Commentary by Clyde M. Miller       Questions by John C. Sewell

The King’s Crown Is Defiled

Psalm 89:1-52
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Commentary

by

Clyde M. Miller

Text:

Psalm 89:1-52,

1. I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.
2. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself.
3. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant,
4. 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'" Selah
5. The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.
6. For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings?
7. In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.
8. O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you.
9. You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.
10. You crushed Rahab like one of the slain; with your strong arm you scattered your enemies.
11. The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it.
12. You created the north and the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name.
13. Your arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.
14. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.
15. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD.
16. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness.
17. For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn.
18. Indeed, our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.
19. Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said: "I have bestowed strength on a warrior; I have exalted a young man from among the people.
20. I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him.
21. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him.
22. No enemy will subject him to tribute; no wicked man will oppress him.
23. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries.
24. My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted.
25. I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers.
26. He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.'
27. I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.
28. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail.
29. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure.
30. "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes,
31. if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands,
32. I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flog-
ging;
33. but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my
faithfulness.
34. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have ut-
tered.
35. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness— and I will not lie
to David-
36. that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before
me like the sun;
37. it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness
in the sky." Selah
38. But you have rejected, you have spurned, you have been very
angry with your anointed one.
39. You have renounced the covenant with your servant and have
defiled his crown in the dust.
40. You have broken through all his walls and reduced his strong-
holds to ruins.
41. All who pass by have plundered him; he has become the scorn
of his neighbors.
42. You have exalted the right hand of his foes; you have made all
his enemies rejoice.
43. You have turned back the edge of his sword and have not sup-
ported him in battle.
44. You have put an end to his splendor and cast his throne to the
ground.
45. You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered
him with a mantle of shame. Selah
46. How long, O LORD ? Will you hide yourself forever? How
long will your wrath burn like fire?
47. Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have
created all men!
48. What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave? Selah
49. O Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David?
50. Remember, Lord, how your servant has been mocked, how I bear in my heart the taunts of all the nations,
51. the taunts with which your enemies have mocked, O LORD, with which they have mocked every step of your anointed one.
52. Praise be to the LORD forever! Amen and Amen. NIV

Introduction:

I. For the title, see Ps. 88.

II. This is one of several royal psalms to be found in the Psalter (cf. Ps. 2; Ps. 16; Ps. 18; Ps. 20; Ps. 21 Ps. 45; Ps. 72; Ps. 110; 132).

A. Psalm 2:1-12, Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. NIV
B. Psalm 16:1-11, Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge. I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing." As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips. LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. NIV

C. Psalm 18:1-50, I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears. The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his
feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—the dark rain clouds of the sky. Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning. The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. He shot his arrows and scattered the enemies, great bolts of lightning and routed them. The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of breath from your nostrils. He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me. The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanliness of my hands he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I have not done evil by turning from my God. All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin. The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanliness of my hands in his sight. To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty. You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light. With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall. As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God? It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like
the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights. He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great. You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn. I pursued my enemies and overtook them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet. You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet. You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—to the LORD, but he did not answer. I beat them as fine as dust borne on the wind; I poured them out like mud in the streets. You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me the head of nations; people I did not know are subject to me. As soon as they hear me, they obey me; foreigners cringe before me. They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds. The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior! He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me, who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me. Therefore I will praise you among the nations, O LORD; I will sing praises to your name. He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever. NIV

D. Psalm 20:1-9, May the LORD answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. Selah May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the LORD grant
all your requests. Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. O LORD, save the king! Answer us when we call! NIV

E. Psalm 21:1-13, O LORD, the king rejoices in your strength. How great is his joy in the victories you give! You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah You welcomed him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head. He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—length of days, for ever and ever. Through the victories you gave, his glory is great; you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty. Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence. For the king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken. Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies; your right hand will seize your foes. At the time of your appearing you will make them like a fiery furnace. In his wrath the LORD will swallow them up, and his fire will consume them. You will destroy their descendants from the earth, their posterity from mankind. Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed; for you will make them turn their backs when you aim at them with drawn bow. Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might. NIV

