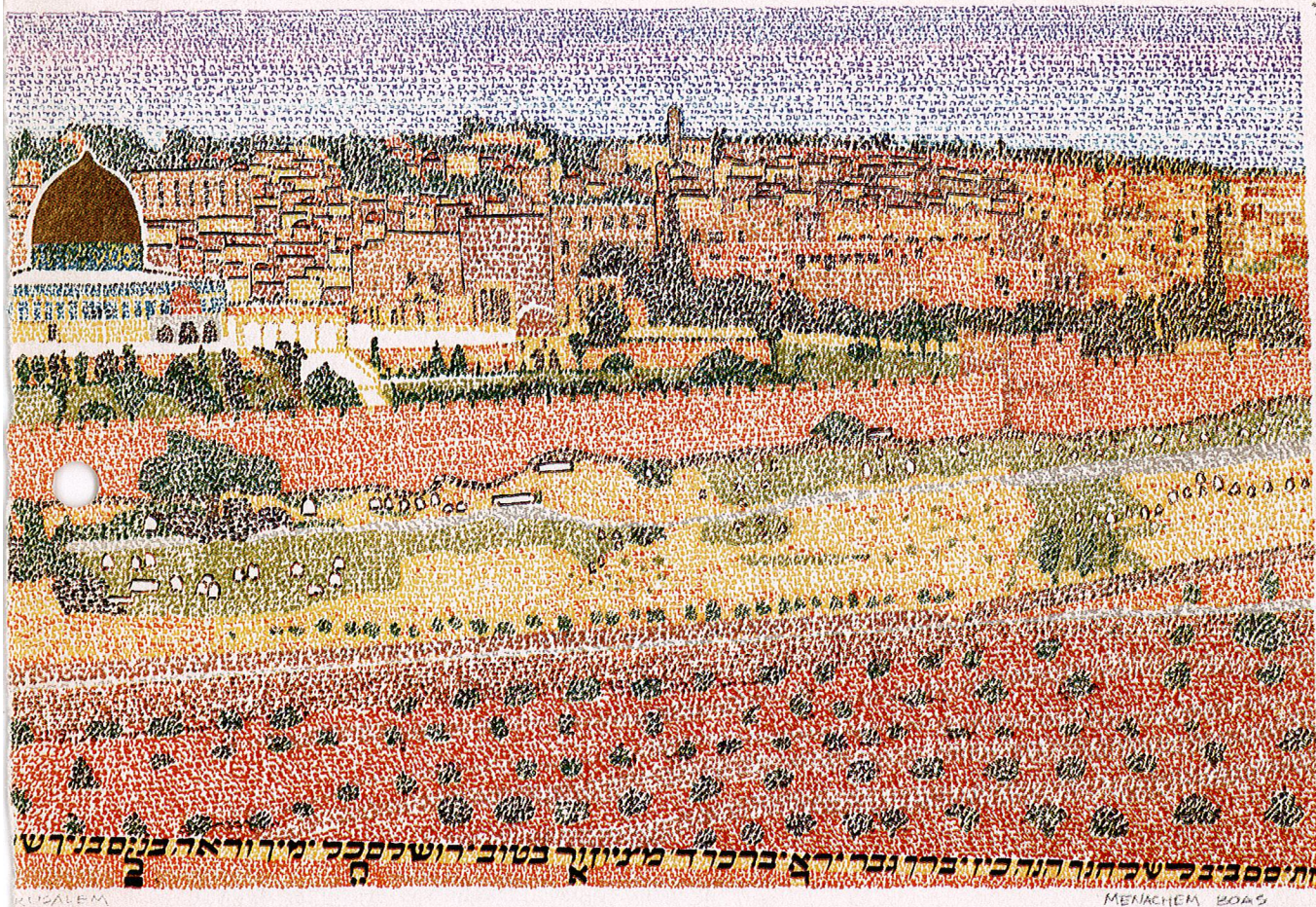
Such scenes lend at least a semblance of plausibility to the biblical assertion that "Solomon's daily provisions consisted of 600 bushels (30 *kor*) of semolina, 1,200 bushels of (ordinary) flour, 10 fattened oxen, 20 pasture-fed oxen and 100 sheep and goats, besides deer and gazelles, roebucks and

*continues on page 56*



# Book of Psalms

## THE HEART



hence, the variety of forms in which the ancient psalmists expressed themselves, reflective of the diverse and changing moods that possessed them. In short, the psalms constitute a revealing portrayal of the human condition. No wonder they infuse and inform the basic patterns of both Jewish and Christian worship, give character and essence to their liturgies and govern the life of prayer and spiritual activity of the individual and the congregation.

"Said Rabbi Yudan in the name of Rabbi Judah, 'Whatever David says in his book pertains to himself, to all Israel, and to all times.'"<sup>1</sup>

What this astute observation conveys is that each psalm is multifaceted. With several possible levels of interpretation, it may be understood as a personal statement, as a manifestation of the soul-life of an individual or as an expression of the concerns and the life of faith of the entire community. Its composition, grounded in a radically different era, is a product of a social and cultural milieu wholly at variance with our own; nevertheless, the message and teachings it communicates are always meaningful and relevant. The genius of the Book of Psalms lies in this—that while it is time-bound in



origin, it is ever fresh and timely, and hence timeless. It speaks to each reader in a great variety of moods.

Another aspect of the Psalms evoked a subtle rabbinic comment, even if, at first glance, it appears to have been somewhat artlessly formulated. Accepting the notion that a dream experience reflects the inner life of the dreamer, the rabbis of the talmudic period said, "He who sees the Book of Psalms in a dream may hope for piety."<sup>2</sup> The implication is that the Psalms possess intrinsic value in that they fulfill a didactic function. They are meant to be internalized. Diligent recitation and study of them is preliminary to a higher level of spirituality and piety; and piety, in the biblical view, is not solely individualistic, certainly not egotistical, self-righteous or sanctimonious. Piety finds expression in the quality of interpersonal relationships.

Sadly, our 20th century secularized society—to its own impoverishment—no longer relates to these vast spiritual, moral and intellectual treasures of the Psalter that our ancestors so reverently and fondly cherished. We hardly know how to pray anymore.

A Yemen Jew once told me how he celebrated his bar mitzvah. The family was desperately poor; there were no parties, no gifts, no excitement, no speeches. The boy simply went to the synagogue on the designated Sabbath morning and read the appropriate portion of the Torah with the traditional blessings before and after. But what left an indelible impression on him—the experience that continues to move him deeply even 40 years later—was staying up all the previous night with his grandfather, and their reciting together the entire Book of Psalms.

Anatoly Sharansky spent nearly nine years of deprivation and suffering as a "prisoner of Zion" in Soviet prisons and labor camps. His crime consisted of wanting to leave the hell of the "workers' paradise," to immigrate to the land of Israel. By his own

testimony, during all his years of enforced isolation, oppressive loneliness, appalling misery, agonized suffering and unutterable anguish, it was a copy of the Hebrew Psalter that he kept with him that sustained his spirit, gave him the strength to endure his bitter fate and imparted the courage to persevere.

While he was incarcerated, his wife, Avital, accepted on his behalf an honorary doctorate of humane letters from Yeshiva University in New York. On that occasion, she told the audience, "Anatoly has been educated to his Jewishness in a lonely cell in Chistopol prison where, locked alone with the Psalms of David, he found expression for his innermost feelings in the outpourings of the king of Israel thousands of years ago." When he finally arrived in Jerusalem still clasping in his hands his beloved Book of Psalms, he was carried to the Western Wall on the shoulders of his friends and admirers.<sup>3\*</sup>

The following incident is a sorry contrast.<sup>4</sup> Zalman Aranne, who twice served as Israel's minister of education, was wounded during World War I by cannon fire and lay helpless and unattended on the battlefield. Drenched in blood, believing that his life was ebbing away, he felt a strong urge to pray or to recite a psalm. In his youth in the Ukraine he had received a traditional Jewish education and still remembered what he had learned in his formative years. Yet, he could not bring himself to utter the words because he had abandoned the practice of Judaism and thought that praying in such circumstances would be hypocritical. When he recounted this experience to Mordecai Bar-On, then chief education officer in Israel's Defense Forces, the latter responded with an experience of his own. He had found himself in a similar wartime situation. He, too, had wanted to pray, but he needed no effort to suppress the urge because he had not the slightest idea what to say.

For three months in 1989, I served as a scholar-in-residence in the greater Washington, D.C. area, at the local Foundation for Jewish Studies. Among the many courses I taught was one on the Book of Psalms. At the final session, a participant, one of the many federal government workers present, approached and said, "I have not stepped into a synagogue these past 30 years. I have always regarded this religious stuff as mumbo jumbo. Having attended your weekly classes on the Psalms, I have come to realize that the material does, indeed, contain profound ideas of lasting worth. Thank you."

According to the Book of Genesis, the urge to worship God is something innate in human beings, for the very first such act is ascribed to the



**PRECEDING PAGES:** The entire Hebrew text of the Book of Psalms forms a shimmering Jerusalem skyline in a work of micrography by the contemporary American artist Menachem Boas. Developed as a Jewish art form in the ninth century, micrography utilizes minute Hebrew letters to form representational, geometric or abstract designs.

Recording the human quest for God, the Psalms have inspired artist and nonartists alike in the centuries since they were composed. Nahum M. Sarna takes us through the byways of this beloved biblical book, much as an experienced guide might lead us through the narrow and winding Jerusalem streets depicted in Boas' artwork.

\* See also Suzanne Singer, "The Power of the Psalms in Our Time," BR, Fall 1986.





האיש אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים ובעדור חסידים לא ינו  
 עביר ובמיושב ליום לא יטב. מי אם מתורת יהוה זכרנו  
 ובהוראתו יחיה ירובם ויליה. יהיה פניו שותף על פליטות  
 אשר פליתו בעתו ועל ידיו לא יפול רב אשר יעשה ידיו  
 ויגליו. לא בן הישנים כי אם בנמיו אשר תלמדו רוחו על  
 בן אקומיו ישירה בפישטו וחסידים בעדת גיריהם  
 כי ידע יהוה דרך צדיקים ודרכו ישועים תאמר  
 למיה רגשוגים ולחמים וההר דים. יהיה צבא  
 בלבו ארץ וירדו דים נוסדו יחד על יהוה ועל מישורו. בעת  
 בעתה את מוריהו ובעל רבה בלבו עבדיו יושב  
 בשמים יחזק יהוה ילעב למי. אורדבר אלוהו באפו ונחש  
 אבחרו ובהלמו. ואני נסבתי בלבו על ידיו הרקטיו. א  
 אספיה אל זק יהוה אומר אלו בני אתה אביהם ודחור  
 טאל מוציו ראונה צים בלחור ואחורק אסר ארץ. ה  
 תרעם בשבט ברק. עבלי דבר תבאצם. ועתה מלכיה הנו

האיש אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים ובעדור חסידים לא ינו  
 עביר ובמיושב ליום לא יטב. מי אם מתורת יהוה זכרנו  
 ובהוראתו יחיה ירובם ויליה. יהיה פניו שותף על פליטות  
 אשר פליתו בעתו ועל ידיו לא יפול רב אשר יעשה ידיו  
 ויגליו. לא בן הישנים כי אם בנמיו אשר תלמדו רוחו על  
 בן אקומיו ישירה בפישטו וחסידים בעדת גיריהם  
 כי ידע יהוה דרך צדיקים ודרכו ישועים תאמר  
 למיה רגשוגים ולחמים וההר דים. יהיה צבא  
 בלבו ארץ וירדו דים נוסדו יחד על יהוה ועל מישורו. בעת  
 בעתה את מוריהו ובעל רבה בלבו עבדיו יושב  
 בשמים יחזק יהוה ילעב למי. אורדבר אלוהו באפו ונחש  
 אבחרו ובהלמו. ואני נסבתי בלבו על ידיו הרקטיו. א  
 אספיה אל זק יהוה אומר אלו בני אתה אביהם ודחור  
 טאל מוציו ראונה צים בלחור ואחורק אסר ארץ. ה  
 תרעם בשבט ברק. עבלי דבר תבאצם. ועתה מלכיה הנו

"HAPPY IS THE MAN who walks not in the counsel of the wicked," opens Psalm 1 of the Book of Psalms in a richly illustrated scene from a late-15th century, northern Italian illuminated work known as the Rothschild Miscellany. King David, to whom many of the Psalms are traditionally attributed, is shown playing his harp amid a pastoral scene featuring stags, does, birds and a rabbit. The Miscellany consists of more than 70 religious and secular works, including books of the Bible, a yearly prayer book and the Passover Haggadah. Of its 948 pages, 816 are illuminated.

The collection received its current name because it had been owned by the Rothschild family in Paris. The Miscellany had been stolen from them during the Nazi occupation in the Second World War; after the war someone tried to sell it to Alexander Marx, librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Realizing that it had been stolen, Marx returned the work to the Rothschilds. Somewhat later, Mordechai Narkiss, director of the Bezalel Museum in Israel, (the fore-runner of the Israel Museum) attempted to persuade James de Rothschild that a manuscript of such importance was a Jewish national treasure that rightly belonged in Israel. In 1957, on hearing of Narkiss's illness, de Rothschild sent the Miscellany to the museum as a gift.

first natural-born human beings on earth: Cain and Abel. Each brings an offering to the Lord (Genesis 4:3-4), but they do not pray. Theirs is a spontaneous, unprescribed, unlearned exercise that consists solely of a ritual act performed in total silence.

The vocal aspect of worship is attributed to another generation, that of Adam's grandson Enosh: "It was then that men began to invoke the Lord by name" (Genesis 4:26). It may be coincidental that this development is said to have occurred in the days of Enosh, whose name carries with it intimations of human frailty (the Hebrew root of Enosh means "to be frail"). The uncertainty and insecurity

of life, its fleeting nature, the sense of utter dependence upon a higher being—these all stir the human instinct to reach out to God, they kindle the desire to offer petition or to express gratitude.

The Genesis narratives completely separate sacrifice from prayer; that is, the ritual act is differentiated from the ritual word. This is consistent with later developments in Israelite religion, in which sacrifice and prayer continued as distinct and discrete domains. The elaborate rules and regulations for sacrificial rituals as laid down in the Torah are all but silent about accompanying prayer or music, while the headings to the psalms have nothing to



say about any sacrificial association. The sacrificial ritual is the responsibility and prerogative of the priesthood; the recitative and musical components of the official worship are a Levitical franchise.<sup>5</sup>

In post-Exilic biblical literature (those Scriptures that derive from the period after the return of the exiled Jews from Babylon), sacrifice is traced back to the Mosaic period. The institution of psalmody is ascribed to David. This careful and consistent separation of the two components of worship, the assigning of diverse histories to the sacrifices and liturgical components,<sup>6</sup> may be a conscious effort to distinguish Israel's mode of worship from contemporary pagan patterns where the two institutions were inextricably linked because the combination of the ritual and verbal elements were held to have magical potency.

The Hebrew designation for the Book of Psalms is *Sefer Tehillim*, often shortened to *Tehillim*, which means "The Book of Songs of Praise."<sup>7</sup> True, many psalms cannot be so categorized. Yet the fact that the root *HLL* (to praise) appears predominantly in the Book of Psalms and that "hallelujah" (which means "praise God" [Yahweh]) occurs nowhere else in the Bible, must have been decisive in calling the book *Tehillim*.<sup>8</sup> That title also recognizes that disinterested praise of God expresses the very essence of the act of worship and its highest expression.

The seminal importance that the Book of Psalms held in the religious consciousness of Israel is reflected in early references to the third section of the Bible as simply Psalms, even though in fact the third section (the Writings) contains a number of books of various genres. For example, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, who died about 50 C.E., mentioned "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms . . ."<sup>9</sup> The same distinctive prominence appears in the late first century C.E. Gospel of Luke (24:44), which speaks of "the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms."

All this provides eloquent and incontrovertible testimony to the extraordinary status and high prestige that the Psalter acquired during the Second Temple period, which ended with the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. Thereafter, when the sacrificial ritual could no longer be observed, prayer and the study of the Torah took its place as the highest forms of spiritual activity. Psalms came to enjoy a position of the foremost rank in both private prayer and public worship.

Another reflection of the centrality of psalms in early Israel is their very survival. I am not now referring to the Book of Psalms as a unit, but to the individual psalms ultimately collected into the 150 in the canonical Psalter. Given the fate of the bulk

of the literary works of the ancient world, it is indeed remarkable how much of the writings of Israel during the biblical period managed to defeat the ravages of time. The Hebrew Bible preserves the names of some 20 compositions, once well known but now lost.<sup>10</sup>

The survival of the psalms is all the more remarkable when their fate is compared to that of much Greek literature. Of the great fifth century B.C.E. dramatists acclaimed during the *floruit* of Greek civilization, Aeschylus is said to have composed 90 plays, but only 7 have survived intact and only fragments of just over 70 others remain. Sophocles, the favorite dramatist of Athens, wrote more than 100 tragedies, but only 7 survived in complete form. Euripides, whose popularity on the stage was sustained for more than 600 years, is reputed to have written at least 75 plays yet only 18 are extant in full.

If Greek literature, in the most favorable of circumstances, had to bow to the harsh imperatives of human history, what fate might have been expected for the literary compositions of ancient Israel?<sup>11</sup> This people in its day was demographically insignificant and relatively unimportant compared to the great civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The trials and tribulations that commonly visited most ancient literatures were aggravated and augmented in the case of Israel by additional afflictions peculiar to itself.

If the chances of survival for ancient literature were so slim, how did it come about that these 150 psalms managed to resist the destructive agencies fashioned by nature and history? Several powerful factors saved them from oblivion. One was the proliferation of musical guilds. Each had its own repertoire, recited, collected and transmitted from generation to generation. The guilds were highly mobile, and their members moved easily either as a group or individually from one cult center to another when their home base was destroyed, bringing their repertoire with them.

(2) Another determining factor was the liturgical tradition itself. That is to say, individual psalms belonged to or constituted standardized liturgies available for recitation or singing on different occasions. They were used when an Israelite felt the need to commune with God, whether to express adoration and praise; to offer thanksgiving; to confess sin and ask for forgiveness; to resort to petition and supplication in circumstances of peril, in a state of dire illness or as the victim of false accusation or injustice. Israelites might repair to the Temple or local shrine and there be given appropriate psalms to recite or sing, or to have recited or



sung for them. Frequent repetition of these liturgies over the ages reinforced them in the minds of the worshipers. This practice was no doubt a powerful factor in the preservation of the psalms.

Although the Hebrew Bible numbers 150 psalms, the Greek translation known as the Septuagint, made by the Jews of Alexandria, Egypt (perhaps as early as the third century B.C.E.) has 151. In the major Greek Bible codices, or manuscript books, this extra psalm bears a special caption noting that it is "outside the number."<sup>12</sup> The internal divisions are also slightly different in the Greek translation and in the Hebrew Bible.

Our printed Hebrew Bibles and their English translations divide the Psalter into five "books" of unequal length, each sequentially labeled. These division closings are marked by a doxology, or formula expressing praise of God. Thus, Psalm 41:14<sup>13</sup> reads:

"Blessed is the Lord, God of Israel from eternity to eternity; Amen and Amen."

Psalm 72:18-20 reads:

"Blessed is the Lord God, God of Israel, who alone does wonderful things. Blessed is His glorious name forever; His glory fills the whole earth. Amen and Amen. End of the prayers of David son of Jesse."

Psalm 89:53 reads:

"Blessed is the Lord forever. Amen and Amen."

Psalm 106:48 reads:

"Blessed is the Lord, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity. Let all the people say, 'Amen.' Hallelujah."

Psalm 150, which closes the fifth division, most likely is meant to serve as the doxology for the entire Book of Psalms.

If we examine these formulas in relation to the psalms to which they are attached, it is obvious at once that they are not an integral part of the compositions; they give every appearance of being additions.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the term "Amen" is a congregational response in a liturgical context. Certainly the doxologies are ancient, for they were already present in the Hebrew text used by the Alexandrian Jewish translators sometime before the second half of the second century B.C.E.<sup>14</sup>

The pentateuchal division of the Psalter is strange, considering that, unlike the Torah, it is not so large as to require transcription onto several scrolls for ease of handling and convenience of study.<sup>15</sup> The rabbis of talmudic times interpreted

the arrangement as corresponding to that of the Torah. As they phrased it, "Moses gave Israel five books of the Torah, and David gave Israel five books of the Psalms."<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, the Psalter as we know it is composed of what were once several smaller collections of psalms. Someone must have made a "Davidic" collection that was thought to be complete at the time, because Psalm 72, which closes the second "book," plainly states (verse 20): "The prayers of David son of Jesse are ended."

Then there must have been an "Asaphite" collection, because a number of contributions are attributed to that choirmaster.<sup>17</sup> Another collection, now incorporated into books two and three, is credited to the sons of Korah, the descendants of the Levite who rebelled against Moses and Aaron in the course of the wilderness wanderings, and whom "the earth swallowed up" (Numbers 16:32). Korah's sons, however, survived and one of their line was appointed by David to be among those in charge of song in the Temple.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from these there is also a block of psalms, numbers 120-134, each headed by the title, "A Song of Ascents"—or at least, that is how the English translations usually render the cryptic Hebrew title *shir ha-ma' alot*.<sup>19</sup> This too must have been a separate collection at one time.

In addition, Psalms 90 through 150, which constitute "books" four and five, were originally a single collection, later artificially split into two parts in a deliberate effort to create five "books" in imitation of the Torah.<sup>20</sup> We know this because Psalms 90 through 150 have certain features that differentiate them from books one through three. For instance, Psalms 90 through 150 are overwhelmingly psalms of praise and thanksgiving, which lack the variety of genres found in the other collections. The term "hallelujah" occurs only in these last two books. Here too there are three times as many psalms without headings as in the rest of the Psalter; those with headings contain none of the musical type; and the otherwise commonly used technical terms *selah* and "To the leader"<sup>21</sup> are very rare.

The Davidic collection is the largest in the Psalter. The headings of almost half of all the psalms bear the name of the illustrious King David—73 out of 150, to be exact. (The Greek version omits four of these designations,<sup>22</sup> but adds another thirteen.<sup>23</sup>) Yet this still leaves 77 psalms not attributed to David in the Hebrew count. Apart from the 12 Asaphite and 11 Korahite compositions, two bear the name of Solomon, and one each is credited to Moses, Heman and Ethan.<sup>24</sup> The remaining 49 psalms are

*text continues on page 40*

EACH  
ENDS  
WITH  
AMEN



## HOW LONG SHALL EVIL PREVAIL?

Why do the unprincipled scoundrels in power act as they do? That is the question Psalm 94 tries to answer.