F. Psalm 45:1-17, My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty one;
clothe yourself with splendor and majesty. In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; let your right hand display awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad. Daughters of kings are among your honored women; at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir. Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: Forget your people and your father's house. The king is enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord. The Daughter of Tyre will come with a gift, men of wealth will seek your favor. All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold. In embroidered garments she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her and are brought to you. They are led in with joy and gladness; they enter the palace of the king. Your sons will take the place of your fathers; you will make them princes throughout the land. I will perpetuate your memory through all generations; therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever. NIV

G. Psalm 72:1-20, Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. The mountains will bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness. He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor. He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. He will be like rain fal-
ling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth. In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more. He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. The desert tribes will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts. All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him. For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight. Long may he live! May gold from Sheba be given him. May people ever pray for him and bless him all day long. Let grain abound throughout the land; on the tops of the hills may it sway. Let its fruit flourish like Lebanon; let it thrive like the grass of the field. May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed. Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen. This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.

NIV

H. Psalm 110:1-7, The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth. The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the na-
tions, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. He will drink from a brook beside the way; therefore he will lift up his head. NIV

I. Psalm 132:1-18, O LORD, remember David and all the hardships he endured. He swore an oath to the LORD and made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob: "I will not enter my house or go to my bed- I will allow no sleep to my eyes, no slumber to my eyelids, till I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob." We heard it in Ephrathah, we came upon it in the fields of Jaar: "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool- arise, O LORD, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. May your priests be clothed with righteousness; may your saints sing for joy." For the sake of David your servant, do not reject your anointed one. The LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke: "One of your own descendants I will place on your throne- if your sons keep my covenant and the statutes I teach them, then their sons will sit on your throne for ever and ever." For the LORD has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling: "This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it- I will bless her with abundant provisions; her poor will I satisfy with food. I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints will ever sing for joy. "Here I will make a horn grow for David and set up a lamp for my anointed one. I will clothe his enemies with shame, but the crown on his head will be resplendent." NIV

III. Not all these psalms were written by a king, but the king is in every case the subject about whom the psalm is written.

A. These psalms emphasize six important points with regard to the king.
1. He is inducted into office and anointed by the Lord (Ps. 2:2, 6).

   a. Psalm 2:2, 6, The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." NIV

2. He is adopted as God's son (Ps. 2:6-7; 89:26-27).

   a. Psalm 2:6, 7, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. NIV

   b. Psalm 89:26, 27, He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.' I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. NIV

3. He is given the promise of the continuance of His kingdom forever (Ps. 89:1-4, 28-37; 132:11-12).

   a. Psalm 89:1-4, I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'" Selah NIV
b. Psalm 89:28-37, I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness— and I will not lie to David— that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky." Selah NIV

c. Psalm 132:11, 12, The LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke: "One of your own descendants I will place on your throne— if your sons keep my covenant and the statutes I teach them, then their sons will sit on your throne for ever and ever." NIV

4. The king is to be endowed with God's righteousness and justice and to utilize these qualities as he governs His people (Ps. 45:6-7; 72:1-2; 89:14).

    a. Psalm 45:6, 7, Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God,
your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. NIV

b. Psalm 72:1, 2, Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. NIV

c. Psalm 89:14, Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. NIV

5. He has priestly functions (Ps. 110:4).

a. Psalm 110:4, The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." NIV

6. He is promised victory over his enemies (Ps. 2:8-9; 20:6-8; 21:8-12; 45:4-5; 132:18).

a. Psalm 2:8, 9, Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." NIV

b. Psalm 20:6-8, Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. NIV
c. Psalm 21:8-12, Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies; your right hand will seize your foes. At the time of your appearing you will make them like a fiery furnace. In his wrath the LORD will swallow them up, and his fire will consume them. You will destroy their descendants from the earth, their posterity from mankind. Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed; for you will make them turn their backs when you aim at them with drawn bow. NIV

d. Psalm 45:4, 5, In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; let your right hand display awesome deeds. Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. NIV

e. Psalm 132:18, I will clothe his enemies with shame, but the crown on his head will be resplendent." NIV

IV. All of these six major features of royal psalms have messianic overtones.

A. These ideals are only partially fulfilled at best by the Davidic kings.

1. Christ perfectly fulfills them in his spiritual kingdom, the church.

2. These psalms contain an idealistic hope for the future at which time God's righteousness and justice will prevail (Ps. 72:1-4).
a. Psalm 72:1-4, Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. The mountains will bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness. He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor. NIV

3. There is the expression of universalistic hope that includes all nations in God's plan of salvation (Ps. 72:8-11; 2:8-9).

a. Psalm 72:8-11, He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. The desert tribes will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts. All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him. NIV

b. Psalm 2:8, 9, Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." NIV

4. There is the expression of eschatological hope that extends God's plan of salvation to the end of time (Ps. 72:5-7; 89:36-37).
a. Psalm 72:5-7, He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth. In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more. NIV

b. Psalm 89:36, 37, that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky." Selah NIV

V. The emphasis in Ps. 89 is on the promise that the kingdom would endure forever (Ps. 89:1-3,19-37).

A. Psalm 89:1-3, 19-37, I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said: "I have bestowed strength on a warrior; I have exalted a young man from among the people. I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him. No enemy will subject him to tribute; no wicked man will oppress him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries. My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted. I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers. He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.' I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my
covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness— and I will not lie to David- that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky." Selah NIV

B. Yet, there is an apparent breach of covenant (Ps. 89:38-45).

1. Psalm 89:38-45, But you have rejected, you have spurned, you have been very angry with your anointed one. You have renounced the covenant with your servant and have defiled his crown in the dust. You have broken through all his walls and reduced his strongholds to ruins. All who pass by have plundered him; he has become the scorn of his neighbors. You have exalted the right hand of his foes; you have made all his enemies rejoice. You have turned back the edge of his sword and have not supported him in battle. You have put an end to his splendor and cast his throne to the ground. You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered him with a mantle of shame. Selah NIV

C. Considerable time has elapsed between the days of David and the writing of the psalm (Ps. 89:19,49).

1. Psalm 89:19, 49, Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said: "I have bestowed
strength on a warrior; I have exalted a young man from among the people. O Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David? NIV

2. The walls of Jerusalem have been breached and its strongholds have been laid in ruins (Ps. 89:40).
   a. Psalm 89:40, You have broken through all his walls and reduced his strongholds to ruins. NIV

3. Though the king is young, he has been dethroned and shamefully treated (Ps. 89:44-45).
   a. Psalm 89:44, 45, You have put an end to his splendor and cast his throne to the ground. You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered him with a mantle of shame. Selah NIV

4. The time between the captivity of Jehoiachin (597 B.C.; 2 Kings 24:8-17) and the fall of Jerusalem (587 B.C.; 2 Kings 25:8-12) best fits the setting of this psalm.
   a. 2 Kings 24:8-12, Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan; she was from Jerusalem. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father had done. At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it, and Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it. Je-
hoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his attendants, his nobles and his officials all surrendered to him. In the eighth year of the reign of the king of Babylon, he took Jehoiachin prisoner. NIV

b. 2 Kings 25:8-12, On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, an official of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He set fire to the temple of the LORD, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. The whole Babylonian army, under the commander of the imperial guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the rest of the populace and those who had gone over to the king of Babylon. But the commander left behind some of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields. NIV

c. Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was nothing more than a puppet of the Babylonian Empire.

Commentary:

Introductory Summary

Psalm 89:1-4, I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you
established your faithfulness in heaven itself. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'" Selah  NIV

Note: The main themes of the psalm are set forth here.

Ps. 89:1, I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. NIV

I. “The Lord’s great love” reads in Hebrew, “the steadfast love of the Lord” (RSV).

A. However, the emendation is advisable to balance the lines of poetry and address both lines to God.

B. As often elsewhere, God’s covenant love is tied to His faithfulness in keeping covenant.

Ps. 89:2, I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. NIV

I. The theme of God's “great love” and “faithfulness” is frequently applied to the Davidic covenant in the psalm (Ps. 89:5,8,14,24,28,33,49).

A. Psalm 89:5, 8, 14, 24, 28, 33, 49, The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones. O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. but I will not take my love
from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. O Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David? NIV

Ps. 89:3,4, You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'" Selah NIV

I. God's promise to David is found in 2 Sam. 7:1-17 and is elaborated in this psalm (Ps. 89:19-37).

A. 2 Samuel 7:1-17, After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent." Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you." That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"' "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed.
Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation. NIV

B. Psalm 89:19-37, Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said: "I have bestowed strength on a warrior; I have exalted a young man from among the people. I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him. No enemy will subject him to tribute; no wicked man will oppress him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries. My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted. I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers. He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.' I will also appoint him my first-born, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to
keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness— and I will not lie to David- that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky." Selah NIV

II. Explanations:

A. “You said” is supplied since there is no formal introduction to the word spoken by God in the Hebrew text.

B. The concept of the "covenant" made with His “chosen one, David” His “servant”, is repeated in the psalm (Ps. 89:19,20,28,29,34-36,39,49-51).