One of the characteristic literary features of the psalm is its threefold use of anadiplosis, the rhetorical repetition of selected words or phrases. These are: the opening divine epithet, "God of retribution"; the agonizing, searching question "how long?"; and the final, confident, unwavering declaration of faith that God "will annihilate" the evildoers. In each case, the reiteration gives prominence to a key element of the psalm: the nature of God, the intolerable suffering of human beings, and the certainty of the ultimate downfall of evil.

At the outset, the psalmist affirms his concept of an active God. This is necessary because, as he states later on, the wicked believe in an essentially inactive deity. The specific epithet used here, "God of retribution," is paralleled in verse 2 by "judge of the earth." The understanding of "retribution" is thus clarified: It is not an arbitrary or vindictive act, but a judicial intervention against the guilty.

The Hebrew term here translated "retribution" is often misleadingly rendered "vengeance" in many English versions. But that word conveys a negative, primitive conception of religion. Vengeance is usually taken to be synonymous with revenge and implies action prompted by base emotions. The Hebrew root, however, means nothing of the kind, for in most instances it signifies an action worthily motivated, purposeful, intended to serve the ends of justice.

Our psalmist calls upon the "God of retribution" to "appear," employing a Hebrew verb that means "to shine," "to be radiant," with the extended meaning of "be manifest." Moreover, it is reinforced here by the addition of the parallel words "rise up," meaning a call for imminent action. What the supplicant is asking for here is decisive, overwhelming, timely action in a situation in which the ordinary resources available to decent people are inadequate to the task of restoring the balance of justice.

The wording in verses 3 and 4 shows that the psalmist is looking for action in the here and now, not in some vague eschatological future. The questions go to the very heart of the

problem of evil in a world that is under divine governance. The issue hinges upon the nature of God as described in the Hebrew Bible. When, in Exodus 33:13, Moses asks to "know" God's ways, God's responsive self-disclosure is a recital of His own attributes, that is, of His moral qualities, which are the essence of His character:

"compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness, and faithfulness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He does not remit all punishment, but visits the iniquity of parents upon children and children's children upon the third and fourth generations (Exodus 34:6-7)."

From the numerous citations of this listing in the Bible in one form or another—clearly an institutionalized liturgical formula—it is apparent that the emphases are on the magnanimous and benevolent divine qualities, rather than on the judgmental and punitive aspects of God's morality. But these benevolent characteristics raise the serious problem of divine tolerance of evil, which is essentially what is behind the vexatious question, "How long, O Lord?"

Implicit here is the subtle and perplexing paradox that it is precisely these benign divine qualities that fortify the conviction of unaccountability, embolden the wicked, and aggravate the problem of evil. So, to ask of God, "How long?" is to view His quality of forbearance from the perspective of the victim of humanly wrought evil, and to demand reduction in the duration of God's tolerance.

Verses 5, 6 and 7 grimly detail the evils that arouse the psalmist. Who are the wicked who perpetrate such heinous crimes? A superficial reading would take them to be foreign, national enemies, because they afflict "Your people." However, closer scrutiny shows that those described as God's people are the disadvantaged and most vulnerable segments of society. An invading enemy would hardly regard those elements as posing a great threat

to his security. God's people are the ordinary common folk, and the evil oppressors and exploiters are the corrupt, privileged upper classes in Israel, those whom the prophets denounced repeatedly from the eighth century B.C.E. on.

Of course, a major and pervasive theme of biblical literature is that God is the redeemer from injustice and oppression, and that God's redemptive acts for Israel demand an imitative

### Psalm 94

- <sup>1</sup> God of retribution, Lord,  
God of retribution, appear!
- <sup>2</sup> Rise up, judge of the earth,  
give the arrogant their deserts!
- <sup>3</sup> How long shall the wicked, O Lord,  
how long shall the wicked exult,  
<sup>4</sup> shall they utter insolent speech,  
shall all evildoers vaunt themselves?
- <sup>5</sup> They crush Your people, O Lord,  
they afflict Your very own;  
<sup>6</sup> they kill the widow and the stranger;  
they murder the fatherless,  
<sup>7</sup> thinking, "The Lord does not see it,  
the God of Jacob does not pay heed."
- <sup>8</sup> Take heed, you most brutish people;  
fools, when will you get wisdom?
- <sup>9</sup> Shall He who implants the ear not hear,  
He who forms the eye not see?
- <sup>10</sup> Shall he who disciplines nations not  
punish,  
He who instructs men in knowledge?
- <sup>11</sup> The Lord knows the designs of men to be  
futile.
- <sup>12</sup> Happy is the man whom You discipline,  
O Lord,  
the man You instruct in Your teaching,

human response. Numerous biblical texts insist that the experience of the liberation from Egypt must be a motive force for social ethics and the well-spring of moral action. This concept is enshrined in law as a positive prohibition in Exodus 22:21-23:

"You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan. If you do mistreat them, I will heed their outcry as soon as they cry out to me . . ."

In light of this fundamental conception of a compassionate God who displays intense concern for the unfortunates of society, and considering the covenantal, humanitarian















imperatives of the religion of Israel that flow from such an understanding, it is not surprising that judicial corruption, as in Psalm 82, and the cruel and oppressive excesses of tyrannical rulers, as here, would be the subject of prayer and entreaty to God.

The precise historical circumstances that called forth the psalmist's accusations can no longer be determined with certainty, but they are

- <sup>13</sup> to give him tranquillity in times of misfortune,  
until the pit be dug for the wicked.  
<sup>14</sup> For the Lord will not forsake His people;  
He will not abandon His very own.  
<sup>15</sup> Judgment shall again accord with justice  
and all the upright shall rally to it.  
  
<sup>16</sup> Who will take my part against evil men?  
Who will stand up for me against wrongdoers?  
<sup>17</sup> Were not the Lord my help,  
I should soon dwell in silence.  
<sup>18</sup> When I think my foot has given way,  
Your faithfulness, O Lord, supports me.  
<sup>19</sup> When I am filled with cares,  
Your assurance soothes my soul.  
  
Shall the seat of injustice be Your partner,  
that frames mischief by statute?  
<sup>21</sup> They band together to do away with the  
righteous;  
they condemn the innocent to death.  
<sup>22</sup> But the Lord is my haven;  
my God is my sheltering rock.  
<sup>23</sup> He will make their evil recoil upon them,  
annihilate them through their own wickedness;  
the Lord our God will annihilate them.

—The New Jewish Publication  
Society Translation

consistent with the references in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel to bloodshed in the land on a large scale. These would seem to point to the reign of King Manasseh (687/6–642 B.C.E.), whom 2 Kings 24:4 blames for the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E., “because of the blood of the innocent that he [Manasseh] had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with the blood of the innocent, and the Lord would not forgive him.”

The psalmist tells us that the horrible crimes perpetrated by the wicked oppressors are grounded in the conviction that there is no accountability. The wicked conceive of an otiose deity, an absentee God, one who, having created the world, thereafter

withdrew from it, and remained remote and aloof from the affairs of humankind. The conviction of the psalmist is that people act wickedly because they do not believe in divine supervision over human society. This is practical, not philosophical, atheism. Sordid self-interest becomes the sole motivating force in human behavior; restraint is dispelled, inhibition discarded, and evil given free reign.

The psalmist, however, is convinced that God will exact retribution from the wicked, and he reiterates this belief repeatedly. The ultimate downfall of the wicked is inevitable. In the meantime, however, their powerless victims continue to suffer, and their undeserved ordeal raises profound philosophical questions. The psalmist, who is himself among the victims, addresses these ever-pressing concerns. His answers, contained in verses 12 through 15, are intended to give meaning to the painful experiences and to offer a measure of consolation.

It is at once apparent that the poet, like the author of Job, does not subscribe to the doctrine that there is a necessary correlation between suffering and sin; the former by no means presupposes the latter. He does, however, hold to the view that the travail of the innocent is divinely wrought and is not mere happenstance. This being so, there must be meaning to the suffering. Here, he falls back on the explanation given in Deuteronomy 8:5: “Bear in mind that the Lord your god disciplines you just as a man disciplines his son.”

The Hebrew root that underlies the word rendered as “discipline” refers primarily to religious and moral instruction, rarely to the development of the intellectual faculties. Suffering, says the psalmist, rather than being a penalty for sin, may be an expression of God’s fatherly love. It may serve an educational function as a test of character. When accompanied by instruction in God’s teaching (Torah), it molds and elevates one’s personality, providing the moral fiber that enables

one to bear adversity with endurance and serenity, secure in the conviction that the wicked will receive their just desserts and tyranny will be overthrown.

Most interesting is the faith expressed in verse 15 that judgment will once again be united with justice. The wicked have severed the one from the other. The decisions and deliberations of the courts no longer are informed by the ends of justice, for the judicial institutions have become mere instruments of the wicked who control the levers of power. Yet, this terrifying situation does not cause the psalmist to lose faith in divine governance of the world. Unable to obtain redress in law, he asks, “Who will take my part against evil men?”

It seems that the psalmist himself is the victim of some fabricated charge; the judges are corrupt, and would-be witnesses to his innocence are too intimidated by the reign of terror to testify in his behalf. In this terrible predicament, only unshakable faith in God saves him from complete collapse.

In his desperation, our psalmist turns directly to God in verses 20 through 23, asking in a different form the same basic question with which he began: How is it that God tolerates the evil? By so doing, He allows an impression of acquiescence to be conveyed.

“Shall the seat of injustice be Your partner, that frames mischief by statute?

They band together to do away with the righteous; they condemn the innocent to death.

But the Lord is my haven;  
my God is my sheltering rock.  
He will make their evil recoil upon them, annihilate them through their own wickedness; the Lord our God will annihilate them.”

In the face of a seemingly hopeless situation, when monstrous evil appears to be all powerful and hideous brutalities are the order of the day, our psalmist continues to place his faith in God and affirms again and again his abiding optimism that the moral order that has been disturbed will be set right, and the wicked be destroyed.—N.M.S.

*A longer version of this analysis, complete with endnotes, can be found in chapter 9 of Nahum Sarna's Songs of the Heart.*



anonymous, or so-called orphan psalms.<sup>25</sup>

Why then was the entire Psalter attributed to David? He was an intrepid warrior, a brilliant strategist, an empire builder, founder of Judah's only royal dynasty and a messianic symbol. Yet he is best known as the author of the Psalms. A talmudic statement expresses it thus: "David wrote the Book of Psalms, including in it the work of the elders, namely, Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heiman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah."<sup>26</sup>

The psalms provide a direct, personal approach to God. There are no intermediaries, human or celestial, no being or beings who facilitate the ascension of prayer to the divine realm. Nor is there any notion of angelic intercession or influence.

The psalms reflect the unqualified conviction that prayer is heard, that the deity is approachable and responsive to the pleas of humankind, although not necessarily immediately or always favorably.

The psalmists were also acutely aware of the dangers of hypocrisy and the perils it holds for true religiosity. They warn the would-be worshiper that God probes the mind and the conscience, that he discerns the contrast between profession and deed, promise and performance.

The psalms take for granted that history has meaning because the processes of history are under the sovereign control of God. It is regarded as axiomatic that his governance of the world is based upon foundations of justice and righteousness, that there is a divinely ordained moral law of universal application operative in the concatenation of events and that there are positive ethical imperatives for the violation of which human beings are held accountable. Given such a system of beliefs, the psalmists inevitably possess unshakable faith that evil doing must in the end be punished and the wicked overthrown. They inveigh against the flagrant abuses rife in the land. Their special concern is the corruption of the judicial processes. They cry out against the exploitation of the disadvantaged and vulnerable of society: the stranger, the poor and the needy, the orphan and the widow.

Despite the frequent expression in the psalms of basic human concerns, there is a complete absence of personal pleas for power or wealth. If there ever were any, they have not survived. The vagaries and dilemmas of the human condition, on the other hand, find expression in abundance. The vexing problems of life, the fearful insecurities of existence, the troubles and travails that afflict every human being—all are reflected in the

psalmist's work. Always, the psalmist, and thus the worshiper, find solace and comfort in adversity, and are sustained and strengthened by faith, thereby mustering the courage to go on with life.

Moreover, the entire community shared the joys and sorrows of the individual, for in ancient times the psalms were recited in the Temple in the presence of a congregation. Sorrows were thereby ameliorated and joys enhanced. Man was recognized as an essentially social being even if, at times, an island unto himself.

For thousands of years, the biblical psalms have nourished, sustained and elevated the spiritual and moral lives of believers of many faiths. In this age of spiritual and moral chaos they still have something to teach us. BR

This article has been adapted from *Songs of the Heart, An Introduction to the Book of Psalms* by Nahum M. Sarna (New York: Schocken Books, 1993).

<sup>1</sup> *Midrash Tehillim* to Psalms [18:1], ed. Solomon Buber, (1891; repr. 1966), p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Berakhot* 57b.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Gilbert, *Shcharansky, Hero of Our Time* (New York: Viking, 1986), pp. 363, 392f., 401f., 412, 416.

<sup>4</sup> Rabbi Israel Lau reported this in the *Jerusalem Post*; it was reprinted by the Wexner Heritage Foundation in its *Jewish News Anthology*, June-October, 1988.

<sup>5</sup> This was pointed out by Y. Kaufmann, *Toledot Ha-'Emunah Ha-Yisre'elit*, vol. 2, pp. 476-478; Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 302-304.

<sup>6</sup> Ezra 3:2, 10; Nehemiah 12:24, 45-46; 2 Chronicles 23:18; cf. 2 Chronicles 8:12-14.

<sup>7</sup> *Bava Batra* 14b; *Avodah Zarah* 19a; *Palestine Talmud, Sukkah* 3:12 (53rd); *Palestine Talmud, Ketubbot*, 12:3 (35a) (shortened).

<sup>8</sup> Only Psalm 145 has *tehillah* in the title.

<sup>9</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *De Vita Contemplativa* 3:25.

<sup>10</sup> For a list of such works, see Sid Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of Scripture* (Hamden, CT: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1976) pp. 17-20.

<sup>11</sup> See Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York: Schocken, 1970) xvii-xix.

<sup>12</sup> The original Hebrew text of this supernumerary psalm turned up in Qumran; see James A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11* (11QPsa), pp. 53-64.

<sup>13</sup> With Psalm 106:47-48, cf. 1 Chronicles 16:36.

<sup>14</sup> Noted by H. B. Swete, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge, UK: 1902), p. 254.

<sup>15</sup> See M. Haran, "The Four Blessings and Five 'Books' in the Book of Psalms" [Hebrew], *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences*, 8, 1 (1989), pp. 1-32.

<sup>16</sup> See S. Buber, *Midrash Tehillim*, 1[2], p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Chronicles 16:4-5. The psalms that bear his name are 50 and 73-83.

<sup>18</sup> Numbers 26:10-11; 1 Chronicles 16:22. The psalms that bear their name are 42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88.

<sup>19</sup> Psalm 121 has *shir la-ma'lot*.

<sup>20</sup> It should also be pointed out that the Psalms Scroll from Qumran (11QPsa) contains selections from "Book Five." However, this scroll may not be a canonical text but a liturgy or hymn book.

<sup>21</sup> If this is the correct meaning of Hebrew *la-menatseh*.

<sup>22</sup> Psalms 122, 124, 131, 133.

<sup>23</sup> Codex Vaticanus (GB) also adds Psalm 67, making 14 more than the Hebrew.

<sup>24</sup> Psalms 72 and 127; Psalm 90; Psalm 88; Psalm 89.

<sup>25</sup> So called in *Avodah Zarah* 24b. Psalms 39, 62 and 77 carry "Jeduthun" in the superscription, but the first two also add *le-david*; Psalm 77 adds *le-asaph*. The Greek adds "Jeremiah" to Psalm 137, and "Haggai and Zechariah" to Psalms 138, 146, 147:1, 147:12 and 148.

<sup>26</sup> *Bava Batra* 14b, referring to Psalms 139:16, 110:1, 89:1 (Ethan is identified with Abraham), 90:1, 88:1, 39:1 et al., 50:1 et al.



Psalms 66  
Don Webb - Newberry

- I. Introduction - All invited to Praise God.  
VV. 1-4.  
A. Give honor to his name  
B. Because of his great power  
C. Forced submission is worth little -  
D. All nations are welcome to worship God.
- II. God Deals with The Nations. VV. 5-7
- III. God's People will Triumph over Evil.  
VV. 8-15
- IV. God Answers Prayer. VV. 16-20.

Psalms 110  
Eddie Helms - Bennettsville

- I. The Messiah - His Position. VV. 1-2  
A. where was he to sit?  
B. when did he begin to sit?  
C. How long is he to sit?
- II. The Messiah - His Power. V. 2  
A. What is the rod?  
B. From what source would it come?  
C. Where was he to rule?
- III. The Messiah - His People. V. 3  
A. The people offer willingly - Show how God has always wanted willing people.  
B. The people offer willingly in the day of his power.



- implying a recognition of power).
- C. He also describes how God's people are to be clothed. V. 3; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Pet. 3:1-5.  
2 Cor. 10:3-6

#### IV. The Messiah - A Priest After The Order of Melchizedek. V. 4

- A. Offer something on behalf of the people -  
Heb. 5:1ff
- B. He is a priest forever in that no one will succeed him.
- C. He is a priest forever in that his sacrifice is forever.

#### V. The Messiah - His Judgments Are Sure To Come W. 5-7

- A. Foolish to resist God.
- B. God's judgments have always been sure to come.
- C.
-





### The Forty-Sixth Psalm

Sennacherib, the mighty monarch with his Assyrian host, had moved into the land of Judah and shut up King Hezekiah in the city of Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." The king was greatly troubled. Unrest prevailed in the city. The prophet Isaiah, however, was calm and self-possessed. He had faith that God would deliver his people and preserve the city.

"He shall not come into this city," said the prophet, "nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it. By the way he came, by the same way shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Jehovah. For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." (Isa. 37: 33-35.)

"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies." (2 Kings 19: 35.)

Inspired by this great exhibition of divine power and providence, some psalmist sat down and wrote, *God Is My Refuge*. The beautiful poem divides itself into three parts.

#### I

- 1 God is my refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth do change,  
And though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas;
- 3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,  
Though the mountains tremble with the swelling thereof.

When Sennacherib and his powerful army swept across the country, the nations of earth were greatly disturbed. The people were upset by the invasion. The psalmist paints the chaotic condition by the familiar figures of a changed earth, tottering mountains sinking in the raging sea, and a wild ocean in frightful fury. But, in the midst of the convulsion, God was Israel's refuge and stronghold. Why should they fear? Not only is he a sure refuge and stronghold, but one of easy access when danger comes—a *very present help in trouble*. He is always available or at hand when trouble afflicts his people. Martin Luther's noble hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, is based on this psalm.

#### II

- 4 There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God,  
The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.
- 5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:  
God will help her, and that right early.
- 6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved:  
He uttereth his voice, the earth melted.
- 7 Jehovah of hosts is with us;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

We pass from a scene of commotion to one of peace. We do not see an earthquake or mountains sinking in the raging sea or a wild ocean foaming in fury; but, instead, a peaceful river—Siloam. The stream is a fountain in flow, and we behold the gentle movements of the water, gliding through the city, with music in its ripples and sunshine in its flash. This brings gladness wherever it comes. There was a storm, a mighty upheaval outside the city of God, but on the inside was peace and a sense of security. *God is in the midst of her*, that is, in the midst of his people. This gives stability—they *shall not be moved*.

There are trials and tribulations and temptations in the world around us, but if we trust the Lord in fulness of faith, there will be a peace that passeth all understanding in our heart.

#### III

- 8 Come, behold the works of Jehovah,  
What desolation he hath made in the earth.
- 9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;  
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;  
He burneth the chariots in the fire.
- 10 Be still, and know that I am God:  
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.
- 11 Jehovah of hosts is with us;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Again, the scene has changed. Leaving the enclosed city of Jerusalem, we take a walk around the city. There *we behold the works of Jehovah*, the *desolation* he has made—the ruins of a once proud and powerful army. Doubtless, these were still visible when the psalmist wrote the beautiful lines. Broken bows, splintered spears, half-charred chariots, were scattered over the earth. God's people can now go forth without the city and feast their eyes on these tokens without fear. God again speaks—*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations*.

And the sweet singer closes the psalm just about as he began—with triumphant faith—*Jehovah of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge*. Live a life of trustful obedience and fear no consequences!

#### TO PROVOKE THOUGHT

1. What is the title of this psalm?
2. Who wrote it?
3. What historical event caused him to write it?
4. Describe the scene depicted in verses 1-3, in verses 4-7, in verses 8-11.
5. Memorize one verse. Quote it to yourself, then to a friend.
6. What great lesson have you learned? (Note the last line of the writer's comments.)

another matter. That James Nelson Armstrong made errors of judgment in refusing to yield to the demands of his contemporaries is not for this writer or anyone else to decide. J. N. Armstrong looked for honorable ground on which to stand, and we are confident he lived his life in all good conscience until his time came to leave this world.

J. N. Armstrong was an effective preacher of the gospel. He had little spare time for protracted meetings during the school terms. His summers were entirely devoted to evangelistic work in far away places from California to Canada and Florida. Often he could be home only five or six days during the summer season.

As L. R. Wilson wrote at his passing: "It is doubtful if any teacher among us had been as universally loved by his pupils as was Brother Armstrong." It may be said that they stood staunchly by him in life and their loyalty to him as a Christian of great faith and personal worth has not waned with the passing years.

J. D. Bales wrote about James Nelson Armstrong: "It is my conviction that he sincerely determined to be simply a Christian. It was the desire of his heart to be a member simply of the New Testament church, and thus he was opposed to sectarianism whether outside the church or when he thought that he saw it raise its head inside the church. He was fearful lest any brethren should fall into a sectarian view of the Lord's church." James Nelson Armstrong was a "good man," but he was as equally great in his splendid life of Christian service.

## Harvest Is Ripe in St. Vincent

Charles A. Lucas

A campaign for Christ was conducted in Kingstown, St. Vincent, December 3-20, 1967, with V. P. Black of Mobile, Alabama, preaching. Others who took part in the campaign were Curtis Dowdy, Phillip Black, James Cooper, Gary Bradley, S. G. Gray, E. R. Brannon, James Andrews and the writer.

An estimated 1,000 people were present for the opening service and excellent attendance was maintained throughout the campaign. Seven persons were baptized and four others indicated the desire to render full obedience in the near future. Hundreds heard the gospel for the first time and expressed an interest in learning more about Christ and New Testament Christianity.

St. Vincent, one of the Windward Islands, is strategically located for spreading the gospel throughout this section of the Caribbean Islands. Kingstown, the largest town on the island, is situated in a beautiful valley surrounded by mountains.

The natives have many fine qualities. Most are extremely poor but have a great deal of pride in their work and themselves. They are a friendly people and are almost without prejudice toward the gospel of Christ. Those who have been converted are among the most dedicated Christians this writer has ever

met. Some of the women walked five miles to the services each night.

In his newsletter from the month of September, Ralph Wharton, our missionary to St. Vincent, made the following report concerning the work there: "Clayton D. Soleyn is my 'number one' helper—teaching, preaching, and counseling. His heart is fully set on (1) preaching the gospel here and on other islands, and (2) fully supporting himself—BOTH. He wants to go to Caribbean Christian College in Puerto Rico but lacks the money for his transportation. He has been awarded a (US) \$960 yearly scholarship for three years at the University of West Indies in Barbados. He had the opportunity in his hands to prepare himself to earn a very good living. But it would delay, for three years, his preparation to preach the gospel. After an agonizing inward struggle, and after receiving his airplane ticket yesterday, today he reached his decision. He turned it down!" Is there some congregation and/or individual who would help this dedicated young man?

Brother Wharton and his co-workers are doing a great work. The church was unknown until 2 years ago, and now there are several congregations. Members on the island now number between seventy and 100. Thirteen young men ranging in age from fifteen to twenty-five have been baptized and are now preaching. When Alexander Campbell visited New Orleans, the press reported that every man converted began preaching and baptizing, and this is what is happening in St. Vincent.

The church in Kingstown needs help and they need it now, that they may take advantage of the opportunities for growth. The church now meets in Brother Wharton's living room, but larger and more adequate facilities are needed. There is a two-story building that can be purchased for (US) \$14,000. The ground floor can be converted into a 250-seat auditorium. The upper story will be adequate living quarters. If \$5,000 can be raised, the remainder of the purchase price can be financed. The members in Kingstown, though they barely make enough to live, have given \$1,400. Thus, they need \$3,600. I appeal to churches and individuals to make a contribution to this work. You may make your check payable to Church of Christ, and send to W. Ralph Wharton, Kingstown, St. Vincent, or to the writer at Beville Road Church of Christ, 850 Beville Road, Daytona Beach, Fla., 32019.

### Answers to:

### KNOW YOUR BIBLE

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Dorcas or Tabitha. (Acts 9: 36-41.) | 6. Priscilla. (Rom. 16: 3-5.)           |
| 2. Elisabeth. (Luke 1: 36-60.)         | 7. Martha. (Luke 10: 38-42.)            |
| 3. Sapphira. (Acts 5: 1-10.)           | 8. Herodias' daughter. (Matt. 14: 3-6.) |
| 4. Jairus' daughter. (Luke 8: 41-56.)  | 9. Lois (2 Tim. 1: 5.)                  |
| 5. Lydia (Acts 16: 14.)                | 10. Eunice. (2 Tim. 3: 15.)             |



# THE CRIEVE HALL FAMILY CHRONICLE



"striving together as God directs" (Phil. 1:27)

Volume 40

Nov. 22, 1998

Number 47

## "His lovingkindness endureth for ever!"

-- Dan Winkler

Twenty-six times we read of God's *lovingkindness* [ASV] or *mercy* [KJV] in Psalms 136. But love, kindness and mercy are the elements that make for grace (Eph. 2:4-7; Tit. 3:4-7). That means Ps. 136 alerts us to a God of grace almost thirty times. He is God, yes, but a God of grace!

Look more closely. First, the psalm begins and concludes with words of grateful praise: "*Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good...Oh give thanks unto the God of heaven*" (Ps. 136:1, 26).

Then the psalm fleshes out these words of praise with three examples of God's gracious care.

1. His "Creation" (Ps. 136:5-9). -- He "*made*" ["fashioned"] the heavens as if they were clay in the hands of a potter and "*spread forth*" ["stamped out"] the earth like sheet metal yielding to the hammer of a smith. This beautiful universe is the home he crafted for man.
2. His "Nation" (Ps. 136:10-15). -- He miraculously "*smote Egypt*" and "*brought out Israel from among them.*" Remember the plagues? The pillar of fire? The Red Sea?
3. His "Navigation" (Ps. 136:16-25). -- He "*led*" or guided his people through the wilderness, fought for them in Canaan and gave them the land of their enemies.

Today, God is still "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3-4). I need to remember that:

- when I'm not happy with myself and wonder if anyone really cares who I am or what I feel. **God cares** (2 Cor. 7:5-7)!
- when I'm ashamed of myself and burdened with the guilt of my mistakes. **God is fair**, faithful and forgiving (1 Jn. 1:9)!
- when I struggle with myself and my response to life's disappointments. **God is there** to help (1 Pet. 5:7)!

If I will but trust him with my challenges and my concerns he will prove himself to be "*the God of gods...and the Lord of lords*" (Ps 136:2-4), a God whose "*lovingkindness endureth for ever!*"

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Nov. 21**

3rd-5th Thanksgiving Service project

**Nov. 22**

6th-12th Visitation Project

**Nov. 22**

HiStep Meeting

**Nov. 25**

Thanksgiving Devotional

**Nov. 29**

K-12th Parents Meeting

**Nov. 29**

Crieve Hall conducts worship at LakeShore Heartland - 4:00

**Dec. 4**

Freed Hardeman Advisory Board  
Benefit Dinner  
Program is posted.

**Dec. 8**

Open House at JoAnn Wright's  
10:00 - 1:00  
Bring recipe for cookbook

**Dec. 23**

Wednesday Night Devotional



**PANTRY ITEM**

Pull-top Cans



## Unity Like Oil

Psa 133:1

1. The word of God specifies the ingredients of the oil — In the same way the word of God specifies the ingredients of unity.
2. The components to be blended according to the word of God — Components to work together in unity — Eph. 4:15-16 *the whole*
3. Components of this oil distinctive — Each member of church has distinctive features — 1 Cor. 12:13-24; Mt. 25:14-30
4. The blend is holy (all the ingred.) Our holiness is there only as we are a part of the church
5. The blend has one aroma — Christ — 2 Cor. 4:16-18
6. Blend is not for common use — Church for holy use — not common use.
7. Application necessary in order that priests might minister — we need to be anointed —



Psa. 63

Dillon Barges - Myrtle Beach

Resolved To Seek

I. ~~Do not shut~~ After God. V. 1-3

A. Thirsted as body thirsts

B. God's lovingkindness moved him -

II. He Resolved To Praise God. V. 4, 5

A. Men seek happiness & satisfaction in too many places.

B. Only those who seek God shall be satisfied.

1. God provides abundantly - Eph. 3:20

2.

C. Realizing God's provision he resolved to praise God with his lips.

III. He resolved to ~~remember~~ meditate on  
~~Ps. V. 6-11~~ - "Trust God"

Psalms 72

- Larry Williams Andrews

The King of the Righteous King

VV 1-7

I. What Kind of King

II. Rule the World over - VV. 8-11

III. How To Deal with poor & unfortunate - 12-14

IV. A Prayer for the King - 15-19 -



## PSALMS I

James Meadows

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalms I needs no title, because it is so plain, and because it is itself a preface to all the great matters, which come after it. "The sum of this Psalm is that the just and he alone is blessed. It incites us to the love of righteousness by presenting proper hopes. By pointing to the dreadful end of the wicked, it warns us to flee from all iniquity. It is a compound of all the Psalms, and indeed of all Scripture. In many of our Bibles the caption given is, 'The happiness of the godly. The unhappiness of the ungodly'" (W. S. Plumer)

### THE RIGHTEOUS

First, "blessed is the man . . ." The word "blessed" is the Hebrew plural, denoting the richness of the variety of blessings secured to the righteous. Adam Clarke says it "may be considered as an exclamation produced by contemplating the state of that man who has taken God for his portion; O the blessedness of the man!"

Second, the negative characteristics of the righteous are given. (1) He "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" (wicked, ASV). "Walketh" refers to the whole round of the activities of one's life or that which one practices. "Counsel" denotes not merely the advice of the wicked, but his aims, his maxims, his principles, and his practices. The "ungodly" or "wicked" are those who have no place in their thoughts and lives for God. (Rom. 1:18-28) "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." (Prov. 4:14, 15) (2) He does not stand "in the way of sinners." "Sinners" are those who "miss the mark" or "pass over the prohibited limits." The sinner not only does not do good, but he does evil. This man adds outward transgression to the sinfulness of his heart. "To stand" means that one has stopped or loitered around long enough to allow evil to get a grip; it denotes a decaying sensitiveness to sin.

*"Vice is a monster of so frightful  
mien,  
As, to be hated, needs only to be  
seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her  
face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."  
(Alexander Pope)*

(3) He sitteth not "in the seat of the scornful" (scoffers, ASV). "Scoffers" are those who scorn, mock, and deride truth and sacred things. Peter mentions those who would mock, ridicule, and hold up to scorn the idea of the Lord coming again. (2 Pet. 3:1-4) The righteous man deliberately refuses association with people of this type.

"A steady progress in sin is indicated -- walking, standing, sitting. First, stepping aside from the right path into crooked ways in compliance with evil counsel; secondly, continuing a line of conduct conscience condemns; at last, sitting down at the banquet of sinful pleasure, conscience drugged or seared, God openly despised. A picture of how many lives once bright with hope." (E. R. Condor) Achan saw, he coveted, and he took. (Josh. 7:21) David looked upon Bathsheba; he desired her; he lay with her; he tried to deceive her husband; he got her husband drunk; and he finally had him murdered. (2 Sam. 11)

Third, the righteous man is described positively under two heads. (1) "but his delight is in the law of the Lord." "Delight" means "pleasure", "desire", a matter in the



mind that is acceptable, delightful, desired. It is from a root word which means "to incline to. . . fig. to be pleased with, desire . . . (have, take) delight, desire, favor, like . . ." (Strong) The righteous man loves the word of God, not only to read, but to follow as the rule of his life. "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psa. 119:97) "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (Matt. 5:6) "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." (1 Pet. 2:2) (2) "An in his law doth he meditate day and night." "Meditate" means "to ponder or reflect on, muse over, consider, contemplate . . ." (Webster) "The power of reflection chiefly distinguishes a man from a brute. The habit of reflection chiefly distinguishes a wise man from a fool . . . Without meditation grace never thrives, prayer is languid, praise dull, and religious dues unprofitable." (W. S. Plumber) Meditation on the word of God on the part of the righteous is not an occasional practice, but it is his work day and night. Paul told Timothy to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . Meditate upon these things. . ." (1 Tim. 4:13, 15)

Fourth, the four results that follow the way of the righteous are clearly named. (1) "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." The words, "rivers of waters," are sometimes used figuratively (Psa. 119:136; Lam. 3:48); they are used to refer to actual rivers (2 Kings 5:12); and they are used to refer to artificial streams. (Prov. 21:1; Deut 11:10) "The original words properly denote canals or channels, as customary means of artificial irrigation. Hence the single tree is said to overhang more than one, because surrounded by them." (Alexander) To be planted suggested permanency of connection. He shall be rooted, anchored, and steadfast (Col. 2:5-7); he shall be fed and nourished from an unending fountain of rich treasures. (cf. John 4:14) (2) "That bringeth forth his fruit in his season." "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." (Isa. 92:13, 14) The righteous man will continue to be a vigorous, productive, fruit bearing servant to the Lord all the days of his life. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (John 15:8) (3) "His leaf also shall not wither." What a contrast to the threat of Isaiah

against the wicked of his time. "Ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water." (Isa. 1:30) "His profession of true religion shall always be regular and unsullied; and his faith be ever shown by his works." (A. Clarke) Just as a tree planted by the "rivers of water" exhibits "all the fragrance and all the beauty of a perpetual spring" so shall it ever be with the righteous man. His life is evergreen. (4) "And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." This statement contains a general truth or "contains an affirmation as to the natural and proper effect of religion, or of a life of piety." (A. Barnes) Paul wrote, "for bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. 4:8) "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." (Mark 10:29, 30) The phrase "and whatsoever he doeth he shall prosper" is sometimes translated "in whatsoever he doeth, he shall prosper", suggesting that the man who delights in God and in God's word, shall prosper, regardless of whether the enterprises in which he invests succeed or fail. (cf. Joseph. Gen. 39:1-23)

### THE UNGODLY

First, there is a tremendous difference between the righteous and the ungodly. "The ungodly are not so." In contrast to the righteous the ungodly "walk in the counsel of the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, sit in the seat of the scornful; their delight is not in the law of the Lord, neither do they meditate in God's word day and night; nor are they like a well watered tree, bringing forth seasonable fruit, and covered with green foliage; and whatsoever they do shall in the end work their shame and overthrow. A sad and utter defeat of all their plans await the ungodly." (W. S. Plumer)

Second, the ungodly are "like the chaff which the wind driveth away." The Hebrew word chashash rendered chaff means dry grass or hay. The Hebrew word mots refers to the husk of the wheat. "In ancient times it was considered of no value at all,



and when corn was winnowed, it was thrown up in the air until the wind had blown all the chaff away." (G. Rawlinson) Chaff is used throughout the scriptures as an emblem of what is weak and worthless, and as a symbol of the destruction of the wicked. (Job 21:18; Psa. 35:5; Isa. 5:24, 17:13; Matt. 3:12) The "ungodly" or "wicked" are not necessarily gross sinners, as that expression is generally understood, but may be active, religious people who have failed to let the will of God control their lives (Matt. 7:21-23), or they may be people who have buried their talents. (Matt. 25:14-30)

Third, the ungodly "shall not stand in the judgment." The word "stand" means to endure or withstand a test. The lives of the wicked are not built on the word of God and they cannot withstand the trials of life (Matt. 7:24-27), but particularly, as this verse probably means, they will not be able to maintain their cause and have any support in the final judgment. (Eccle. 12:13, 14; 1 Tim. 5:24, 25) They will not be found among those acquitted and approved by the Judge of all the earth.

Fourth, the ungodly shall not stand "in the congregation of the righteous." God's people are now dispersed all over the world, but the day is coming when they shall all be congregated together; there shall be an eternal separation of God's friends and God's foes. (Matt. 25:46) In this life the tares and the wheat grow together (Matt. 13:24-30), and the sheep and goats often herded together (cf. Matt. 25:31-46), but no wickedness shall be in that eternal city. (Rev. 21:27) This principle needs to be loved and practiced in the church today. (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-13)

### THE LORD KNOWS

First, "the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." To "know" means to recognize and to approve. God is said to "know" those of whom he approves, and on whom he "lifts up the light of his countenance." (Psa. 4:6) "only those whom God approves, and loves, as his friends, will be able to stand in the day when the great decision shall be made . . . No one can be admitted to the favor of God, and to the rewards of heaven, whose character is not such that it will bear the scrutiny of the Omniscient eye." (A. Barnes)

Second, "the way of the ungodly shall perish." This is given as the reason why the ungodly shall not be able to stand in the judgment. God does not approve or recognize their ways. The Lord will say to some in the judgement, " . . . I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity," i.e., I never recognized or approved your way. (Matt. 7:23) David was envious and fretful of the wicked's prosperity (Psa. 73:1-3) until he went into the "sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." (Psa. 73:16, 17) Let the wicked prepare to meet God, and know their end if they continue in their wicked state. (2 Thess. 1:7-9)







## **The Way of the Righteous**

### **Psalm 1**

#### **I. Avoid the three steps into evil (Psalm 1:1).**

##### **A. Walk by a questionable place.**

1. Rom. 12:9
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:22

##### **B. Stand or loiter around evil.**

1. Heb. 5:11-14 Senses dull through disuse
2. Hebrews 6:11-12
3. 1 Corinthians 15:33

##### **C. Sit down and become a part of evil.**

1. Hebrews 6:4-6
2. Hebrews 10:26-27

#### **II. Turn to God and be blessed.**

##### **A. Read and study God's law day & night.**

1. Psalm 1:2
2. Psalm 119:97-100, 105

##### **B. God will bless.**

1. Psalm 1:3 Rooted like tree by water
2. Ephesians 4:14-15
3. Producing fruit. John 15:8
4. Evergreen. Psalm 34:6-8
5. Prosperous in his works. Matthew 19:29

**Conclusion:** Follow the way of righteousness to be blessed, always remembering the consequences of the alternative (Psalm 1:4-6).



- I. WHAT ARE THE PSALMS? The Hebrew Psalter (Psalms) is the most ancient collection of poems in the world; and was composed long before those in which ancient Greece and Rome have gloried. The Hebrew "Psalter" means "praises" or "hymns", while the Greek word means psalms. It may be called the "Hebrew Prayer or Praise Book". The prevailing note is one of praise, though some are sad and plaintive, while others are philosophical.
- Psalms and Proverbs differ from the other books we have studied in that they do not tell a story. They reveal much about their author and throw light on history, but they are not historical but devotional in nature.
- II. HEBREW POETRY: Hebrew poetry has neither rhyme nor meter as is found in English poetry, but it does abound in rhythm - rhythm in structure and rhythm in thought. Hebrew poetry is particularly figurative in language and most striking in its comparisons. It is a poetry of feeling and thought. Parallelism is its chief characteristic.
- III. DATE AND AUTHORSHIP: The question of date and authorship is not as important in the case of the Psalms as it is in the case of the prophetic books and other Old Testament writings. A psalm remains a psalm, and may take the reader into the presence of God, no matter by whom and under what circumstances it was written. We speak of the Psalms as the Psalms of David, because David was the principle writer. His name is mentioned in the titles of fifty of the Psalms and we do not know how many more he might have written. We have no means of determining the authorship of many of the 150 Psalms. Besides David, other authors named are Asaph, the sons of Korah, Heman, Ethan, Moses and Solomon.
- IV. RELATIONSHIP OF PSALMS TO OTHER BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: The relationship of Psalms to the Old Testament is especially intimate. It has been called the heart of the entire Bible. Of all the books in the Old Testament, the Psalms are most frequently quoted in the New Testament. Of the seventy-five quotations from the Psalms in the New Testament, more than fifty apply to Christ or represent Him as the speaker.
- V. NATURE OF THE WRITINGS: Many were the moods and experiences of the authors of the Psalms, but there is one bond which unites them all into one unity, namely, a sublime faith in Jehovah. Their refuge is in God; and probably more than any other book in the Bible does the Psalter bring home to us the overwhelming sense of the reality and personality of God. The Psalms were written and sung by men who counted God their friend.
- VI. CLASSIFICATION: As to subject matter, the following classifications have been suggested:
1. Psalms of Adoration.
  2. Psalms of Reflection.
  3. Psalms of Thanksgiving.
  4. Psalms in Celebration of Worship.
  5. Historical Psalms.
  6. Psalms of Vengeance.
  7. Psalms of Penitence.
  8. Psalms of Petition.
  9. The Royal Psalms.
  10. Psalms Concerning the Universal Reign of Jehovah.

# An Introduction to the Book of Psalms

E. S. Jones

## I. Hebrew Poetry

A. The Old Testament repeatedly expresses itself in poetry.

1. Hebrew poetry is very flexible.
2. Meter is not measured in "feet" and syllables are not arranged in complicated patterns.
3. The basic structure is a line and its answer.
4. Spontaneity is generously accommodated.
5. The basic unit of Hebrew poetry is two lines with three and sometimes four lines forming a unit.
6. Hebrew poetry is much more exalted than the sentimental and romantic examples of most English religious poetry.
7. Further elements of Hebrew poetry include:
  - a. Alliteration (similar sounds at beginning of words).
  - b. Assonance (similar internal sounds).
  - c. Paronomasia (puns, plays on words).
  - d. Onomatopoeia (words that sound the same but have different meanings).
  - e. All such characteristics are difficult to translate.

B. The primary characteristic of Hebrew poetry is the matching of thoughts -- a sort of "thought rhyme" usually called "parallelism."

1. Synonymous (either identical or similar): Ps. 103:10; 63:1; 51:1; 19:1; 2:4; 83:14; 24:1; 19:2; Prov. 1:8; Job 22:3-11; Gen. 4:23; Ex. 15:4; Isa. 1:3; Amos 1:8. *PS. 2:3 / EMBLEMATIC PS. 103:13*
2. Synthetic or Constructive (addition of a thought): Ps. 145:18; 29:1; Prov. 1:10; 3:27-30; Amos 1:7; Job 19:25; Deut. 33:27; Joel 1:4; Prov. 15:17; 26:4; Ps. 19:7; *1:1; 2:3, 2:6.*
3. Antithetical (contrast): Ps. 37:21; *1:6*; 30:5; 90:6; 1:6; Prov. 10:1, 5, 7; 1:29; most of 10:1-22:16.
4. Comparative: Ps. 42:1; 63:8; Prov. 25:25; 11:22.
5. Analytical (second line gives the consequence of the first): Ps. 23:1; Deut. 32:4; Lam. 3:24.
6. Climatic (building to a climax): Ps. 95:1-3; *29:1; 2*; Jud. 5:7; Ps. 121:1-8. *94:1, 3, 23*
7. Tautological (repetition of words): *94:3. PS. 8:1, 9*  
*Beginning and end Ps. 20, 21, 30; cf. 25:1-3, 19-21*

C. Early examples of Hebrew poetry.

1. Gen. 4:23-24; 9:25-27; 27:27-29; 39:4; 49:2-27.
2. Ex. 15:1-8; Ps. 90; Num. 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 15-24; Deut. 32:1-33:29.
3. Josh. 10:12-13.
4. Jud. 5:2-31.
5. I Sam. 2:1-10.

D. Types of Hebrew Poetry

1. Lyric (the poetry of sentiment). The Psalms are chiefly lyric as are most poetic sections in the historical books and the Prophets.

2. Didactic (gnomic or teaching poems). Found primarily in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.
  - a. Not concerned with abstract reasoning.
  - b. Observations about life and morality and the order of the universe.
3. Dramatic (the poetry of drama) Job and Song of Solomon represent this type.
  - a. The movement of ideas rather than people is stressed.
  - b. An interplay of thought provides the plot.
4. Lament (the poetry of sorrow) Lamentations is the chief example of this kind of poetry.

E. Additional Observations about Hebrew poetry.

1. Poetry is important to a religion that is deeply felt.
2. Hebrew poetry gives us insight into the inner spiritual life of those most influenced by God.
3. Hebrew poetry suffers less from translation than does almost any other form of national poetry. Parallels of sense rather than sound.