1. Psalm 89:19, 20, 28, 29, 34-36, 39, 49-51, Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said: "I have bestowed strength on a warrior; I have exalted a young man from among the people. I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness— and I will not lie to David- that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; You have renounced the covenant with your servant and have defiled his crown in the dust. O Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David? Remember, Lord, how your servant has been mocked, how I bear
in my heart the taunts of all the nations, the taunts with which your enemies have mocked, O LORD, with which they have mocked every step of your anointed one. NIV

2. There is no record of an oath being used by God when he chose David (Ps. 89:3b).

   a. Psalm 89:3, You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, NIV

   b. This may be poetic license used to emphasize the unconditional nature of the covenant, or it may be that the book of Samuel left out the detail of the oath.

   c. See the note at the end of Ps. 77 on the supplementation of Israel's history in the Psalms.

C. “Forever” (Ps. 89:4a) is also repeated in the psalm (Ps. 89:1,2,21,28,29,36,37,46).

1. Psalm 89:2, 21, 28, 29, 36, 37, 46, I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. . that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky." Selah

   How long, O LORD? Will you hide yourself forever?

   How long will your wrath burn like fire? NIV
2. With the possible exception of Ps. 89:2, “forever” must mean “for a long time”.

3. The kings are all dead, the kingdom has ended, and the Jewish era has passed.

4. This phraseology is doubtless idealized hyperbolic language used to gain an intensive effect (cf. Ps. 72:5,15,17).

   a. Psalm 72:5, 15, 17, He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. Long may he live! May gold from Sheba be given him. May people ever pray for him and bless him all day long. May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed. NIV

   b. However, the psalmist here seems to have taken the phrase literally.

   c. See the final paragraph at the end of the psalm.

The Throne of God

Psalm 89:5-18, The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings? In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him. O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them. You crushed Rahab
like one of the slain; with your strong arm you scattered your ene-
mies. The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you
founded the world and all that is in it. You created the north and
the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name. Your
arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand
exalted. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your
throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who
have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your pres-
ence, O LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult
in your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and
by your favor you exalt our horn. Indeed, our shield belongs to the
LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel. NIV

Ps. 89:5-8, The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your
faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones. Or who in the
skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD
among the heavenly beings? In the council of the holy ones God is
greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him. O
LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD,
and your faithfulness surrounds you. NIV

I. The majesty of God is set forth in these verses.

A. Ps. 89:5-6 employs synonymous parallelism.

1. “Wonders” and “faithfulness” (Ps. 89:5) suggest those
divine manifestations that show God to be faithful to His
covenant promise.

2. “The assembly of the holy ones” (Ps. 89:5b), “the
heavenly beings” (literally “sons of God”, Ps. 89:6b),
and “the council of the holy ones” (Ps. 89:7a) all refer to
the angelic hosts in "the heavens" (Ps. 89:5a) and “skies”
(Ps. 89:6a; cf. Deut. 33:2; Dan. 7:10).
a. Deuteronomy 33:2, He said: "The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from his mountain slopes. NIV

b. Daniel 7:10, A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. NIV

3. The language may be mythological in origin, referring to the inferior gods that counseled with the chief god in pagan thought.

4. However, the Scripture demythologizes these concepts and purifies them so that God is supreme and unique (cf. Isa. 14:12-14).

a. Isaiah 14:12-14, How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." NIV

5. See the note on Canaanite Baalism at the end of Ps. 77 and the note on Ps. 82:1.
a. Psalm 77:1-20, I will cry unto God with my voice, Even unto God with my voice; and he will give ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: My hand was stretched out in the night, and slackened not; My soul refused to be comforted. I remember God, and am disquieted: I complain, and my spirit is overwhelmed. Selah Thou holdest mine eyes watching: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, The years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart; And my spirit maketh diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favorable no more? Is his lovingkindness clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah And I said, This is my infirmity; But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will make mention of the deeds of Jehovah; For I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also upon all thy work, And muse on thy doings. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: Who is a great god like unto God? Thou art the God that doest wonders: Thou hast made known thy strength among the peoples. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah The waters saw thee, O God; The waters saw thee, they were afraid: The depths also trembled. The clouds poured out water; The skies sent out a sound: Thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lightened the world: The earth
trembled and shook. Thy way was in the sea, And thy paths in the great waters, And thy footsteps were not known. Thou ledest thy people like a flock, By the hand of Moses and Aaron. (NIV)

b. Psalm 82:1, God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgment among the "gods": NIV