II. The Basic Structure of the Book of Psalms.

- A. Book One (1-41).
- B. Book Two (42-72).
- C. Book Three (73-89).
- D. Book Four (90-106).
- E. Book Five (107-150).
- F. Each have similar endings (41:13; 72:18-19; 89:52; 106:48; 150:6).
- G. Both the Septuagint and the Book of Chronicles attest to the antiquity of those divisions (I Chron. 16:35-36).
  1. An orderly arrangement is thus ancient.
  2. However, the arrangement is an informal one with no clear-cut reasons for the various divisions.

III. Modern Trends of Scholarship.

- A. Beginning with Gunkel's studies in 1904, a reappraisal of the Psalms was begun.
  1. Serious acceptance was restored.
  2. The negative influences of Wellhausen were undermined.
- B. Gunkel's research revealed some very practical insights.
  1. The Psalms reflected the same kind of material found in the rest of the Old Testament: hymns, laments, thanksgiving, prayers, situations associated with royalty.
  2. From this Gunkel concluded that the Psalms were the very kind of material one would expect to find arising from Hebrew culture.
  3. With this he pushed back the date of the Psalms.
  4. When they were then compared with ancient poems from neighboring cultures, the Psalms were demonstrated as being from a similar historical setting and literary expression. Especially is this true of the Ras Shamra tablets in Ugaritic.



5. The Psalms written in the Maccabean period are clearly different from Old Testament Psalms.
- C. Mowinckel's work from 1921-1924 made a turn back to Wellhausen.
1. He tried to connect the Psalms to literature manufactured by the Cultic structures of Israel.
  2. Temple services came to be the motivation for the composition of the Psalms.
  3. Only one or two Psalms were seen to be from David.
  4. Mowinckel's conclusions found ready acceptance and certain standard assumptions developed among many scholars.
    - a. The yearly enthronement of God was imagined.
    - b. More than 40 Psalms were associated with this supposed event (eg. 89, 24, 93, 81, 95, 96).
    - c. Ingathering and Tabernacles were the feasts wherein this enthronement was said to take place.
- D. Speculations grew beyond the assumptions of Mowinckel.
1. Some felt the Psalms were primarily influenced by the Babylonian "akitu" festivals.
  2. Others looked to Canaanite fertility rites.
  3. A few looked to the king as playing the role of Yahveh's adopted son who acted out God's triumph over the cosmic forces.
- E. Such speculations, however, failed to establish their case.
1. The imaginative New Year reconstructions went beyond historical identification.
  2. The concept of a sacral kingship was, to say the least, precarious.
  3. The evidence is that Israel had a far different pattern of kingship and worship than did her neighbors.
  4. Anthropology, not the evidence from the Hebrew past, was the faulty basis of such speculations.
  5. The whole idea of enthronement is not connected with Yahveh in the Psalms.
    - a. The clear teaching of the Psalms is that God reigns (Ps. 93:1).
    - b. The "day of the Lord" was not seen as a day of enthronement for God, but as a day of battle.
- IV. Notations Within the Book of Psalms.

A. The titles of Psalms

1. The titles demonstrate that they were used rather than invented by Israel.
  - a. Many do not have an obvious connection.
  - b. If they were supplied, they would have undoubtedly assigned Psalms to more readily discernable relationships.

B. In the Hebrew Bible the titles to the Psalms are in the text.

1. This is why the Hebrew verse numbers are usually out of touch with ours in the Psalms.

2. The New Testament treats the headings as inspired (Mk. 12:35-37; Acts 2:29ff; 34ff; 13:35-37).
  3. We need look no further than this for their authentication (the NEB omits them all).
  4. The titles are old enough that their technical terms were meaningless to the Jews who translated the LXX.
  5. Being in the third person they were probably not from the writer of the Psalms, but from the pen of the inspired man or men who put the book in its final form.
- C. Various terms and descriptions found in the Psalms are quite difficult to understand and must be viewed in either a general way or with an admission of ignorance.
1. Mizmor (57 times): A psalm, a composed piece of music.
  2. Shir (29 times): a popular song, often unaccompanied.
  3. Mizmor Shir: A popular song that had taken on a formal status.
  4. Shiggaion: Comes from a word meaning "to wander or err." It might refer to a very emotional section (Ps. 7).
  5. Mikdam: May refer to a silent prayer (16, 56-60).
  6. Maskil: Comes from the verb meaning "to make wise or prudent." It could refer to either the content or the skill needed to write or sing the Psalm (32, 42, 44-45, 52-55, 74, 78, 88-89, 142).
  7. A prayer (17, 88, 90, 102, 142).
  8. A praise (145).
  9. Selah (71 times): Perhaps an interlude.
  10. Higgsaion: Perhaps a quieter playing of instruments (Ps. 9:16).
  11. Notes to the Choirmaster are found in 55 Psalms. The word means "to excell" and could refer to a superintendent having superior ability.
  12. According to Sheminith (6, 12), the word means an eighth and may refer to deeper voices (1 Chron. 15:21).
  13. According to Alamoth "girls" (46 cf. 1 Chron. 15:20), higher voices.
  14. According to Gittith (8, 81, 84), the refers to a wine or olive press.
  15. According to Muth-labben (9) refers to the death of a son and probably refers to a particular tune.
  16. Other possible references to tunes the song is to be sung in would include:
    - a. According to Lilies (45, 69).
    - b. According to Shushan Eduth (60).
    - c. According to Lilies, a testimony (80).
    - d. According to Mahalatt (53, 88).
    - e. According to The Dove on Far Off (56).
    - f. According to Do not Destroy (57-59, 75).
    - g. Song of Scents (120-134, cf. Isa. 30:29).
- D. Davidic Episodes in the headings (3, 7, 18, 30, 34, 51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63, 142).
1. 59 and 1 Sam. 19:11 (esp. 59:12).
  2. 56 and 1 Sam. 21:10 (esp. 56:12).
  3. 34 and 1 Sam. 21:13 (esp. 34:6-8).
  4. 142 and 1 Sam. 22:1 (esp. 142:6).
  5. 52 and 1 Sam. 22:9 (esp. 52:3).

6. 54 and I Sam. 23:13 (esp. 54:3).
7. 57 and I Sam. 24:1 (esp. 57:6).
8. 7 and I Sam. 24:11, 12 (esp. 7:3, 8).
9. 18 and II Sam. 7 repeated II Sam. 22.
10. 60 and II Sam. 3:13-14; I Chron. 18:12, cf. I K. 11:15 (esp. 60:10).
11. 51 and II Sam. 12:13-14
12. 3 and II Sam. 15:16 (esp. 3:5).
13. 63 and II Sam. 16:2 (esp. 63:11).
14. 30 and II Sam. 24:2; 13-17; I Chron. 21:11-17; 22:1 (esp. 30:5,6).

## V. The Theology of the Psalms

- A. The Place of God is central to all Scripture and the Psalms delight in summoning the creation to sing His "praises",
1. An appeal is made to exalt Yahveh (ie Ps. 33:1-3).
  2. The body of this type of Psalm then presents the grounds for the appeal with <sup>ל</sup> <sup>ע</sup>, "for" (eg. 33:4) or <sup>י</sup> <sup>מ</sup> <sup>י</sup>, "who" (eg. 16:7).
  3. A conclusion will usually resume the initial appeal (eg. 103:20-22).
  4. The Psalms do not attempt to prove God exists.
    - a. To disregard the obvious fact of God is the chief concern OF (Ps. 10, 14, 53).
    - b. Only a fool would deny God (Ps. 14:1)
- B. The transcendent <sup>ל</sup> <sup>ע</sup> or <sup>י</sup> <sup>מ</sup> <sup>י</sup> and the immanent and personal <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> are the names for God that most commonly portray His character.
1. His infinity of:
    - a. Time (90:2; 102:12).
    - b. Space (139:7-12, 18; 11:4; 68:7-8; 20:2; 27:4; 145:18).
    - c. Knowledge (139:1-6).
    - d. Power (139:13-18; 93-99).
  2. His changelessness (102:27)
  3. His adaptability (18:25-26).
  4. His righteousness (5; 86:11 [<sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup>, "truth" or "firmness" and <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> "rightness" or "uprightness" establish that righteousness is a fidelity to what is right or truthful]).
  5. His goodness (103).
    - a. Mercy (17:7; 86:15).
    - b. Fatherhood (27:10; 89:26 cf. 57:1; 63:7).
    - c. <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> or "steadfast love" which produces:
      - 1) <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup>, "judgment" (33:5).
      - 2) <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup>, the "peace" of wholeness and integration.
      - 3) <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> has <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> and <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> meeting so that <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> and <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> will kiss each other.
  6. The Psalms of praise focus on God's <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> <sup>י</sup> "holiness" (cf. Lev. 20:26 and Ps. 99).
- C. God's relationship to nature is a further vehicle of praise (104, 50, 29, 65).
1. Nature glorifies God (148).
  2. Nature points men to God (19:1; 8:3-4).
  3. It exists for the praise of God (104:33).
  4. It has a temporary role (102:26) in relation to man (104:10-23).



D. The Psalms show a particular interest in mankind and the problems of sin.

תְּנִיחָה

1. His sinfulness requires redemption through a covenant, תְּנִיחָה (105:8-10; 68:7-8).
2. The nation of Israel and its history portray this relationship between God and man (14, 44, 46-48, 53, 66, 68, 74, 76, 78-81, 83, 85, 87, 108, 122, 124-126, 129, 105-106).
3. The people could appeal to God through provisions of covenant (74:20) to have their fortunes restored (14:7) through forgiveness of sins (79:9; 85:2-3).

E. Several Psalms speak of man's origin, nature, purpose and destiny (100, 8, 139, 103, 78, 142, 146, 31, 77, 143, 41, 102, 55, 104, 93, 150, 119, 15, 27, 43, 1, 4, 39).

נִפְלְאוֹת  
רוּחַ

1. Man is a part of nature (104:4).
2. Man is special (100:3).
3. Adam was given sovereignty over the world (8:5-6) which came to be realized in Christ (Heb. 2:6-8) due to Adam's fall (I Cor. 15:45) and the fall of all men (Rom. 5:12).
4. Individuality and life begin in the womb (139:13, cf. Job 31:15).
5. God knows the paths of life (139:16; 31:15), but through foreknowledge rather than predestination (Rom. 8:29).
6. Man has a mortal body (103:14; 78:39), that is nevertheless wonderful (139:14).
7. Man is a being (soul, נִפְשׁוֹ) in the image of God (8:5) (Ps. 82:6).
8. Man has a spirit רֹחַ that may represent: (Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 22:11)
  - a. Attitude (78:8; 142:3).
  - b. Life breath (104:29-30; 146:4).
  - c. An immortal essence (31:5).
  - d. The higher part of man (77:3, 6; 143:4, 7).
  - e. That which can live forever with God (41:12; 102:26-28).
9. Man is insignificant in one sense (103:13-14; 8:3-4).
10. Man can find security (4:8).
11. Man can have confidence (25:13).
12. Man can find aid from God (55:22).
13. Man is to love God (116:1; 107:1-3).
14. Man is to see his need for God (116:3, 4, 10, 11).
15. Express gratitude (116:5-8, 12, 15-16).
16. Seek to lead others to God (116:13-4, 17-19, cf. 107:8, 9, 15, 16, 21).
17. Glorify God (104:31; 95:6; 43:4; 150).
18. Delight in His Law (1:2; 4:7; 119).
19. Delight in God's presence in the sanctuary (15:1; 27:4; 43:3; 84).
20. Man is but a sojourner (39:12-13).
21. He is to conform to God's character (24:3-4).
22. Be humble (131:1-2).
23. Upright (15; 11:6-7).
24. Honest (101:7, cf. 10:7).
25. Truthful (15:2; 24:4).
26. Guard against failures in his words (12; 52; 120; 15:3-4; 19:14).
27. Enjoy friendship and love (133; 15:4; 45; 7:4).
28. Practice justice (82; 15:5; 72:1-4).
29. Seek peace (120:6-7).

30. Set godliness as a goal for the nations (33:12, cf. 20:7).
31. Practice financial integrity (15:5; 37:21).
32. Trust in God's justice (37:1-3; 73:12-14, 17-19, 24; 49:14-15; 17:14-15).

## VI. Major Classes of Psalms

- A. Imprecatory Psalms (35, 69, 109, 137, cf. 5, 7, 28, 54-55, 58-59, 79, 83, 101, 139).
  1. Jeremiah and Nehemiah mention some of these as from David (Jer. 15:15; 17:18; 18:21-23; 20:12; Neh. 6:14; 13:29).
  2. The New Testament has such material (Gal. 5:12; II Tim. 4:14; Rev. 6:10).
  3. Liberal critics say such statements belong to the "Old Testament spirit" or "the spirit of Elijah" and not of Christ.
  4. Several factors need to be considered before judgment can be made:
    - a. The New Testament does not condemn the "Old Testament spirit," it does on occasion condemn the practices of antibiblical Judaism that arose in the intertestament period. One taught hatred of enemies (IQS<sup>i</sup>, 3-9) the other did not (Ex. 23:4-5; Lev. 19:17-18).
    - b. Some statements were poetic hyperbole (68:21, 23; 58:10; 137:9; Jer. 13:14).
    - c. Some simply speak of the hatred for sin (Nah. 3:19; Ps. 50:21; 101:8; 139:21).
    - d. Some put vengeance in God's hands, as is proper (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19; I Sam. 25:22, 32-35, 36-39; Ps. 37:8-9; 104:34-35; 58:11).
    - e. Positive goals are often put beyond private vindication (109:2-5; 92:11, 15; 54:7; 52:6; 83:3-5; 137:8).
    - f. Prophecies of God's attitude toward sin (125:5; 55:2-3; 145:20, cf. Matt. 13:49-50; Jn. 5:29).
    - g. "Oh ye that love Yahveh, hate evil," is an exhortation that belongs, not to one age, but to all time (Lk. 18:7f; Mk. 11:14; 12:9; I Cor. 5:5).
    - h. And yet the "spirit of the age" must be considered in that the spiritual development of the people was not as great as became possible in Christ.
    - i. Some Psalms may simply record the feelings of someone in honest fashion (i.e., II Sam. 12:31).
    - j. Unrighteous deeds and thoughts are recorded throughout both Testaments, even when they come from otherwise good men.
    - k. The following verses can now be properly appraised (5:10; 10:15; 18:40-42; 28:4; 31:17; 35:3-8; 40:14; 55:9; 58:6-10; 59:12-15; 68:2; 69:22-25; 79:12; 83:9-17; 109:6-15; 137:7-9).
- B. Penitential Psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).
  1. Man is a sinner who needs mercy (130:3; 14:3; 143:2).
  2. Sin is a violation of the will of Yahveh (78:17-19)
    - a. Rebellion,  $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע}$  (51:1).
    - b. Twistedness,  $\text{וַיִּשְׁתַּבֵּחַ}$  (51:2).
    - c. Missing the mark,  $\text{וַיִּשְׁתַּבֵּחַ}$  (51:2).
    - d. A violent disturbance of evil,  $\text{וַיִּשְׁתַּבֵּחַ}$  (51:14).

$\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע}$   
 $\text{וַיִּשְׁתַּבֵּחַ}$   
 $\text{וַיִּשְׁתַּבֵּחַ}$   
 $\text{וַיִּשְׁתַּבֵּחַ}$

3. Persistence in sin results in the inability to see one's sinfulness (19:12; 40:12).
  4. God must act (102:10, 11; 73:27).
  5. Forgiveness involves a variety of factors (130:3; 60:1; 108:12; 32:5; 65:3; 119:9).
    - a. God is loyal to His covenant (6:5; 25:7).
    - b. Sins must be blotted out (51:1,9) before a man can be reckoned as righteous (32:2).
    - c. Obedient faith is required (130:1,2; 143:1; 32:10; Heb. 11).
    - d. Mercy is sought (6:2).
    - e. Patience is to be practiced (130:5, 6; 37:7).
    - f. The sacrificial system and the heart both had roles to play (19:7; 40:6; 51:16; 51:19).
    - g. Forgiveness brought joy (51:12).
    - h. Exaltation (130).
    - i. Assurance (125:1; 23:6; 103:3, 12).
    - j. A desire to help others (32:8-11; 51:13).
    - k. Giving highest regard to spiritual things (16:11; 73:24).
- C. Messianic Psalm (Cf. I Sam. 10:1; 16:13).
1. Royalty 2, 8, 45, 72, 89, 110.
  2. Priesthood 16, 22, 110, 69, 102, 109.
  3. Prophet 22.
  4. A priest-king (110, cf. Zech. 6:9-13; Isa. 61:1; 49:7; 53:12). *ISA 6:13*
  5. Jesus said the Psalms spoke of Him (Lk. 24:44).
    - a. The New Testament draws Messianic material from 15 Psalms.
    - b. However, they seemed to be tied to a larger group associated to three categories:
      - 1) Those Psalms applying to David that relate to similar New Testament ideas (18:43, cf. Eph. 2:11-12; 24:7; 21:4; 61:7, cf. Heb. 7:2).
      - 2) Similar to Old Testament passages noted in the New Testament (34:20 cf. Ex. 12:46; 97:7, cf. Deut. 32:43).
      - 3) Psalms of universal application (31:5/Lk. 23:46; 42:5, 11/Matt. 26:38; 44:22/Rom. 8:36; 38:11 and 88:8/Lk. 23:49; 116:10/II Cor. 4:13; 41:9/Jn. 13:18; 69:4, 21/Jn. 15:25; 19:28-30 and 78:2/Matt. 13:35). The phrase "that it might be fulfilled" can be understood simply as meaning "to illustrate further" cf. Jas. 2:23.
  6. The Suffering Servant (69:22, 35, 40, 41, 109, 118; 69:4, 9, 21; 41:9; 35:19; 118:22; 22:7-8, 18; 109:8; 22:1; 31:5).
- D. Psalms of Worship (26, 73, 84, 100, 116, 122)
- E. Psalms of Suffering (37, 42-43, 49, 77, 90, 109, 137).
- F. Psalms of Assurance (3, 4, 11, 16, 20, 23, 27, 31, 36, 46, 52, 57, 61-63, 85, 91, 108, 121, 125, 126).
- G. Psalms of Praise (87, 103, 107, 114, 139, 150).



H. Complaints mixed with praise (9, 18, 30, 33, 34, 47, 48, 65-68, 79, 81, 92, 93, 95-99, 105, 106, 111, 113, 115, 117, 118, 124, 134-136, 138, 145, 146-150).

#### I. Liturgical Psalms

A. The sacrificial system is often mentioned in the Psalms (50:59; 51:16, 17; 4:5; 40:9; 141:2; 69:30, 31; 51:19; 50:12-13; 79:9; Heb. 10:4, 12; Ps. 15:1, 2; 24:3, 4).

B. Various aspects of the temple worship can be seen in the Psalms (100, 24).

1. Morning worship (3, 5, 93).
2. Evening worship (4, 141).
3. Night worship (4, 141).
4. Sabbath (92).
5. Responses from the people (I Chron. 16:36; Ps. 146-150; 136)
6. Feasts (42:4; 84:12; 68:25, cf. Lev. 23:14-17).
7. Sacrifices (66:13; 96:8; 50:14; 43:4; 51:7 with Lev. 14:4; 29:2; 96:9; 141:2).

J. National Psalms (46, 137).

K. Concerning the Word (19:7-14; 119).

L. Pilgrim Psalms (120-134).

M. Alphabetic (25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145).

N. Elohist (42-83).

O. Yahvistic (1-41; 84-150).

P. God's Reign (47, 93, 96-99).

#### Q. Theological Psalms

1. Historical summations (78, 105-106, 136).
2. Holy living (1, 119).
3. Creation (8, 19, 104).
4. Judgment (37, 49, 73).
5. God's care (103).
6. God's sovereignty (2, 110).

### VII. The Authors of the Psalms

A. 73 have the note, "belonging to David."

1. This can mean "to" or "from" David.
2. That they were written by David is evident from the title of Ps. 18 and from various Bible citations (Acts 2:29; II Sam. 23:1-7; Am. 6:5; II Sam. 1:17-27).

3. David was well qualified to write poetry (I Sam. 16:16-18; Amos 6:5; II Sam. 1:19-27; 3:33-34; 22; 6:5, 16; I Chron. 15, 16, 25; II Chron. 7:6; 29:30; II Sam. 23:1-2; Mk. 12:36; Acts 1:16; 2:30-31; 4:25; Rom. 11:9; Matt. 22:44; Lk. 20:42).
- B. 72, 127 to Solomon.
- C. 42-49, 84-85, 87-88 are from the Sons of Korah (I Chron. 9:17ff, cf. Ps. 84:10; I Chron. 6:31, 33, 39, 44).
- D. 50, 73-83 are from Asaph (I Chron. 16:5; II Chron. 29:30).
- E. 89 goes with Ethan the Ezrahite, who was probably identical with Jeduthun who wrote 39, 62, 77 (I Chron. 15:19; II Chron. 5:12).
- F. Moses wrote 90 that echoes early sections of Genesis and relates to Deut. 32 and 33.

#### Conclusion

1. The Book of Psalms is the heartfelt theology of Israel as given by God.
2. From the common affairs of life to the hope of an afterlife (Ps. 16-17; 49, 73), this great book relates man to his God with a moving message of truth.

## PSALMS

### Some Introductory Thoughts

#### A. Title

1. Hebrew title for the book of Psalms is Tehillim meaning "praises".
2. The Greek title derived from the verb psallo.

#### B. Inspiration

1. "The Holy Spirit spake by the mouth of David" (Acts 1:16)
2. Jesus endorsed the book of Psalms (Luke 24:44)
3. Jesus said David wrote "in the Spirit" (Matt. 22:43)

#### C. Impact of the Psalms

1. Of all the books of the Old Testament books, no book has meant more to Christian people than the Psalms. "The popularity of the Psalms rests in the fact that they reflect the common experiences of the human race."
  - a. In the early church, some writers say, morning and evening worship commenced with a psalm.
  - b. "Tertullian, in the second century, tells us that the Christians of his day were wont to sing many Psalms in their Agapae."
  - c. Jerome says that "the Psalms were continually to be heard in the fields and vineyards of Palestine."
  - d. The Psalms are printed in many editions of the New Testament because love for them has been so great.
  - e. Adam Clarke wrote: "I know nothing like the book of Psalms: it contains all the lengths, breadths, depths and heights of the patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations. It is the most useful book in the Bible, and is every way worthy of the wisdom of God."
  - f. John Calvin wrote: "I may truly call this book an anatomy of all parts of the soul, for no one can feel a movement of the Spirit which is not reflected in this mirror. All the sorrows, troubles, fears, doubts, hopes, pains, perplexities, stormy outbreaks by which the hearts of men are tossed, have been depicted here to the very life."
2. The key word of the Psalms is "worship" and the key text might well be Psalms 29:2.
3. The underlying theme is "the attitude of man in the presence of God."
  - a. God is here seen supreme and man in submission to Him.
  - b. An examination of the Psalms will "reveal a certain conception of God, and an attitude of the soul in worship resulting from such conception."

#### D. Divisions and Authors

1. The five-fold division of Psalms is as follows: (American Standard and Revised Standard note these divisions)
  - a. Book I - Psalms 1 - 41:13. Worship of Jehovah as the becoming one who is helper.
  - b. Book II - Psalms 42L; - 72:19. Worship of Jehovah as the wonder-working God.
  - c. Book III - Psalms 73:1 - 89:52. Worship of Jehovah ceaseless.
  - d. Book IV - Psalms 90:1 - 106:48. Worship of Jehovah rendered.
  - e. Book V - Psalms 107:1 - 150:6. Worship of Jehovah consummated.



2. The Psalms is the only book divided by the Holy Spirit into chapters. cf. Acts 13:33.

3. Bro Hugo McCord lists the following authors of Psalms:

a. Book	David	?	Korah's sons	Asoph	Solomon	Ethan	Heman	Moses
I	37	4						
II	18	4	7	1	1			
III	1		3	11		1	1	
IV	2	14						1
V	15	28			1			
150	73	50	10	12	2	1	1	1

b. The septuagint makes David the author of 88 Psalms and the Vulgate makes him author of 89.

#### E. The approximate time of writing

1. Unknown: 1, 4, 8, 19, 81, 91, 110, 139, 145
2. 1060 B.C., when David was persecuted by Saul: 11, 31, 34, 56, 16, 54, 52, 109, 17, 22, 35, 57, 58, 113, 140, 141, 7.
3. 1050 B.C., when David began to reign after Saul's death: 2, 9, 24, 68, 101, 29, 20, 21, 38, 39, 40, 6, 32, 33.
4. 1030 B.C., during Absalom's rebellion: 3, 4, 55, 62, 70, 71, 143, 144.
5. 587 B.C., before Babylonian captivity: 18, 30, 72, 45, 78, 82, 83, 76, 74, 79.
6. 587 - 536 B.C., during captivity: 10, 12, 13, 14, 53, 15, 25, 26, 27, 27, 36, 37, 42, 43, 44, 49, 50, 60, 64, 69, 73, 75, 77, 80, 84, 86, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 95, 109, 120, 121, 130, 131, 132.
7. 536 B.C., post-exilic: 122, 61, 63, 124, 23, 87, 85, 86, 47, 48, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, 117, 126, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 148, 149, 150, 146, 147, 59, 65, 66, 67, 118, 125, 127, 128, 129, 138.

#### F. The Nature of the Psalms and Different Types

1. Some have distinct parallelism (the two lines or groups of words mean the same thing although stated differently.) An example would be Psa. 3: 1,2,3,4.
  - a. Some times they are synonyms: 46:7,11.
  - b. Some times they are antithetic: 20:8.
2. Some times there is a tristich - three lines: 3:7; 4:1; 1:1.
3. Some times there is tetrastich - four lines: 1:3.
4. "Ten Hebrew words (eight in English: testimony, way, word, judgment, precept, commandment, law, statue) describing the Torah (Moses' Law) appear at least once in 174 verses, in Psa. 119 (not in 90, 122), and two of them appear in seven verses (15, 16, 43, 48, 160, 168, 172); thus in 176 verses (of Psa. 119) these ten words appear 181 times." (Hugo McCord)

## II. Some Timeless Lessons From the Psalms

- A. Look at the heart touching logic in Psalms 19.
- B. Reason for believing in God over against atheism in Psalms 14.
- C. Psalm 90 dares go back to creation and allow us mortal creatures to peer into God's eternity before time started.
- D. "The Crown of all the Psalms" (Eben Ezra), Psalm 139 shows man's inability to understand deity and we are awed at the description of some of God's qualities-- omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence.
- E. Psalms 104 is sometimes called the description of "the Lord of the Seven Wonders":
1. The sky, vs. 2-4
  2. The earth, vs. 5-9
  3. The water, vs. 10-13
  4. Vegetation, vs. 14-18
  5. The moon and the sun, vs. 19-23
  6. The sea, vs. 24-26
  7. The gift of life, vs. 27-30
- F. The essence of worship is described in the Psalms. 103:1; 95:6
- G. Soul-searching prayer is magnified. 139:23, 24
- H. The Psalms displaying object humbleness, full confession of sin, no alibis and excuses offered with a broken and crushed heart, are forever memorable and refreshing. 32, 51, 130.
- I. Psalm 65 is sometimes styled "the Harvest Hymn"
- J. Psalms 100 emphasizes praise to God.
- K. Psalms 23 is probably the most familiar of all Psalms. It emphasizes at least 15 major themes:
1. Of faith - "The Lord is my shepherd"
  2. Of assurance - "I shall not want"
  3. Of contentment - "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures"
  4. Of peace - "He leadeth me beside the still waters"
  5. Of life - "He restoreth my soul"
  6. Of leadership - "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake"
  7. Of confidence - "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death"
  8. Of courage - "I will fear no evil"
  9. Of companionship - "for thou art with me"
  10. Of comfort - "thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"
  11. Of providence - "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies"
  12. Of favor - "Thou anointest my head with oil"
  13. Of joy - "my cup runneth over"
  14. Of blessings to follow - "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life"
  15. Of immortality - "and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever"

*Psa. 78 good example of unbelief & believ*

## DISCUSSION

### I. The Use of the Psalms In The New Testament

<u>A. Matthew</u>	<u>Psalms</u>	<u>I Corinthians</u>	<u>Psalms</u>
4:6	91:11,12	3:20	94:11
13:35	78:2	15:27	8:6
21:9	118:25,26		
21:16	8:2	<u>II Corinthians</u>	
21:42	118:22	4:17	116:10
22:44	110:1	9:9	112:9
27:46	22:1		
		<u>Ephesians</u>	
<u>Mark</u>		4:8	68:18
12:10	118:22	4:26	4:4
12:36	110:1		
		<u>Hebrews</u>	
<u>Luke</u>		1:5	2:7
4:10	91:11,12	1:6	97:7 (?)
20:42	110:1	1:7	104:4
		1:8	45:6
<u>John</u>		1:10	102:25
2:17	69:9	1:13	110:1
6:31	78:24; 105:40	2:6	8:4
10:34	82:6	2:12	22:22
13:18	41:9	3:7	95:7
15:25	35:19; 64:4	3:15	95:7
17:12	41:9(?)	4:5	95:11
19:24	22:18	4:7	95:7
19:28	69:21	5:5	2:7
19:36	34:20	5:6	110:4
		7:17	110:4
<u>Acts</u>		7:21	110:4
1:20	69:25	10:5	40:6
1:20	109:8	13:6	118:6
2:25 f	16:8 f		
2:34	110:1	<u>I Peter</u>	
2:30	132:11	2:7	118:22
4:11	118:22	3:10	34:12 f
4:25	2:1,2		
13:22	89:20(?)		
13:35	16:10		
<u>Romans</u>			
3:4	51:4		
3:10	14:1; 53:1		
3:13	5:9		
3:13	140:3		
3:14	10:7		
3:18	36:1		
4:7	32:1		
8:31	44:22		
10:18	19:4		
11:9	69:22		
15:3	69:9		
15:9	18:49		
15:11	117:1		



III. Passages in the Psalms Specifically Declared By the New Testament to Refer to Christ

- A. Jesus declared that all that was written in the Psalms about Him must be fulfilled. Luke 24:44
- B. "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Psalms 2:7; Acts 13:33
- C. "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:27
- D. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?..." Psalms 22:1; Matt. 27:43
- E. "...they pierced my hands and my feet." Psalms 22:16; Matthew 20:25
- F. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." Psalms 22:18; John 19:24
- G. "...Lo, I come...to do thy will, O my God..." Psalms 40:7,8; Hebrews 10:7
- H. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Psalms 41:9; John 13:18
- I. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever..." Psalms 45:6; Hebrews 1:8
- J. "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;..." Psalms 69:9; John 2:17
- K. "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" Psalms 69:21; Matthew 27:34,38
- L. "Let his days be few; and let another take his office." Psalms 109:8; Acts 1:20
- M. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Psalms 110:1; Matthew 22:44
- N. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Psalms 110:4; Hebrews 7:17
- O. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." Psalms 118:22; Matthew 21:42
- P. Christ knew that all written in the Psalms about him would come to pass. Luke 24:44
- Q. Little is known of Jesus in the New Testament that was not first spoken by a psalmist.
1. His character - 45:4
  2. His truth - John 8:32; 14:6; 17:17; 18:37
  3. His meekness - Matt. 11:28-30; John 13:12 f
  4. His righteousness - Matt. 3:15; Psa. 119:172
  5. His preaching - 78:2; Matt. 13:35
  6. His zeal - 69:9; John 2:17
  7. His being praised - 8:2; Matt. 21:16
  8. His being a rejected stone - 118:22; Matt. 21:42
  9. His being David's son - 132:11; Matt. 22:42; Acts 2:29,30
  10. His being David's lord - 110:1; Matt. 22:43f
  11. His being God - 45:7; Heb. 1:8,9
  12. His trials - 22:2; Acts 4:25-27

13. His crucifixion:
  - a. Parted garments - 22:18; John 19:23,24
  - b. Vinegar - 69:21; John 19:28-30
  - c. Shoot out the lip - 22:7; Matt. 26:39f
  - d. "My God, my God" - 22:1; 27:46
  - e. "Into thy hands" - 31:5; Luke 23:46
  - f. "Not one of them is broken" - 34:20; John 19:36
14. His resurrection - 16:10; 118:22-24
15. His ascension - 24:6-10; 68:18; Acts 1:9
16. His coronation - 45:6,7; Heb. 1:8; Psa. 89:34-37; 110:1-5

IV. Some Misuses of the Psalms (some thoughts from Bro. Hugo McCord)

A. By the Jews:

1. An ancient scribe used Psa. 3 in a medical prescription. "Whosoever is subject to a severe headache and backache, let him pray this psalm...over a small quantity of olive oil; anoint the head and back while in the act of prayer; this will afford immediate relief."
2. A copy of Psalm 9, written on pure parchment with a new pen, hung about the neck of a sick boy, would heal him.

B. By the Roman Catholics:

1. "The seven psalms usually styled 'penitential' were believed by Roman Catholics of the Middle Ages to refer to the seven mortal sins."
2. A recitation of each of these psalms would be a preventive against committing them: Psa. 6 (anger); Psa. 32 (pride); Psa. 38 (gluttony); Psa. 51 (luxury); Psa. 102 (covetousness); Psa. 130 (envy); Psa. 143 (sloth).

C. By those who use instrumental music. Because some psalms mention instrumental music, then some argue they are alright today. Psalms were part of the law done away. Col. 2:14-16

D. By advocates of inherited sin. Psa. 51:5; 58:3

E. By Satan. Psa. 91:11,12; Matt. 4:7

F. By well-meaning brethren. Psa. 111:9 used to condemn use of "reverend" to man.

1. The word no translated "reverend" occurs hundreds of times - 378 times verbally
2. It is used of Samuel in I Sam. 12:18 ("feared")
3. It describes anyone worthy of respect.
4. Matt. 23:7-9 condemns wearing of titles.

# ANALYSIS OF THE PSALMS

(It is believed that the original collection of the Psalms was arranged in five books, as shown in the analysis.)

## Book I, Psalms 1-41

- \*\*\*Psalms 1. Theme, God's law, two ways of life contrasted.
- \*Psalms 2. A king's psalm. King exhorted to trust the Lord.
- \*Psalms 3. A lament over enemies; Jehovah's salvation. A morning psalm.
- \*\*\*Psalms 4. A song of trust; an evening psalm.
- \*Psalms 5. An individual lament because of personal enemies; another morning psalm.
- Psalms 6. A complaint in sickness, penitence and cry for deliverance.
- Psalms 7. A psalm of vengeance, a lament over enemies.
- \*\*\*Psalms 8. A nature psalm, God's glory is magnified in nature and man.
- \*Psalms 9. A lament over enemies. God praised for His righteous rule.
- Psalms 10. A lament over enemies. Originally a part of Psalms 9.
- \*\*\*Psalms 11. A song of trust; faith's answer to fear.
- Psalms 12. A national lament.
- Psalms 13. A personal lament over an enemy; ends with a note of triumph.
- \*Psalms 14. A lament over the general corruption of mankind showing safety of godliness and peril of ungodliness. Same as Psalms 53.
- \*\*\*Psalms 15. A "responsive psalm" describing one who dwells in the Lord's tabernacle.
- \*\*\*Psalms 16. A psalm of trust, a song of satisfaction.
- \*\*Psalms 17. A lament because of ungodly enemies.
- \*\*Psalms 18. A king's song of thanksgiving; Jehovah is worshipped.
- \*\*\*Psalms 19. Jehovah revealed in nature (1-6) and law (7-11) followed by a prayer (12-14).
- Psalms 20. A war psalm; a king's prayer in the temple before battle.
- Psalms 21. Another king's psalm; a thanksgiving for victory.
- Psalms 22. Called "Passion Psalm" containing Messianic prophecies, picturing the suffering and triumph of Christ.
- \*\*\*Psalms 23. The Shepherd psalm, a song of trust.
- \*\*\*Psalms 24. A hymn of praise to the king of glory.
- \*\*\*Psalms 25. A sorrowful lament, a plea for deliverance.
- \*\*\*Psalms 26. A lament of one falsely accused and fearful of death.
- \*Psalms 27. Jehovah is worshipped, an outpouring of appreciation.
- \*Psalms 28. The cry of one in danger, surrounded by enemies.
- \*\*Psalms 29. A nature psalm; a storm viewed by one conscious of God.
- \*Psalms 30. A psalm of thanksgiving after God's deliverance from affliction.
- \*Psalms 31. A lament over enemies; trust struggling through tears to triumph.
- \*Psalms 32. Psalm of penitence, a song of thanksgiving because of forgiveness of sins.
- \*\*Psalms 33. A triumphant song of gladness and praise.
- \*\*\*Psalms 34. A song of personal praise and exhortation for others to praise.
- Psalms 35. A passionate plea for safety from enemies.
- \*\*Psalms 36. Pictures the misery of the wicked (1-4) and the mercy of God (5-10).
- \*\*\*Psalms 37. A wisdom psalm; "fret not" is the keynote. More philosophical than most others. The underlying problem is the prosperity of the wicked.
- Psalms 38. A Psalm of penitence. A lament over illness.
- Psalms 39. Another Psalm of sorrow and affliction.

\* Some verses are outstanding. \*\* Portions are good for devotional reading.

\*\*\* Entire Psalm excellent for devotional reading.



- \*\*Psalms 40. Jehovah is worshipped in praise (1-10) and prayer (11-17).
- \*Psalms 41. A song of thanksgiving. A Beatitude of Benevolence.

Book II, Psalms 42-72

- Psalms 42. A song of exile among enemies.
- Psalms 43. God leading the exiled home. Thought to have been originally a part of Psalms 42.
- Psalms 44. A national lament and prayer for deliverance.
- Psalms 45. A king's psalm, based on royal wedding. The only marriage song of the psalms; Messianic.
- \*\*\*Psalms 46. A Zion hymn and a great song of confidence.
- Psalms 47. Song of the sovereignty of God.
- Psalms 48. Hymn of pilgrimage to Zion, in which God is seen reigning over His own.
- Psalms 49. A wisdom psalm showing the vanity of trusting in riches.
- \*Psalms 50. A prophetic psalm, urging worship in sincerity.
- \*\*Psalms 51. One of the greatest psalms of penitence.
- Psalms 52. A lament over ungodly enemies.
- Psalms 53. A lament over corruption. Same as Psalms 14.
- Psalms 54. A lament over enemies.
- Psalms 55. A lament over an enemy (former friend).
- \*Psalms 56. Another lament over enemies, ending in praise.
- \*Psalms 57. A lament over enemies, showing the triumph of trust over fear.
- Psalms 58. A national lament showing the judgment of God over the wicked.
- Psalms 59. Another cry against enemies.
- Psalms 60. A national prayer for deliverance. God is the Hope of His people.
- \*\*Psalms 61. A king's psalm of confidence.
- \*Psalms 62. A psalm of trust, showing God as man's only hope.
- \*\*\*Psalms 63. A king's thirst for God.
- Psalms 64. A lament over enemies. Similar to Psalms 55 and 59.
- \*\*Psalms 65. A harvest hymn of praise.
- \*\*\*Psalms 66. A beautiful song of worship and thanksgiving.
- \*\*\*Psalms 67. A song of thanksgiving for the harvest, showing God the Governor of the nations. A fine combination of prayer and praise.
- \*Psalms 68. A congregational song praising God as the strength of His people.
- Psalms 69. A lament over enemies; a plea for God to strengthen the sorrowful.
- Psalms 70. A lament over enemies and cry for deliverance.
- Psalms 71. A lament over enemies; a song of the aged. Begins in prayer, ends in praise.
- Psalms 72. A king's psalm, ascribed to Solomon.

Book III, Psalms 73-89

- Psalms 73. A wisdom psalm shows God our only god. Deals with the problem of the prosperity of the wicked.
- Psalms 74. A national lament, a complaint of faith.
- Psalms 75. A prophetic psalm; God speaking and active.
- Psalms 76. A Zion hymn, praising God as the God of Victory.
- Psalms 77. An individual lament in sorrow; finds comfort in what God has done for Israel.
- Psalms 78. An historical psalm showing God's power and patience in leading Israel.
- Psalms 79. A cry of distress, a national lament over the destruction of Jerusalem.

- Psalms 80. Another national lament or cry of distress.  
 Psalms 81. A psalm for the Feast of the Trumpets. God is the strength of the loyal.  
 Psalms 82. A cry for justice recognizing God as the Judge of all.  
 Psalms 83. A national imprecatory lament. A prayer that the enemies may be overthrown for the glory of God.  
 \*\*\*Psalms 84. A hymn of praise, a pilgrim psalm.  
 Psalms 85. A prayer to God the Restorer of the wanderer.  
 \*Psalms 86. The prayer of the afflicted soul to the Lord who is mighty helper of the needy.  
 Psalms 87. A Zion hymn, exalting the city of God.  
 Psalms 88. A song of sorrow and sadness by a solitary soul in fear of death.  
 Psalms 89. A king's psalm to the God of discipline.

#### Book IV, Psalms 90-106

- \*\*\*Psalms 90. A prayer of Moses to Jehovah, the Refuge of man.  
 \*Psalms 91. A song of safety to those who trust in Jehovah.  
 \*Psalms 92. A song of praise and thanksgiving.  
 \*\*Psalms 93. A majestic hymn of enthronement.  
 \*\*Psalms 94. A national lament, complaining of the tyranny of the wicked, a prayer.  
 \*\*Psalms 95. An exhortation to worship declaring God's supremacy and uttering a note of warning.  
 \*\*Psalms 96. A hymn of "enthronement", worship the King.  
 \*\*Psalms 97. A hymn of "enthronement", the King's Judgments.  
 \*Psalms 98. A hymn of "enthronement", worship the King.  
 Psalms 99. A hymn of "enthronement", the King's Reign.  
 \*\*\*Psalms 100. One of the richest psalms of praise.  
 \*Psalms 101. A king's psalm recognizing God in private and public life.  
 \*Psalms 102. A prayer of the afflicted. Faith triumphing over affliction.  
 \*\*\*Psalms 103. A psalm of praise and thanksgiving for God's mercy.  
 \*\*Psalms 104. A nature psalm, praising God as Creator and Sustainer. A song of loyalty to Royalty, stressing majesty of Jehovah.  
 Psalms 105. An historical psalm, covering period from Abraham to inheritance of Canaan.  
 Psalms 106. History continued, probably in Captivity, showing rebellion, rejection and repentance of the people.

#### Book V, Psalms 107-150

- \*\*Psalms 107. A psalm of praise, telling the story of redemption.  
 Psalms 108. A national lament, presents God as man's refuge and hope. This psalm is a combination of portions of two other psalms. Psalms 57:7-11 and Psalms 60:6-12.  
 Psalms 109. A psalm of vengeance, a sob song, which ends with a note of praise.  
 \*Psalms 110. A king's psalm, purely Messianic.  
 \*\*\*Psalms 111. A psalm of praise and thanksgiving; Jehovah the Great and Gracious.  
 \*\*Psalms 112. A wisdom psalm, close connected with Psalms 111. He who "feareth the Lord" is described and his security is assured. (Psalms 113-118 constitute the "Hallel" hymns of praise sung at Passover, Pentecost and Feast of Tabernacles. Probably sung by Jesus and His disciples on the night of his betrayal.)

- \*\*Psalms 113. A congregational hymn of praise. Jehovah is both high and lowly.
- Psalms 114. An historical psalm showing power of God.
- \*Psalm 115. A plea for glory to God's name, showing vanity of idols (vvs. 2-8) and an exhortation to trust God. (vvs. 9-18).
- \*\*Psalms 116. A personal song of thanksgiving containing a note of triumph over death, praising God, the Deliverer.
- \*\*\*Psalms 117. A congregational hymn of praise. The shortest and also the middle chapter of the Bible.
- \*\*Psalms 118. An exhortation to praise God for His mercy; a victory song, the sixth and last of "Hallel".
- \*\*Psalms 119. A hymn praising the Word of God. Every verse but three mentions the Word. This is the longest chapter in the Bible and an alphabet acrostic.  
(Psalms 120-134 called songs of "degrees" or "ascents" may have been sung by pilgrims on way to annual feasts in Jerusalem.)
- Psalms 120. An individual lament; Jehovah the Hope of the pilgrim.
- \*\*\*Psalms 121. A plea for Divine help; Jehovah the Help of the pilgrim.
- \*\*Psalms 122. A Zion hymn; Jehovah the Glory of the pilgrim.
- \*\*\*Psalms 123. A prayer for mercy; Jehovah giveth mercy to the pilgrim.
- Psalms 124. A song of national thanksgiving; Jehovah the Deliverer of the pilgrim.
- \*Psalms 125. A Prayer contrasting the righteous and the wicked; Jehovah the Protector of the pilgrim.
- \*\*Psalms 126. A national prayer; Jehovah the Restorer of the pilgrim.
- \*Psalms 127. A psalm of practical wisdom; Jehovah the Home-maker of the pilgrim.
- Psalms 128. "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord"; Jehovah the Home-keeper of the pilgrim.
- Psalms 129. A national lament; Jehovah the Confidence of the pilgrim.
- \*\*\*Psalms 130. A penitential lament; Jehovah the Redeemer of the pilgrim.
- \*\*\*Psalms 131. A psalm of trust; Jehovah the Satisfaction of the pilgrim.
- Psalms 132. A king's psalm, Jehovah the Assurance of the pilgrim.
- \*\*\*Psalms 133. A wisdom psalm, Jehovah unites the pilgrims.
- \*\*\*Psalms 134. An exhortation to bless the Lord; Jehovah blesses the pilgrim. Last of songs of "Degrees".
- \*Psalms 135. A congregational hymn of praise, giving reasons for praising the Lord.
- Psalms 136. Another congregational hymn of praise. Each verse contains the refrain, "for his mercy endureth forever".
- Psalms 137. A national lament composed during Babylonian captivity.
- \*\*Psalms 138. An individual song of praise.
- \*\*\*Psalms 139. One of the richest psalms of praise; Jehovah omniscient and omnipresent.  
  