6. No one is as mighty as is God (Ps. 89:8).

Ps. 89:9-13, You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them. You crushed Rahab like one of the slain; with your strong arm you scattered your enemies. The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it. You created the north and the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name. Your arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted. NIV

I. The mastery of God is here set forth.

A. God controls the world he created.

1. “Rahab” (Ps. 89:10), like Leviathan (Ps. 74:13-14; Job 26:12), stood as a symbol of the ancient sea monster subdued by the chief God in creation.

a. Psalm 74:13, 14, It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters. It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave him as food to the creatures of the desert. NIV
b. Job 26:12, By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces. NIV

c. “Rahab” in Israelite literature stands for Egypt (see Ps. 87:4), and Leviathan stands for Assyria or Babylonia (Isa. 27:1).

i. Psalm 87:4, "I will record Rahab and Babylon among those who acknowledge me—Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush—and will say, 'This one was born in Zion.'" NIV

ii. Isaiah 27:1, In that day, the LORD will punish with his sword, his fierce, great and powerful sword, Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea. NIV

2. “The north and the south” (Ps. 89:12) may also be a reference to the mythological language of Canaanite paganism that pictured the supreme god as enthroned in the north on Mount Saphon (Hebrew for “north”).

a. Here it merely means throughout the land.

3. Mount “Tabor” (1,900 feet in elevation) and Mount “Hermon” (9,000 feet) are symbols of the glory of God.

Ps. 89:14-18, Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and
by your favor you exalt our horn. Indeed, our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel. NIV

I. The moral nature of God is here set forth.


1. Deuteronomy 25:13-16, Do not have two differing weights in your bag—one heavy, one light. Do not have two differing measures in your house—one large, one small. You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. For the LORD your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly. NIV

2. Leviticus 19:35-37, "Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity. Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah and an honest hin. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt. "Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them. I am the LORD." NIV

B. God always administers righteousness and justice in keeping with His “love” (Hebrew: covenant loyalty) and “faithfulness” to His covenant with Israel.

1. The king is expected to possess and utilize these characteristics in the administration of his office (cf. Ps. 45:6-7; 72:1-2).

   a. Psalm 45:6, 7, Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be
the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. NIV

b. Psalm 72:1, 2, Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. NIV

2. “To acclaim you” (Ps. 89:15) apparently refers to a celebration of the king's victory, recognizing the king as God's representative (cf. 1 Sam. 4:5-6; 18:6-7), or to God pictured as a victorious king (cf. Ps. 47:5-7; 98:6).

a. 1 Samuel 4:5, 6, When the ark of the LORD's covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook. Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, "What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?" When they learned that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp, NIV

b. 1 Samuel 18:6, 7, When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." NIV

C. Psalm 47:5-7, God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. NIV
d. Psalm 98:6, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—shout for joy before the LORD, the King. NIV

3. “Horn” and “shield” (Ps. 89:17-18) refer to the king's strength and the protection he provides for the people as he relies on divine help (cf. Ps. 18:1-3; 21:1-7).

a. Psalm 18:1-3, I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies. NIV

b. Psalm 21:1-7, O LORD, the king rejoices in your strength. How great is his joy in the victories you give! You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah You welcomed him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head. He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—length of days, for ever and ever. Through the victories you gave, his glory is great; you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty. Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence. For the king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken. NIV

4. “Belongs to” faithfully represents the Hebrew.

5. “Our shield” (18a) and “our king” (18b) are synonymous.
Terms of the Covenant

Psalm 89:19-37, Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said: "I have bestowed strength on a warrior; I have exalted a young man from among the people. I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him. No enemy will subject him to tribute; no wicked man will oppress him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries. My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted. I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers. He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.' I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness— and I will not lie to David- that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky." Selah NIV

Compare: 2 Samuel 7:1-17, After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent." Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you." That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up
out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. "'The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.'" Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation. NIV

Ps. 89:19, Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said: "I have bestowed strength on a warrior; I have exalted a young man from among the people. NIV
I. “Your faithful people” could be taken as a plural of majesty, referring to David, or it could refer to Samuel and Nathan through whom God's wonderful promises came to David.