(Psalms 140-143 present the cries and pleas of one in need.)
- Psalms 140. A prayer for deliverance from enemies; Jehovah the Defender of the Defenseless.
- \*\*Psalms 141. A prayer of David; Jehovah the Keeper of the trembling.
- \*Psalms 142. A prayer of David in trouble; Jehovah the Refuge of the overwhelmed.
- \*Psalms 143. A prayer of David for guidance; Jehovah the Confidence of the desolate.
- \*Psalms 144. A king's psalm, a song of triumphant assurance.
- \*\*\*Psalms 145. David's psalm of praise, similar to Psalms 103.



(Psalms 146-150, Psalms of adoration, each one beginning with, "Praise ye the Lord.").

- \*\*\*Psalms 146. An individual thanksgiving; Jehovah praised as the Helper of His people.
- \*\*Psalms 147. A national hymn; Jehovah praised as the Governor of His people.
- \*\*\*Psalms 148. A congregational hymn; Jehovah praised by the whole creation.
- \*Psalms 149. A New Year song of praise, used on enthronement of the king; Jehovah praised by His saints.
- Psalms 150. A national thanksgiving; the final doxology.

Here are the titles we have given to each chapter.

- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Progressive Nature of Sin        | 28. Man's Cry and God's Response |
| 2. God's Son in Judgment            | 29. The Beauty of Holiness       |
| 3. I Will Not Be Afraid             | 30. Remember His Holiness        |
| 4. Hear Me When I Call              | 31. Be of Good Courage           |
| 5. Look Up                          | 32. A Covering For Sin           |
| 6. The Lord Will Hear Me            | 33. He Spake and it was Done     |
| 7. Judgment and Righteousness       | 34. Pursuing Peace               |
| 8. What Is Man?                     | 35. Who is like unto Thee?       |
| 9. Wholeheartedness                 | 36. The Fountain of Life         |
| 10. God's View of Things            | 37. The Great Provider           |
| 11. Destroying the Foundations      | 38. "Be In A Hurry, Lord"        |
| 12. The Power of Words              | 39. Sin Not With The Tongue      |
| 13. Sing Unto The Lord              | 40. The Lord Be Magnified        |
| 14. He Knows                        | 41. Heal My Soul                 |
| 15. The Holy Hill                   | 42. The Longing Heart            |
| 16. I Shall Not Be Moved            | 43. Plead My Cause               |
| 17. I Shall Be Satisfied            | 44. Redemption                   |
| 18. The Lord is my Fortress         | 45. The Oil of Gladness          |
| 19. More Precious Than Gold         | 46. God Is Our Refuge            |
| 20. The Lord Will Answer            | 47. Voice of Triumph             |
| 21. The Lord Exalted Above His Foes | 48. All Glory Is Thine           |
| 22. The Cross                       | 49. The Way of Folly             |
| 23. The Shepherd                    | 50. God's Sovereignty            |
| 24. The King of Glory               | 51. A Man After God's Own Heart  |
| 25. The Secret of the Lord          | 52. Make God Your Strength       |
| 26. Walk In Integrity               | 53. Does God Despise You?        |
| 27. The Strength of My Life         | 54. He Is My Helper              |

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 55. Burdened By Fears            | 84. The Rich Doorkeeper             |
| 56. The Land of the Living       | 85. A Divine Romance                |
| 57. In the Shadow of Thy Wings   | 86. Our Gracious Lord               |
| 58. The Judge of all the Earth   | 87. A Holy Foundation               |
| 59. God Is My Defense            | 88. Rebellion                       |
| 60. The Banner of Truth          | 89. How Short Our Time!             |
| 61. A Rich Heritage              | 90. The Days of Our Years           |
| 62. Pour Out Your Heart          | 91. He Shall Hear Me                |
| 63. My Lips Shall Praise Thee    | 92. Grow Old With God               |
| 64. Deliver Me From Secret Foes  | 93. The Lord Reigneth               |
| 65. He Does All Things Well!     | 94. My Rock and Refuge              |
| 66. Ruling By His Power Forever  | 95. The Sheep of His Hand           |
| 67. Salvation For All            | 96. The Glory Due His Name          |
| 68. Leading Captivity Captive    | 97. Thanks Be To God                |
| 69. The Zeal of the Lord's House | 98. Make a Joyful Noise             |
| 70. Let God Be Magnified         | 99. Exalt Him!                      |
| 71. My Hope and Trust            | 100. Enter His Courts With Praise   |
| 72. The Ideal King               | 101. I'll Walk With God             |
| 73. In God's Sanctuary           | 102. This Fleeting Life             |
| 74. The Power of Evil            | 103. Bless The Lord                 |
| 75. God's Grace                  | 104. Sweet Meditation               |
| 76. Who Can Withstand His Anger? | 105. The Providence of God          |
| 77. Consider the Days of Old     | 106. A Lean Soul                    |
| 78. God's Hand In History        | 107. God Satisfies Our Need         |
| 79. O God of our Salvation       | 108. Vain is the Help of Man        |
| 80. Deliver Us In Our Affliction | 109. Deliver Thou Me!               |
| 81. The Great Protector          | 110. Victorious King                |
| 82. The Mighty Also Fall         | 111. Where Wisdom Begins            |
| 83. Vindicate Thy Cause          | 112. Light In the Midst of Darkness |



- |                                      |                               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 113. Now and Forever Praise Him      | 133. The Pleasant Way         |
| 114. Tremble In His Presence         | 134. Bless The Lord           |
| 115. The Lord Has Been Mindful of Us | 135. Dumb Idols               |
| 116. Falling In Love With God        | 136. Give Thanks              |
| 117. O Praise The Lord!              | 137. In A Strange Land        |
| 118. Jesus Loves Me                  | 138. Praise Him               |
| 119. The Holy Scriptures             | 139. Search Me, O God         |
| 120. The Cry of Distress             | 140. Maintain Thy People      |
| 121. The Hills of Home               | 141. Guard My Lips            |
| 122. Service and Prosperity          | 142. No Man Cares For My Soul |
| 123. Our Souls Are Sad               | 143. I Flee Unto Thee         |
| 124. The Lord Is On Our Side         | 144. The Passing Shadow       |
| 125. Abide With me                   | 145. Our God Is Great         |
| 126. Sowing and Reaping              | 146. Trust In The Lord        |
| 127. The Master Builder              | 147. The Great Healer         |
| 128. Walk In His Ways                | 148. Hallelujah               |
| 129. The Poverty of Sin              | 149. Praise and Duty          |
| 130. Out of the Depths               | 150. His Excellent Work       |
| 131. Walk Humbly With God            |                               |
| 132. The Horn of David               |                               |

As the wild animal pants for the water brook, so should our souls long for the refreshing word of God (Psalms 42:1). May we treasure His teachings in our hearts that we might not sin against Jehovah (119:11).



## PRACTICAL PERCEPTIONS FROM THE PSALMS

## I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. "Psalms" means "praises." "Songbook of the Bible." (O.T. Book)
- B. Practical for Christians (Rom. 15:4; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 5:13). Of 283 O. T. quotes in N. T. 116 from Psalms.
- C. Time does not permit study of the poetry style, authors, dates, etc. of Psalms; but note briefly:
1. Many authors. David probably wrote less than half.
  2. Dated from time of Moses to the exile. (Psalms 90 and 137.)
  3. Poetry not in rhyme, but in parallelism (saying same thing twice or more in different words).
    - a. C. S. Lewis saw providence in this inasmuch as it could be translated into all languages.
    - b. Also use of acrostics and refrains.

## II. DISCUSSION:

- A. In what way are the Psalms practical for us today?

- Basically,*
1. They do not supply our need for information or instruction; but they do provide for our need to express ourselves. *soul needs expression.*
  2. "They show us the human heart laid before God in all its moods and emotions; in penitence, in desire for holiness, in doubt and perplexity, in danger, in desolation, or, again, in deliverance and triumph."
    - a. The Bible tells of man's words to man; of God's words to man; but Psalms, more than any other book, contains man's words to God.
    - b. It shows man's search for and experience with God.
    - c. Private prayer and private praise is no more than the outpouring of the heart to God. On the one hand telling of fears, temptations, foes and on the other hand rejoicing in God's righteousness, justice, and mercy. *some Psalms record how one feels!*
  3. The Psalms express our needs, exalt God, foretell Christ, condemn evil, and rejoice in providence.
  4. *To be read slowly & studied thoughtfully* The Psalms are, therefore, practical in the devotional and emotional life of a Christian. They express what we feel, or at least, should feel within.

- B. Let's take a brief look at the Psalms that are most popular.

1. Psalm 1, "The Preface Psalm."

- a. Like the Sermon on the Mount, begins with a beatitude. (*Frequent in Pauline*)
- b. Verse 2.
  - (1) Many want their religious knowledge and spiritual guidance in neat, concise, pre-digested packages without taking the time to meditate.



(2) Cf. 63:5-6.

"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow  
and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee  
with joyful lips:  
When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate  
on thee in the night watches."

2. Psalm 8. "Man's dignity framed in the glory of God."

a. Like everything, begins and ends with God.  
(Cf. 90:2.)

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever  
thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from  
everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

b. "What is man...?"

(1) "Two thoughts struggle together in his  
mind--the littleness and the greatness  
of man."

(2) "Thou hast made him..."

The creation-evolution controversy is more  
than just a question of what happened long  
ago. It is a question as to the nature and  
dignity of man. Did God make him? Did God  
make him a little lower than the angels?  
(Interesting question for theistic evolution,  
Did angels evolve?) Did God crown him with  
glory and honor?

3. Psalm 19. "The works and the word of God."

a. The sun by day and the stars by night  
speak a message universally understood.

b. But the law answers what nature cannot.

c. Verse 10-11. (Story of man and wife who  
had been irreligious. Convinced to read  
Bible. Both became overwhelmed with con-  
viction. The man said, "Wife, if these  
things are true, we're lost." They read  
further, "Wife, if these things are true,  
we can be saved.")

d. Verse 12-13.

e. Verse 14.

4. Psalm 23. "The Shepherd Psalm."

a. Little girl asked to recite: "The Lord is my  
Shepherd and that's all I want."

b. I shall not want for:

Rest, because "He maketh me to lie down..."

Refreshment, because "He leadeth me beside..."

Forgiveness, because "He restoreth my soul..."

Guidance, because "He leadeth me in the..."

Companionship, because "Yea, though...thou art..."

Comfort, because "Thy rod..."

Sustenance, because "Thou preparest..."

Joy, because "Thou anointest...my cup..."

Anything in this life, because "Surely..."

Anything in the life to come, because "I will dwell..."

- c. Note verse 6 as most optimistic verse in the Bible.
5. Psalm 51. "Psalm of Repentence."
    - a. Verses 1-4.
    - b. Verse 5.
    - c. Verses 10-12.
    - d. Verse 17.
  6. Psalm 90. "Psalm of Human Frailty *Contrasted with Eternity of God*"
    - a. Oldest psalm. Expresses truth for every generation.
    - b. Verses 1-2, 4-5.
    - c. Contrast verses 9-10. (Shakespeare.)
    - d. Verse 12.
  7. Psalm 100. "Psalm of Praise."
  8. Psalm 119. "Acrostic on word of God."
    - a. Divided by 22 letters of Hebrew alphabet, 8 verses in each (total 176), each verse begins with letter of section.
    - b. There are 8 other acrostic Psalms.
  9. Psalm 133. "Psalm of Brotherhood."
  10. Psalm 139. "Omniscience and Omnipresence."
- C. There are practical perceptions for every need. For example:
- Do you want to know the folly of atheism? Read 14:1, "The fool..."
  - Do you need to be reminded of the futility of resisting God? Read 6:4 "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."
  - Do you yearn for fellowship with God? Read 42:1-2 "As the hart..."
  - Are you troubled by the actions of evil people? Read 37:1-2 "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb."
  - Are you afraid? Read 67:1. "The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"
  - Do you need help? Read 21:1-2. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."
  - Do you need to be reminded of your dependence on God? Read 127:1. *Expect..*
  - Do you want to know the mercy of God? Read 136 (26 verses) *the mercy of the Lord endureth forever*
  - Are you looking for safety? Read 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
  - Do you need to feel gratitude? Read 107:21. "O, that men..."

Do you rejoice in salvation? Read 40:2-3.

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay,  
and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath  
put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it;  
and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

Do you feel forsaken? Read 27:10. *"when... take me up."*



Psalm 22 (cf. Heb. 2:12)

1-21 I/me sections: 1-2, 6-8, 11-18; you  
sections: 3-5, 9-10, 19-21. At verse 22  
praise and vision will take over.

vs. 1-2 (Gal. 3:13 *inhabits*)

vs. 3-5 God "enthroned on the praises of Israel"  
gives the inner meaning of Israel's institution  
(cf. Ps. 51:17; TGA. 66:1-2)

The father had trusted in God and found  
deliverance.

vs. 6-8 Jesus felt the pain. Both Jesus and  
David were far from being stoics.

cf. Matt. 27:39, 43 with 22:7-8. Note the  
view of God that He is there for our  
convenience (cf. the temptation)

vs. 9-10 God is no casual acquaintance for  
only occasional help (cf. 139:13-16; Job 10:8-12).

vs. 11-18

The crowd is pictured as bulls, lions, dogs,  
wild open. The strong move in on the weak.

Their reasons include:

1. resentment of those who are openly righteous (8)
2. mob mentality (12, 16a cf. Ex. 23:2)
3. greed for even trivial gain (18)
4. perverted taste (17)
5. sinful attitudes (Jn. 8:44)

vs. 19-21

A last plea for help with an answer

vss. 22-31 The spreading of the joy of deliverance  
vss. 22-26 a festive feast

verses 25-26 picture the keeping of a vow  
by sharing God's gracious gifts (Lev. 7:16; Deut.  
12:17-19), cf. 40:9-10; 116:14; 34:3.

verse 22 is applied to Jesus (Heb. 2:12) cf.  
Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:

vss. 27-31

Universal praise of God because  
of Jesus.

## Psalms 26

- 1-3 An insistence that God examine David for sincerity. There is nothing to hide. cf. I Cor 4:3-5; I Kings 9:4. Compare with 139:23-24.
- Truth in the O.T. usually deals with faithfulness, in verse 3 it is probably God's faithfulness.
- 4-5. This is not arrogance. The classes mentioned could be used as allies or avoided as enemies, David had made a clear choice based on principles. The choice was not a matter of social preference, but spiritual alignment.
- 6-8. Here the rules of temple worship changes from dry precision to vibrant worship. The laver was between altar and tent and was for washing hands and feet. Cf. Isa. 1:15; 33:15; Jer. 2:8.
- A song of thanksgiving accompanied accompanied sacrifices (Leviticus 7:12-14) cf. Ps. 40; 116; 78; 105.
- The past should enrich the present.
- Love, or hate (vs. 5), is a matter of choice.
- The tabernacle was a marvel of God's dwelling with men, how much more Christ! (Jn. 1:14).
- 9-10. David does not want to be cast in the company of sinners.
- 11-12. Whole-heartedness (Deut 6:4-5). Compare "will walk" with vs 1 and "have walked." Not self-righteousness. Redemption etc.



## Psalm 32

- A penitential Psalm (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143)
- 1-2. Removing (forgiven) and concealing (covering) show that it is not a matter still present or unresolved.
- Romans 4:6-8 draws from this verse. Trusting response not self-righteousness is the key. Gen. 15:6 and James 2:21-24 explain the principle. We are as if we never sinned in God's sight if we have an obedience of faith. Christ makes this possible (Rom. 3:21-3-5).
- Denying sin is the most destructive attitude a child of God can have (I Jn. 1:7-9; I Cor. 11:30). The benefits of repentance far outweigh the cost of repentance.
- 6-7. Song "Hide Me, O My Savior Hide Me" Deleware's bump shorts of joy - never regret.
- 8-9. If forgiveness is good, fellowship is better. The gentle touch that follows a heavy hand is needed indeed (Rom. 8:31-39).
- Stubbornness is seen in all its foolishness when forgiveness and fellowship are seen. Willing obedience is a must.
- 10-11. Spiritual well-being cannot be over stated

P S A L M S  
"POUR OUT YOUR HEART"  
BY JOHNNY RAMSEY

One of the fullest verses in the Old Testament is found in Psalms 62:8.

Notice the wonderful three point lesson therein: "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us."

We need to learn these principles anew in our modern society. In fact, members of the Lord's family often act as though we had forgotten that Jehovah is our refuge. Our trust in the Creator will cause us to pour out our hearts unto Him. Emerson once said: "All that I have seen causes me to trust in God for all that I have not seen." This is virtually the thesis of Hebrews, chapter 11. The word trust means "to have confidence in." Notice carefully these random thoughts from Scripture. "Our help is in the name of the Lord.....casting all your care upon Him.....God is our refuge and strength.....so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me.....Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to, the children of men.....I will fear no evil for Thou art with me.....If God be for us, who can be against us.....For His merciful kindness is great toward us and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord." The best summary of this theme concerning which God begat trust in our hearts is found in II Corinthians, chapter one: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation....."

Yes, trust in Him at all times. The saddest scene on earth to me is to see a wife and children bereft of their beloved husband and father. Or, for a virtuous woman to be taken suddenly from the midst of the home by means of death. Or, for a small, precious child to pass from this life thus removing the sunshine from many hearts. I have stood by the casket as loved ones passed by for the final earthly view of their departed ones. I have heard the deepest expressions of

trust in the Lord on these occasions. I have been greatly stirred to see the spiritual stability of mature Christians during such moments of sorrow. The reality of Christianity is never more beautiful than when in the hour of tribulation we exclaim: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" God is a refuge for us! One real tragedy is the strange situation of those who mightily depend on God in the hour of trial and then forsake Him in the day of success, health and strength. Is our Father incapable of receiving our confidence when we have ascended from the valley of tears unto the mountain-peak of happiness? Or is this human defection of forgetting the source of our blessings just another tool of the Devil? Success is the one thing that some people cannot endure. The Deceiver of the whole world (Revelation 12:9) knows it. Let us trust in God at all times.

Closely alligned with these thoughts are the words: Pour Out Your Heart Before Him. The emphasis of the Hebrew language in Psalms 62:8 simply means to commit yourself wholly unto God! The phrase now under discussion includes prayer and spontaneous praise flowing from the created unto the Creator. In James, chapter 5, we read of the natural response of the spiritual life whether in sadness or in joy --- let the Heavenly Father know! He knows, He cares, He blesses. Isn't it thrilling to hear someone just talk with God when his heart is on fire with love for eternal verities? Too much of the time our prayers are simply stilted, formalistic preachments. We desperately need more fervent communion with our Maker in prayer. Yes, in sorrow and sickness, in pain and bereavement, in success, happiness and victory --- Pour out your heart unto God. He is our refuge, our solace, our balm, our strength!

"Then trust in God through all thy days;  
Fear not, for He doth hold thy hand;  
Though dark thy way, still sing and praise;  
Sometime, Sometime, we will understand."



BLESSINGS ABOUND-----  
"IN GOD'S SANCTUARY"  
By Johnny Ramsey

In the seventy-third Psalm we find the writer perplexed over a very common problem -- Why do the wicked prosper? The age old puzzle had almost become an obsession with the Psalmist. In verse seventeen we find him saying: "Until I came into the sanctuary of God, then I understood their end." The inspired penman was simply saying: "I was confused until God's presence pervaded my life. Then the dilemma was solved. I understood more clearly his purposes." Brethren, is it not so, with us, today?

The word sanctuary means literally: "A structure made holy by God's presence." Under the law of Moses both the Tabernacle and the Temple qualified as an earthly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:2; 9:1). But today, as Stephen proclaimed in Acts 7:48, "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Jesus stressed that the place of worship was inconsequential (John 4:23, 24). The Lord doesn't abide in a special place; we make a special place for him in our hearts (I Peter 3:15). Thus, in the gospel age, Jehovah finds sanctuary in the Christian's life and in the church (I Corinthians 3 and 6). As members of the royal priesthood we ought to be found in the presence of God at all times. We should never hide from his holy presence as did Adam and Eve. Nor shall we try to sneak away from it as Saul did at the Witch of Endor's house. It does not strengthen us to warm by the fireside as Peter did or head in the other direction like Jonah when we could wisely place ourselves in the sanctuary of God. Until we yearn for the divine presence and are found therein like Paul, David and Daniel were, we shall wander aimlessly through life (Philippians 3:8-10; Psalms 42:1; 122:1; 119:164; Daniel 6:10). Let us notice three great lessons from the text of Psalms 73:17.

(1) God Is Accessible:

It is a wonderful thing that he who made the world is not very far from each one of us (Acts 17). We can seek the Lord and find him even though

he is as far above us as the heavens are the earth (Isaiah 55:6-9). We don't have to get a prayer card and stand in line like Oral Roberts' followers do. We don't have to wait for an audience with our Father as do the Roman Catholics regarding the "Pope". God is accessible now for each one of his children. We can go directly unto him through Christ Jesus our high priest. One of the most interesting scenes in the Bible is found in I Kings 18 where Elijah taunts the prophets of Baal who were unable to make contact with their pagan god. In Habakkuk, chapter two, the prophet reminds the heathen that his idols of clay, wood and stone just cannot grant a blessing. He then concludes by saying: "But Jehovah is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him." Let us give thanks that it is even so today. God is accessible.

(2) We See Things Differently in the Sanctuary of God:

The Psalmist had a problem. He came into God's sanctuary. He left with a different perspective altogether. Being in the presence of Deity makes a vast difference. In Exodus 32 we see two men --- both servants of Jehovah --- Moses and Aaron. One has the tables of stone containing God's Law; the other has fashioned a golden calf to be used in idolatrous worship. What made the difference in Moses and Aaron? One had been in close communion with God! When our lives are filled with pressing problems and trying circumstances we should avail ourselves of the transforming power of the Lord's presence. Once we have been in a covenant relationship with our Maker and then depart our heart is heavy until restitution has been made. We know, better than anyone else, how difficult it is "to sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Psalms 137:4). In the sanctuary of God our soul is at home and at peace!

(3) Blessings Result From Being In His Divine Presence:

In Isaiah, chapter six, we have a graphic picture of the power of worship unto the Almighty. This period of devotion and homage caused the prophet to place himself at God's disposal. The Lord of Hosts was exalted and Isaiah humbled himself to carry out the will of heaven. This is the purpose of assembly worship today. Man is made better by true, spiritual worship. In the gathering of the saints we gain incentive and inspiration to "go about doing good" unto our fellow man. Private worship is also uplifting. In fact, unless we draw nigh unto God when we are all alone our religion is vain. Verily, our professed adoration is just as good as it causes us to be when no one is watching. If our personal godliness is like the Priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan we will be sadly lacking in God's sight. One major reason they "passed by on the other side" was because no one was there to applaud --- they were not in the mood and besides their work didn't call for spontaneous sympathy! How about it, brethren? When we are all alone with God does our religion have any reality to it? One of the most powerful scenes in the Bible depicts Jesus all alone in the Garden of Gethsemane. There, in the sublime presence of eternity he was strong enough to humbly say: "Thy will be done." He arose from the rocky soil with strength enough to do the will of the Father. We too can find a blessing from being in the sanctuary of God.

One day we shall be in the actual presence of the Creator. One day we shall know the resplendent glory of his power. May we so live upon earth in the shadow of divine love that over on the other shore we can pay eternal homage to his name!





## PSALMS

### CHAPTER 9

1. This "psalm was believed to have built-in therapeutic qualities: A copy of Psalm 9, written on pure parchment with a new pen, hung about the neck of a sick boy, will heal him." Hugo McCord, The Living Messages of the Books of the Old Testament, p. 216

2. "In the LXX. and Vulg., Psalms ix. and x. are combined into one." Ellicott, p. 97

"Together they present the first example in the psalms of an acrostic, every other verse beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet, in successive order. . . In the case before us the acrostic is incomplete, Psa. 9 carrying it through 'k' ('d' is omitted), and Psa. 10 presenting only 'l,q,r,s,' and 't'." The Abingdon Bible Commentary, p. 519

"The acrostic proceeds regularly from 'aleph' to 'gimmel' (Ps. ix. 1-6); 'daleth' is wanting. Four verses (8-11) begin with 'vaw', and the arrangement proceeds regularly to 'yod' (verse 18). For 'caph', which should succeed, 'koph' is substituted (verse 20); and the arrangement is taken up correctly with 'lamed', in Psalm x. 1. Here it suddenly ceases. 'mem', 'nun', 'samech', 'ayin', 'pe', and 'tsaddi' are wanting; but 'koph' appears again in verse 12, and the other letters duly succeed to the end of the psalm." Ellicott, pp. 97,98

"The Remains of the Alphabetical Acrostic are as follows: 'aleph', vers. 1,2, four times; 'beth', ver. 3, once; 'gimel', ver.5, once; 'he', ver. 6, once; 'waw', vers. 7,8,9,10, four times; 'zain', ver. 11, once; 'heth', ver.13, once; 'teth', ver. 15, once; 'yod', ver. 17, once; 'koph' (? for 'kaph'), ver. 19, once; 'lamed', 10:1, once; 'koph', 10:12, once; 'resh', 10:14, once; 'shin', 10:15, once; 'tau', 10:17, once." College Press, Volume 1, p. 110

"The alphabetic arrangement is begun in its completest form. Every clause of the first stanza begins with 'Aleph'." Ellicott, p. 98

3. Verses 1-6 may be styled: Thanksgiving.

a. "Elyon" is praised. 9:1,2

b. Enemies perish. 9:3-6

4. What will the psalmist give?

5. To whom will he give it?

6. How will he give it?

7.

## WHOLE-HEARTED SERVICE

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Half-hearted service is not pleasing to God.
- B. We must use all our heart in service to him.
- C. 1 Kings 18:21
- D. 2 Corinthians 9:7
- E. Colossians 3:23

### II. WITH OUR WHOLE HEART, WE ARE TO:

#### A. Seek Jehovah.

- 1. Deuteronomy 4:29
- 2. 2 Chronicles 15:12,15; 22:9; 31:21
- 3. Psalm 119:2,10
- 4. Jeremiah 29:13

#### B. Love Jehovah.

- 1. Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 30:6
- 2. Joshua 22:5
- 3. Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27

#### C. Fear Jehovah.

- 1. Deuteronomy 10:12
- 2. 1 Samuel 12:24

#### D. Walk in all the ways of Jehovah.

- 1. Deuteronomy 10:12
- 2. Joshua 22:5
- 3. 1 Kings 2:4; 8:23
- 4. 2 Kings 10:31. Jehu refused.
- 5. 2 Kings 23:3
- 6. 2 Chronicles 6:14; 34:31

#### E. Serve Jehovah.



1. Deuteronomy 10:12; 11:13
  2. Joshua 22:5
  3. 1 Samuel 12:20,24
- F. Keep and do the statutes and ordinances of Jehovah.
1. Deuteronomy 26:16
  2. Joshua 22:5
  3. 1 Kings 14:8
  4. 2 Kings 23:3
  5. 2 Chronicles 34:31
  6. Psalm 119:34,69
- G. Return to Jehovah.
1. Deuteronomy 30:2
  2. 1 Samuel 7:3
  3. 1 Kings 8:48
  4. 2 Chronicles 6:38
  5. Jeremiah 3:10; 24:7
- H. Obey the voice of Jehovah. Deuteronomy 30:2,10
- I. Cleave unto Jehovah. Joshua 22:5
- J. Follow Jehovah. 1 Kings 14:8
- K. Turn to Jehovah.
1. 2 Kings 23:25
  2. Joel 2:12
- L. Give thanks to Jehovah. Psalm 9:1; 111:1; 138:1
- M. Praise Jehovah. Psalm 86:12
- N. Entreat Jehovah. Psalm 119:58
- O. Call upon Jehovah. Psalm 119:145
- P. Trust in Jehovah. Proverbs 3:5

Q. Rejoice. Zephaniah 3:14

R. Believe. Acts 8:37

### III. EXAMPLES OF WHOLE-HEARTED SERVICE

A. Stephen. Acts 6:8-8:1

B. Paul. 2 Corinthians 11

C. Widow. Mark 12:41-44

D. Prisca and Aquila. Romans 16:3-5

E. "James, the Lord's half-brother: Josephus (Antiquities 20:9:1) said that James was tried before the Sanhedrin for departing from the Jewish law and was stoned. Clement of Alexandria said he was flung from a gable of the temple, and then clubbed to death. He formerly was an unbeliever. John 7:5." Hugo McCord, Psalms notes.

F. Demas, at one time, gave whole-hearted service. Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24 (62 A.D.). Then he must have gradually lost heart. 2 Timothy 4:10 (67 A.D.).

### IV. CONCLUSION

A. Let us give God the whole-hearted service he deserves.

B. Obey the Gospel.

C. Live faithfully.

8. What will the psalmist show forth?

9. What will the psalmist do in Jehovah?

10. What will he do to the name of Jehovah?

11. "Songs are the fitting expressions of inward thankfulness, and it were well if we indulged ourselves and honoured our Lord with more of them. . . and if only we could determine to praise the Lord, we should surmount many a difficulty which our low spirits never would have been equal to, and we should do double the work which can be done if the heart be languid in its beating, if we be crushed and trodden down in soul." The Treasury of David, Spurgeon, Volume 1, p. 97

12. What name of Jehovah is used?

13. "Most high (Elyon) is used only in poetry by the Hebrew writers (twenty-one times in the Psalms). It is also used by non-Israelites quoted in the Bible as a title for the Supreme God." Beacon Bible Commentary, Volume 3, p. 157

14. What three things do the enemies do at the presence of Jehovah?

15. What has Jehovah done for the psalmist?

16. Where is Jehovah said to sit?

17. What does he do there?

18. GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. Psalm 9:4-10

B. God is a righteous judge and the Psalmist presents his judgment as being righteous.

C. God will judge our works.

1. Romans 2:6; 14:12

2. Ecclesiastes 12:13,14

3. Matthew 10:15; 25:31-45

4. Revelation 20:13

## II. GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

A. Seals the doom of those who remain unrighteous. 9:5,6

B. Secures the safety of those who remain righteous.  
9:4,7-10

C. Subjects of God's judgment:

1. 2 Corinthians 5:10

2. Hebrews 9:27

3. Matthew 25:32

4. Ecclesiastes 11:9

5. Romans 14:12

D. Standard of God's judgment:

1. Romans 2:16

2. Revelation 20:12

3. John 12:48



E. Sentences of God's judgment:

1. Colossians 3:24,25
2. Galatians 6:7-9
3. Romans 2:5-11
4. 2 Timothy 4:6-8
5. Revelation 2:10
6. Matthew 25:46

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Let us be prepared to meet the righteous judge.
  - B. Obey the Gospel.
  - C. Live faithfully.
19. What has God done to the nations and the wicked?
  20. What is the condition of the enemy?
  21. Verses 7-12 could be styled: Teaching.
    - a. Jehovah's throne is prepared for judgment. 9:7,8
    - b. Jehovah's people are protected. 9:9-12
  22. How does Jehovah sit?
  23. How long will he thus sit?
  24. What has he prepared?
  25. What will he judge?
  26. "The 'he' is emphatic - he himself, and no other." Pulpit Commentary, Volume 8, p. 57
  27. How will he judge?
  28. What will he minister to the peoples and how will he do this?
  29. What will Jehovah be to the oppressed?
  30. When will he be this?
  31. Who will trust in Jehovah?
  32. What has Jehovah not done?

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. Those who seek Jehovah may dwell in safety. He will not forsake them.

B. This is an assurance for all who do right.

C. Psalm 9:10

## II. "A FIERY DART OF SATAN CONSTANTLY SHOT AT THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

A. It is the suggestion that God has forsaken us. Of all the arrows of hell it is the most sharp, the most poisonous, the most deadly. It is sent against us -

1. When we have fallen into sin. Then comes the suggestion, this fiery dart, 'Ah, wretch that you are, God will never forgive that sin; you have been so ungrateful, such a hypocrite, such a liar.'

2. In time of great trouble. The deep waters are around and almost overflow you; just then, when in the very deepest part of the stream, Satan sends this suggestion into your very soul - thy God hath forsaken thee.

3. In prospect of some great toil and enterprise. When the trumpet is sounded for some dreadful battle, when there is a deep soil to be ploughed, there comes this dark thought. And this arrow is most grievous, and most dangerous; and it bears the full impress of its Satanic maker." The Biblical Illustrator, Volume 5, p. 163

B. If the Devil can get us to believe it, he can pull us away from God.

## III. "THE DIVINE BUCKLER WHICH GOD HAS PROVIDED AGAINST THIS FIERY DART.

A. It is the fact the God hath not, no never, forsaken them that fear Him." The Biblical Illustrator, Volume 5, p. 163

B. "Ignorance is worst when it amounts to ignorance of God, and knowledge is best when it exercises itself upon the name of God.

O hope of every contrite heart,  
O joy of all the meek,  
To those who fall how kind thou art,  
How good to those who seek.

'But what to those who find, ah, this  
Nor tongue nor pen can show  
The love of Jesus what it is,  
None but his loved ones know." The Treasury of David,  
Spurgeon, Volume 1, pp. 98,99

- C. Deuteronomy 31:6,8
- D. Joshua 1:5
- E. 1 Samuel 12:22
- F. 1 Kings 6:11-13
- G. 1 Chronicles 28:20
- H. Ezra 9:9
- I. Nehemiah 9:19,31
- J. Psalm 37:25,28; 94:14
- K. Isaiah 42:16
- L. 2 Corinthians 4:9
- M. Hebrews 13:5

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Aren't we thankful that we can rely upon God to stay beside us as long as we seek him?
  - B. We seek him by obeying the Gospel?
  - C. We keep him by us by living a faithful life.
34. What does the writer exhort others to do?
35. "Singing and preaching, as means of glorifying God, are here joined together. . . ." The Treasury of David, Spurgeon, Volume 1, p. 99
36. What does Jehovah remember?
37. What passage is the background for this thought?
38. Whom does Jehovah not forget?
39. "The Hebrew word 'doresh', from 'darash', that is here rendered 'inquisition', signifies not barely to seek, to search, but to seek, search, and enquire with all diligence and care imaginable." The Treasury of David, Spurgeon, Volume 1, p. 104

This same word is translated "seek" in verse 10.



40. Verses 13 and 14 may be styled: Trouble.
- a. Plea for mercy. 9:13
  - b. Pleasure in deliverance. 9:14
41. David pleads for:
- a. Compassion 9:13a
  - b. Concern, 9:13b.
42. From whom does his affliction come?
43. How does he describe what Jehovah has done for him?
44. What does the psalmist want to do?
45. Where will he do this?
46. In these verses we have a contrast between the "gates of death" and the "gates of the daughter of Zion". If we allow the "gates of the daughter of Zion" to represent the church, we may learn some valuable lesson for our age.
- a. We pass through the "gates of death" but once (Hebrews 9:27), and when we have done so we cannot enter the "gates of Zion" but the "gates of Zion" are open to all men continually, as long as they live, (Isaiah 60:11).
  - b. The "gates of death" are not subject to our control (Ecclesiastes 8:8) but the "gates of Zion" are entered by choice (Matthew 7:13,14).
  - c. The "gates of death" and the "gates of Zion" are under God's control (Romans 14:8,9; Revelation 1:18).
  - d. The "gates of death" hold no fear for those who have entered the "gates of Zion" (Psalm 23; Matthew 25:46; 2 Timothy 4:6-8).
47. In what will he rejoice?
48. Verses 15-18 may be styled: Transgression.
- a. Punishment for the wicked. 9:15-17
  - b. Provision for the poor. 9:18
49. What has happened to the nations?
50. What has Jehovah done?
51. In what is the wicked snared?

52. "There is nothing that a wicked man does that is not against his own interest." Clarke's Commentary, p. 244

53. Higgsaion. "This word occurs three times in the book of Psalms; and from the multiplicity of interpretations suggested, it would seem to have two meanings - one of a general character implying 'thought,' 'reflection;' and another in Ps. 9.16 and 92.3 of a special technical nature, bearing the import of musical sounds or signs well known in the age of David, but whose import cannot now easily be determined." Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible, p. 480

"Higgsaion" occurs three times in the Psalms - here, Ps. xix.14, and Ps. xcii. 4 (Heb.). [verse 3 in our translations - J.E.R.] In the two latter places it is translated; in Ps. xix.14, 'meditation;' in Ps. xcii.4, 'solemn sound.' Both meanings are etymologically possible, but the word apparently, indicates some change in the music, or possibly, as joined with 'selah', a direction to some particular part of the orchestra." Ellicott, p. 99

In Lamentations 3:62 this word is translated "device".

54. To what shall the wicked be turned?

55. "... wicked and corrupt men, who, in conduct and life, neglect or reject the presence of God." I.S.B.E., Volume 2, p. 1251

56. "Sheol" is an important word in the Bible.

a. This word is used 65 times in the Old Testament.

(1). Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 44:29,32. It is translated "grave" by the K.J.V.

(2). Numbers 16:30,33. K.J.V. - "pit".

(3). Deuteronomy 32:22. K.J.V. - "hell".

(4). 1 Samuel 2:6

(5). 2 Samuel 22:6

(6). 1 Kings 2:6,9

(7). Job 7:9; 11:8; 14:13; 17:13,16; 21:13; 24:19; 26:6

(8). Psalms 6:5;; 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14,15; 55:15; 86:13; 88:3; 89:48; 116:3; 139:8; 141:7

(9). Proverbs 1:12; 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:11,24; 23:14;

27:20; 30:16

(10). Ecclesiastes 9:10

(11). Song of Solomon 8:6

(12). Isaiah 5:14; 14:9,11,15; 28:15,18; 38:10,18;  
57:9

(13). Ezekiel 31:15,16,17; 32:21,27

(14). Hosea 13:14

(15). Amos 9:2

(16). Jonah 2:2

(17). Habakkuk 2:5

b. "Davidson's Hebrew lexicon defines 'Sheol' (Greek, Hades) as meaning (1) a cavity or grave. . . Hades is associated with death (Psa. 6:5; 116:3; Hos. 13:14; Isa. 5:14; Job 17:13-16), with corruption (Psa. 16:10), with the pit (Psa. 30:3), with Abaddon (destruction) (Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11), with Rephaim (shades) (Isa. 14:9), with worms (Isa. 14:11), with dust (Job 17:16), and with the Abyss (Rom. 10:7). Physical Hades is hard (Song of Sol. 8:6), and in it is no consciousness (Eccles. 9:5,6,10). In it is no praise of God (Psa. 6:5.) Both good people (Psa. 16:10; Gen. 37:35) and bad (Psa. 31:17; 49:14; Job 24:19) and animals (Eccles. 3:19-20) go there. Deliverance from it is a blessing (Psa. 30:3; 49:15; Hos. 13:14.) From it all humans will come. (Psa. 49:15; Isa. 26:19; Hos. 13:14; John 5:28-29.)

Whereas numerous are the references pointing to a physical Hades (a grave or cavity), only one citation points to a spiritual Hades (Luke 16:23), the abode after death of the spirits of evil men. Likely the spiritual Hades is the same as Tartarus (2 Pet. 2:4), the abode of evil angels. And likely spiritual Hades is the same as the spiritual Abyss (Rev. 9:1), of which the king is the angel of Abaddon (Rev. 9:11), and the abode of evil spirits (Luke 8:31), of the devil (Rev. 20:3), and of the beast (Rev. 11:7; 17:8). Jesus and his angel have the key of the spiritual Abyss (Rev. 20:1.)" Volume Two: Fifty Years of Lectures, Hugo McCord, pp. 400-401

c. The Greek word is "Hades". It is used 11 times in the New Testament.

(1). Ten times it refers to the grave in death.

(a). Matthew 11:23; 16:18



- (b). Luke 10:15
- (c). Acts 2:27,31
- (d). 1 Corinthians 15:55
- (e). Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14

(2). One time it refers to a place where the soul of evil men go. Luke 16:23

57. The wicked are described as those who forget whom?

58. What two words are used in verse 18 to describe the oppressed?

59. What will be done for them?

60. "An aged Christian, lying on his death-bed in a state of such extreme weakness that he was often entirely unconscious of all around him, was asked the cause of his perfect peace. He replied, 'When I am able to think, I think of Jesus; and when I am unable to think of Him, I know He is thinking of me.'" Spurgeon's Sermon Notes, p. 71

61. Verses 19 and 20 may be styled: Triumph.

a. Prevailing of Jehovah. 9:19

(1). Restrain the wicked. 9:19a

(2). Reckon with the wicked. -9:19b

(3). Reveal the weakness of the wicked. 9:20

b. Perception of the nations. 9:20

62. What does the psalmist ask Jehovah to do?

63. What do the nations need to know?

64. David pleads for Jehovah to:

65. In this chapter we have :

a. The perils from which the people of Jehovah had been delivered:

(1). Enemies. 9:3-8

(2). Oppression. 9:9

(3). Murder. 9:12

(4). Deceit. 9:15

b. The plans by which Jehovah delivered them.

(1). He maintained the right of the just. 9:4

(2). He monished the nations. 9:5

(3). He moved the remembrance of guilty people forever. 9:6

(4). He ministered his judgments to the people. 9:7,8

(5). He manifested his remembrance of the oppressed. 9:8-12

(6). He made the plots of the wicked to recoil on themselves. 9:15,17

66. In this chapter we see joy brought about as a result of:

a. Thanksgiving. 9:1

b. Deliverance. 9:3-9,12,15-20

c. A proper relationship with Jehovah. 9:10. This involves:

(1). Seeking Jehovah.

(2). Trusting Jehovah.

d. Prayer. 9:13,14





## PSALMS 19

*JAMES MEADOWS*

### Introduction

1. Psalms 19 might be titled The Works and The Word of God.
2. There are three voices heard in Psalms 119.
  - a. The voice of nature (vv. 1-6).
  - b. The voice of revelation (vv. 7-11).
  - c. The voice of man (vv. 12-14).
3. To David God's two books were always open.
  - a. The book of nature.
  - b. The book of revelation.

### Discussion

#### I. The Voice of Nature (vv. 1-6).

A. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handy work." The characteristics of this voice are class:

1. A teaching voice: (vv. 1-2).
  - a. It "declares."
  - b. It "uttereth speech."
2. A perpetual voice: (v. 2).
  - a. "Day unto day."
  - b. "Night unto night."
  - c. It continues.
3. A quiet voice (v. 3). Nature speaks not to the ear, but to the understanding heart.
4. A universal voice: "Their line [sphere of influence] is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world...."

B. The Psalmist picks out the sun as the chief witness to God's glory.

1. He pictures God as setting a tabernacle for the sun in the heavens (v. 4).
2. "As the bridegroom went forth to meet the bride in glorious apparel, so the sun comes over the horizon from the chamber of night to burst forth in its full glory, driving away the darkness" (J. Leonard Jackson, G.A., Feb. 1, 1951, p. 67).
3. The Psalmist proposes three things to consider about the sun:
  - a. The splendor and excellency of his form (vv. 4-5).
  - b. The swiftness with which he runs his course (vv. 5-6).
  - c. The astonishing power of his heat (v. 6).

C. Romans 1:20; Acts 14:15-17.

1. The things discussed here are God's everlasting power and divinity.
2. The existence of anything declares that someone produced it (Watch, Carmaker).

II. The Voice of Revelation (vv. 7-11).

A. The Psalmist also declares that the God whose glory is shown by nature is the author of a spiritual law—it is described by sixes.

1. Six characteristics named—law, testimony, precepts, commandments, fear and judgments.
2. Six epithets (quality or characteristics): perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, *righteous.*
3. Six benefits: "converting the soul"; "making wise the simple"; "rejoicing the heart"; "enlightening the eyes"; "enduring for ever"; "righteous altogether."

B. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" ("restoring the soul," margin).

1. The scriptures have the power to convert, restore, revive, and refresh.

2. It can totally transform the person and able to bring one to perfection (Acts 20:32; 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14).
  3. The sinner's soul is out of its proper place and the word of God is sufficient to restore it (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- C. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."
1. "Testimony" speaks of scripture as divine witness—of God, of right and wrong (2 Pet. 1:3-4).
  2. Simple means it is able to take a simple-minded, undiscerning, ignorant person and make them skilled.
  3. Teachable individuals (Mt. 13:1ff).
- D. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart."
1. "Statutes" are divine principles."
  2. The entrusted word of God (2 Tim. 1:13; "rejoicing" (Acts 8:38).
- E. "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."
1. It is pure.
  2. It enlightens the eyes, gives understanding.
- F. "The fear of the Lord is clear, enduring forever."
1. Fear is a reverential sort.
  2. It is the type of fear that moves one to obey God's commands.
    - a. Noah (Heb. 11:7).
    - b. Cornelius (Acts 10:24).
  3. Eccle. 12:13.
  4. 1 Jn. 4:18.
- G. "The ordinances (judgments) of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.



1. "Ordinance means that which is ordered or ordained.
2. God's ordinances are true (Jn. 17:17; 8:32; Psa. 119:172).

H. More to be desired than gold.

1. Psa. 119:103.
2. Job 23:12.
3. Jeremiah 15:16.
4. No estimate of God's word will avail unless we have a taste, a relish, a zest for its holiest requirements.

III. The Voice of Man (19:12-14).

A. Looking into the law of God the Psalmist recognized his own imperfections.

B. Humble prayer. He prayed for deliverance:

1. From "hidden faults"—these are faults which a person cannot see in himself.
2. From "presumptuous sins"—wilful, conscious transgressions, the final falling away from God.
3. From sinful thoughts—"the meditations of my heart"—passes from outward to the inward.

### Conclusion

1. When we survey the wonderful works of God we conclude he is wise, wonderful, powerful and benevolent.
2. But with all that it is not a moral and spiritual guide—it does not teach us our duty.
3. The Bible is the one and only sufficient guide.
4. Man finds in the Bible his own shortcoming and this brings him to humble prayer.
5. A study of the Bible will bring one to his knees.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. In 1888 Charles Spurgeon wrote in the Preface of Vol. VI on "The Treasury of David"

these words: "I have been all the longer over this portion of my task because I have been bewildered in the expanse of the One Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm, which makes up the bulk of this volume. Its dimensions and depth alike overcame me. It spread itself out before me like a vast, rolling prairie, to which I could see no bound, and this alone created a feeling of dismay. Its expanse was unbroken by a bluff or headland, and hence it threatened a monotonous task, although the fear has not been realized. This marvelous poem seemed to me a great sea of holy teaching, moving, in its many verses, wave upon wave; although without an island of special and remarkable statement to break it up. I confessed I hesitated to launch upon it. Other psalms have been mere lakes, but this is the main ocean. It is a continent of sacred thought, every inch of which is fertile as the garden of the Lord: it is an amazing abundance, a mighty stretch of harvest-fields. I have now crossed the great plain for myself, but not without persevering, and, I will add, Pleasurable, toil.... This great Psalm is a book in itself: instead of being one among psalms, it is worthy to be set forth by itself as a poem of surpassing excellence. Those who have never studied it may pronounce it commonplace and complain of its repetitions, but to the thoughtful student it is like the deep, full, so as never to be measured; and varied, so as never to weary the eyes. Its depth is as great as its length; it is mystery, not set forth as mystery, but concealed beneath the simplest statements....." (Charles Spurgeon, Vol. 6, Preface V, VI)

### 2. "In Matthew Henry's Account of the Life and Death of His Father, Philip Henry",

he says: Once, pressing the Study of the Scriptures, he advised us to take a verse of this psalm every morning to meditate upon, and so go over the psalm twice in the year, and that, saith he, will bring you in love with all the rest of the Scriptures.

He often said, All grace grows as the love of the word of God grows." (Spurgeon, p. 3)

### 3. In our study of Psalms 119 we purpose to observe some general truths, a breakdown of each section, the inspiration of the word of God, the powers of God's word, etc.

## DISCUSSION

### I. SOME GENERAL TRUTHS ABOUT PSALMS 119

#### A. It is alphabetical in its arrangement.

1. Each section has eight verses.
2. Each section begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet until it goes through the twenty-two letters.
3. "According to this alphabetical series of eight stanzas, the word is the source of happiness to those who walk by it (aleph), of holiness to those who give heed to it (beth), of truth to those whose eyes the Lord opens.....(gimel), of law to those whose heart he renews (daleth), begets perverance by its promise (he), reveals the mercy and salvation of the Lord (vau), awakens the comfort of hope in God (zayin), presents the Lord as the Portion of the trusting soul (cheth), makes affliction instructive and chastening (teth), begets fellowship in the fear of God (jod), and a longing for the full peace of salvation (kaph), is faithful and immutable (lamed), commands the approval of the heart (mem), is a light to the path (nun), from which to swerve is hateful (samek), warrents the plea of innocence (ayin), is a testimony to God's character and will (pe), is a law of rectitude (tsade), warrents the cry for salvation (qoph), and prayer for deliverance from affliction (resh), and from persecution without a cause (skin), and assures in due time (tau). There is here as much order as could be expected in a long alphabetical acrostic." (James G. Murphy, in a "Commentary on the Book of Psalms" 1875)

#### B. Its author is David.

1. It is Davidic in tone and expression
2. It tallies with David's experience in many interesting points.
3. Some have referred to it as "David's pocket book."

#### C. Its subject is the word of God.

1. "The one theme is the word of God." (Spurgeon)
2. "The 119th Psalm is the appropriate sermon, after Hallel, on the text which is its epitome (Ps. 1:1,2). "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel



of the ungodly.....but his delight is in the law of the Lord." Except in two verses (122, 132) the law is expressly extolled in every verse. (Andrew Robert Fausset, in Studies in the 119 Psalms, 1876)

3. "Every verse contains in it either a praise of God's word....."(William Cowper)

4. ".....The psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the Psalm, keeps his eye on it all along, and pursues it to the end.....God's law....."

(Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758)

5. ".....Its theme is the word of God." (James Murphy)

D. It discusses the word of God under ten words.

1. "These are, doubtless, all designation of the Divine Law, but it was doing a deep injury to the cause of revealed truth to affirm that they are mere synonymous; in other words, that the sentiment of this compendium of heavenly wisdom are little better than a string of tautologies. The fact is, as some critics, both Jewish and Christian, have observed, that each of these terms designates the same law of God, but each under a different aspect, signifying the different moods of its promulgation, and of its reception." (John Jebb, 1846)

2. "Many superficial readers have imagined that it harps upon one string, and abounds in pious repetitions and redundancies; but this arises from the shallowness of the reader's own mind: those who have studied this devine hymn, and carefully noted each line of it, are amazed at the variety and profundity of the thought. Using only a few words, the writer has produced permutations and combinations of meaning which display his holy familiarity with his subject, and the sanctified ingenuity of his mind. He never repeats himself; for if the same sentiment recurs it is placed in a fresh connection, and so exhibits another interesting shade of meaning." (Charles Spurgeon, Vol. 6, p. 1)

3. "Law" (Torah)

a. It occurs 25 times.

- b. "It is the settling down of duties, how they are to be done." (Kinchi)
- c. "It is formed from a verb which means to direct, to guide, to aim, to shoot forwards. Its etymological meaning then, would be a rule of conduct.... It means God's law is general....." (John Jebb)
- d. "It is called law because it guides, directs, and instructs in the way of righteousness.....(A. Clarke)

#### 4. Testimonies ( Edah or eduth)

- a. Found in two forms, having the same derivation and the same signification - 23 times.
- b. Testimonies are more particularly God's revealed law: the witnesses and confirmation of his promises made to his people an earnest of his future salvation." ( John Jebb)
- c. " The things contained in the Scripture are called God's testimonies because they are solemnly declared to the world and attested beyond contradiction." (M. Henry)
- d. Clarke says the word is derived from one denoting "beyond, farther, all along, to bear witness or testimony. The rites and ceremonies of the law; because they point out matters beyond themselves, being types and representations of the good thing that were to come."

#### 5. Precepts (Piqqudim)

- a. It occurs 21 times in other Psalms and only 3 times in other places.
- b. It comes "from a word which means to place in trust, means something entrusted to man, that is committed; appointments of God...." (John Jebb)
- c. "Precepts signify that the will of God is imposed by the authority of our sovereign Law giver." (Dickson)
- d. "They are called precepts, because prescribed to us and not left indifferent." (Henry)
- e. "They are called precepts from a word signifying to take notice, or care of a thing, to attend, have respect to, to appoint, to visit; because they take

notice of our way, have respect to the whole of our life and conversation, superintend, overlook, and visit us in all the concerns and duties of life." (Clarke)

6. Statutes (Chuqqim)

- a. It is found once in the feminine (V. 11) and 19 times in the masculine.
- b. "The verb from which this word is formed means to engrave or inscribe, the word means a definite, prescribed, written law." (Jebb)
- c. "They are called statutes, because they are fixed, and determined, and of perpetual obligation." (Henry)
- d. "Statutes, from a word signifying to mark, trace out, describe and ordain; because they mark out our way, describe the line of conduct we are to pursue, and order or ordain what we are to observe." (Clarke)

7. Commandments (Mitsvah)

- a. It occurs 22 times.
- b. "The commandments are God's laws, not only exhibited, and revealed, and recommended, but positively enjoined." (Jebb)
- c. "God's commandments are so called because given with authority, as (as the word signifies) lodged with us as a trust." (Henry)
- d. "They are called commandments because they show us what we should do, and what we should leave undone, and exact our obedience." (Clarke)

8. Judgments (Mishpatim)

- a. It is found 23 times.
- b. "It is derived from a word signifying to govern, to judge or determine. Judgments mean judicial ordinances, and decisions; legal sanctions." (Jebb)
- c. "God's judgments are so called, because they proceed from the great Judge of the world, and are his judicial sentences to which all men must submit." (Pool)
- d. "They are called God's judgments, because framed in infinite wisdom and because by them we must both judge and be judged." (Henry)
- e. So called "because they judge concerning our words and works; show the rules by which they should be regulated; and cause us to discern what is right and wrong, and decide accordingly." (Clarke)

9. Word or Words (Dabas)

- a. Two terms quite distinct in the Hebrew, but both rendered word - appears 43 times.
- b. "The corresponding verb is rendered talk, speak, say, tell, promise, declare, pronounce, communes". (Plumes)
- c. "The Scripture is called God's word because it proceeds from his mouth, and



is revealed by him to us." (Poole)

d. "The Scripture is called God's word or saying, because it is the declaration of his mind, and Christ, the essential Eternal Word, is all in all, in it."

(Henry)

e. "In the revelation, God speaks to man, shows him in a clear concise, intelligible, and rational way, his interest, his duty, his privileges, and, in a word, the reasonable service he requires of him." (Clarke)

#### 10. Way

a. It occurs 13 times.

b. "In some cases it clearly refers to the manners of life or the way that one walks (V. 5, 26, 29, 59, 168) but in (V. 1, 3, 14, 27, 30, 32, 33, 37) it points to the Scriptures." (Plumes)

c. "The word of God is called his way, as prescribed by him for us to walk in." (Pool)

d. "The Scriptures are called God's way because they are both the rule of his providence and of our obedience." (Henry)

e. "The revelation which God has given was called a way, because it was the way in which God goes in order to instruct and save man, the way in which man must tread in order to be safe, holy, and happy." (Clarke)

#### 11. Truth or Faithfulness.

a. "Both words are given because both are employed by our translators in this Psalm and elsewhere as a fit rendering for a word cognate to Amen. It occurs in this Psalm 5 times, vv. 30, 75, 86, 90, 38.....It expresses the stability and fidelity with which God executes all he speaks." (Plumes)

b. "The principles upon which the divine law is built is eternal truths." (Henry)

#### 12. Righteousness.

a. It occurs 2 times in the feminine and 12 times in the masculine.

b. In some cases it is rendered right, justice, righteous.

c. It clearly in several cases refers to God's word - vv. 7, 62, 75, 106, 123, 138, 144, 160, 164, 172.

d. As applied to Scripture "it signifieth that the word of God sheweth the way how a man shall be justified, to *act*, by faith, and how a justified man should approve himself to God and man, as justified by faith, and that every son of wisdom must and will justify this word of God as the perfect rule of righteousness." (Dickson)

e. "because it is all holy, just, and good, and the rule and standard of righteousness." (Henry)

E. Volumes have been written on Psalms 119.

1. In the 1860 to 1890 Charles Spurgeon wrote seven volumes on the Psalms.

Volume six contains Psalms 119 and he wrote 398 pages on this one psalm.

2. In 1867 William S. Plumes finished a book of 1211 pages on Psalms and 75 pages were given to Psalms 119.

3. "It is well known that upon no portion of holy Scriptures, have so many practical commentaries been written.....It has been justly considered in all ages of the church as a storehouse of religious wisdom." (John Jebb)

F. The Psalmist continually pleads for "life." "Let me live" (vv. 25, 37, 40, 88,

107, 149, 154, 156, 159, 116, 144). "The source of life he finds in the law and promises of God (59, 93): and by "life" he means not simply preservation from

death, but liberation from all, whether within or without, that crushes and

paralyses life, and hinders its proper use and enjoyment; for "life" includes

the ideas of light and joy and prosperity. It finds its fullest realisation in

communion with God....very noteworthy is the Psalmist's enthusiastic love for the

Law. The love which the Israelite was bidden to cherish for Jehovah (Deut. vi. 5,

etc.) is kindled by the manifold revelation of His Will in the Law. "Oh how I love

thy law; it is my meditation all the day" (97). It is no irksome restraint of his

liberty, but his delight, his joy, his treasure, his comfort, the subject of his

meditations by day and by night, the source of trust and hope amid all the

perplexities and troubles of life. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Cambridge Bible, Psalms - Books IV & V, p. 705).

11. A Breakdown of The Sections of Psalms 119.

A. 119:1-8 - The Perfect Law (Alpha) Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord."

1. The first division sets forth the perfection of God's word.
2. It is described in this division by seven different words - Law, testimonies, ways, precepts, statutes, commandments, judgements.
3. "In the use of these varied phrases, and others yet to follow, there is revealed the perfection of God's will in its methods as well as its intentions." (G. Campbell Morgan)
4. The New Testament likewise claims that God's word is perfect. II Tim. 3:16, 17; II Pet. 1:3, 4; Jude 3, John 16:13 -

Principles to Guide Heb. 5:12-14

B. 119:9-16 - The Way of Cleansing (Beth) - "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."

1. "The path of purity is that of caution conditioned by the word of God." (Morgan)
2. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (V.11)
3. God's word has cleansing power. Eph. 5:26; I Pet. 1:22-24.
4. God's word has the power to guard us from sin, Mt. 4:1-11; I John 3:9; Eph. 4:22-32.

C. 119:17-24 - The Fountain of Joy. (Gimel) "Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word."

1. Peace and joy are never created by prosperous circumstances, neither can they be taken away by circumstances of difficulty, but the soul desiring, discovering and doing the will of God finds delight.
2. Those who are following God's word will find joy and contentment. (Phil. 4:4-11.)

- D. 119:25-32 - The Strength of Trial (Daleth) "My soul cleaveth unto the dust:  
quicken thou me according to thy work."
1. His soul was in heaviness but he sought the comfort needed in the word of God.
  2. We seldom turn to the word of God for comfort and therein lies our mistake.
  3. Regardless of the trial and circumstances, the word of God has made a way of deliverance. I Cor. 10:12,13
- E. 119:33-40 - The Medium of Guidance (He) "Teach me O Lord, the way of thy statutes;  
and I shall keep it unto the end."
1. The Psalmist makes an appeal for the clear manifestation of the meaning of the will of God.
  2. Notice his petitions: "Give me understanding"; "Teach me"; "Make me to go"; "Incline my heart"; "Stablish thy word".
  3. Let us all seek to know the meaning of God's will. John 7:17; Eph. 5:15,16; Heb. 5:12-14.
- F. 119:41-48 - The Inspiration of Testimony (vow) "Let thy mercies come also unto me,  
O Lord, even thy salvation, according to thy word."
1. He desires to have the answer for these that reproach him and to know how.
  2. Christians need to have the same desire Col. 4:6; I Pet. 3:15.
- G. 119:49-56 - The Comfort of Sorrow (Zayin) "Remember the word unto thy servant,  
upon whom thou hast caused me to hope."
1. God's word was his comfort in his affliction.
  2. Quickened by the word of God he has a three-fold consciousness.
    - a. Loyalty in the presence of reproach (v. 51)
    - b. Hot indignation toward those that forsake his law. (v.53)
    - c. God's word is his songs.
- H. 119:57-64 - The Medium of Fellowship (Heth) "Thou are my portion, O Lord; I have  
said that I would keep thy words".



1. Having declared that he has kept God's law, the outcome is that Jehovah himself is his possession.

2. Loyalty to the will of God is not only comfort in sorrow - but it is the medium of fellowship. John 14: 21; I John 1:1-10; II John 9,10.

I. 119:65-72 - The Key of Affliction (Teth) "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,  
O Lord, according unto thy word."

1. Men have forged a tie against him but he declares his whole-hearted obedience.

2. Having shown that God had dealt well with him, he explains:

a. Before he was afflicted he went astray (v. 67)

b. Affliction brought him closer to God and his word and made him realize that the law of God is better than all material wealth.

3. Affliction can be good for the loyal and obedient. Jas. 1:2-5; Heb. 12:5-11.

J. 119:73-80 - The Depths of Desire (Yodh) "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me:  
give me understanding; that I may learn thy commandments."

1. The Psalmist recognized that he was made by God, therefore the deepest reason for surrendering one's self to God's will.

2. He desires understanding in order that others may see and profit.

3. He makes five request, each beginning with "Let."

a. The first is for comfort, "according to thy word." (v. 76)

b. The second is for tender mercies, in order that he might live, and the reason urged is "Thy law is my delight."

c. The third is for vindication that "the proud may be ashamed."

d. The fourth is for the ability to strengthen others that turn unto him.

e. The fifth is that he may be perfect in God's statutes.

4. We all must strongly desire God's word. Mt. 5:6; I Pet. 2:1-3

K. 119:81-88 - The Confidence of Darkness (Kaph) - "My soul fainteth for thy salvation:  
but I hope in thy word."

1. He is in the darkest circumstances - "My soul fainteth (v. 81). "like a bottle in the smoke" (v. 83); pits have been dug (v. 85); he was persecuted (v.86).

2. Yet through it all, notice his attitude - "I hope..... I do not forget.....

All thy commandments are faithful.....I forsook not thy precepts."

3. In the darkest hour when God seems to be inactive, and the foes successful, the trusting soul still clings to God's will.

4. God's promise and love are sure. Rom. 8:34-39; Acts 27:25; Heb. 13:4,5.

L. 119:89-96 - The Foundation of Faith (Lamed) "Forever, O Lord thy word is settled in heaven."

1. The foundation of the Psalmist faith was the fact that God's word was settled in Heaven.

2. God's faithfulness continues through all generations.

3. Nature provides the evidence of all these things.

4. God's word is sure. Mt. 18:18; 24:35; I Pet. 1:23-25.

M. 119:97-104 - The Delight of Life (Mem) "O how I love thy law: it is my meditation all the day."

1. Trusting God's word even in darkness, assured of the solid foundation on which it stands, the Psalmist now sings the song of his heart's gladness.

2. Knowing God's will, will make one:

a. Wiser than his enemies. (v. 98)

b. With more understanding than his teachers. (v. 99,100)

c. Refrain from evil. (v. 101)

d. Recognize the value of God's word. (v. 103)

3. "What an aid to self examination we have in this part of the Psalm. Do we love God's law? Do we meditate on it? Do we study it? Are we wiser for it? Are we warned by it? Have we submitted to divine teaching? Do we read with more interest, the news of the day, or the letters of a friend, than we feel pursuing the sacred volume? Is our love of holiness increasing? Do we find Christ in all the Scriptures? Is he our life? If we are to lead new lives, it must be by the faith of the Son of God." (Plumes, p. 1065)

N. 119:105-112 - The Light of Pilgrimage (Nun) "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,

1. He reveals his conception of God.
  2. But his consciousness of God's character comes from an acquaintance with his law, and his experiences in life, Rom. 1:20; I Cor. 1:17-20
  3. God's law has always been truth (v. 142; of John 8:32; 17:17)
- S. 119:145-152 - The Inspiration of Devotion (Ooph) "I cried with my whole heart: hear me, O Lord: I will keep thy statutes."
1. "Thus the inspiration of the present devotion to the will of God is the experience won out of past devotion, wherein the faithfulness of Jehovah has been proved." (Morgan, p. 245)
  2. The Psalmist said, "Of old I have known" (v. 152)
  3. In the dark day memory can become the lever of repentance and help. (Psa. 137; Luke 15; Rev. 2:1-3)
  4. God's word cannot change
- T. 119:153-160 - The Principle of Life (Resh) "Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law."
1. Circumstances show that afflictions abound....."mine afflictions;" "my cause"; "my persecutors"; "mine adversaries."
  2. Every verse breathes the breadth and beneficence of the will of God.....  
"Thy law"; "thy word"; "thy statutes"; "thy testimonies"; "thy precepts";  
"thy lovingness".
- U. 119:161-168 - The True Wealth (Shin) "Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word."
1. This division contains no petition to God.
  2. This is a Psalm of thanksgiving.
  3. The heart is filled with awe.
  4. All the wealth which makes the singer's heart glad is a right relation to God's law.
  5. The greatest possession any life can hold is that of being able to sing,  
"all my ways are before Thee."

V. 119:169-176 - The Perfect Law (Tau) "Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord:  
give me understanding according to thy word."

1. It sets forth anew the singer's consciousness of the perfections of the law of God.
2. There is a consciousness of need, but throughout there is a profound conviction of the sufficiency of God's word.
3. "The more perfectly acquainted a soul is with the good and acceptable and perfect will of God the more acute is the sense of personal unworthiness." (Morgan)
4. Through it all the Psalmist is determined to remain loyal to God's word.