Ps. 89:20, I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. NIV

I. David is God's “anointed” (cf. 1 Sam. 16:1,13; 2 Sam. 5:3), as are his successors to the throne.

A. 1 Samuel 16:1, 13, The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah. NIV

B. 2 Samuel 5:3, When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. NIV

Ps. 89:21-25, My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him. No enemy will subject him to tribute; no wicked man will oppress him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries. My faithful love will be with him, and through my name his horn will be exalted. I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers. NIV

I. The usual promises of success granted to the king are here related.

Ps. 89:26-27, He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.' I also appoint him my firstborn, the most ex-
alted of the kings of the earth. NIV

I. In this adoption formula (cf. Ps. 2:6-7), the king accepts God's guidance in his kingly functions and God makes him “the firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth” (89:17).

A. Psalm 2:6, 7, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. NIV

B. Psalm 89:17, For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn. NIV

C. The last phrase is in apposition to the first.


a. Colossians 1:15-20, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. NIV
2. The psalmist is doubtless reflecting upon the fact that Israel as a nation was chosen as God's firstborn son (Ex. 4:21-23), and as long as Israel was obedient, he would be exalted above all the nations of the earth (Deut. 28:1).

a. Exodus 4:21-23, The LORD said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me." But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.'" NIV

b. Deuteronomy 28:1, If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. NIV

3. What was originally said of the nation is here declared of the king.

Ps. 89:28-37, I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness— and I will not lie to David- that his line will con-
The psalmist apparently failed to apply his discernment in his following complaint (Ps. 89:38-51).

Apparent Breach of Covenant

Psalm 89:38-51, But you have rejected, you have spurned, you have been very angry with your anointed one. You have renounced the covenant with your servant and have defiled his crown in the dust. You have broken through all his walls and reduced his strongholds to ruins. All who pass by have plundered him; he has become the scorn of his neighbors. You have exalted the right hand of his foes; you have made all his enemies rejoice. You have turned back the edge of his sword and have not supported him in battle. You have put an end to his splendor and cast his throne to the ground. You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered him with a mantle of shame. Selah How long, O LORD? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire? Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men! What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave? Selah O Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David? Remember, Lord, how your servant has been mocked, how I bear in my heart the taunts of all the nations, the taunts with which your enemies have mocked, O LORD, with which they have mocked every step of your anointed one. NIV
Ps. 89:38-45, But you have rejected, you have spurned, you have been very angry with your anointed one. You have renounced the covenant with your servant and have defiled his crown in the dust. You have broken through all his walls and reduced his strong-holds to ruins. All who pass by have plundered him; he has become the scorn of his neighbors. You have exalted the right hand of his foes; you have made all his enemies rejoice. You have turned back the edge of his sword and have not supported him in battle. You have put an end to his splendor and cast his throne to the ground. You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered him with a mantle of shame. Selah NIV

I. The king has been rejected and renounced (Ps. 89:38-39), despoiled and defeated (Ps. 89:41-43), dethroned and defamed (Ps. 89:44-45).

Ps. 89:46-48, How long, O LORD Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire? Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men! What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave? Selah NIV

I. The familiar plaintive cry “How long?” (Ps. 89:46; cf. Ps. 13:1; 79:5) is a plea for restoration of the king, as is the reference to human frailty (Ps. 89:47-48).

A. Psalm 13:1, How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? NIV

B. Psalm 79:5, How long, O LORD Will you be angry forever? How long will your jealousy burn like fire? NIV

Ps. 89:49-51, O Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David? Remember, Lord, how your servant has been mocked, how I bear in my heart the taunts of all the nations, the taunts with which your enemies have mocked, O
LORD, with which they have mocked every step of your anointed one. NIV

I. Here the psalmist appeals to God's loyalty (Ps. 89:49) and love (Ps. 89:50-51).

A. Ps. 89:50-51 are probably words put in the mouth of the king by the psalmist.

B. The psalm appears to be about the king rather than by him (cf. Ps. 89:1-18).

1. Psalm 89:1-18, I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'" Selah The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings? In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him. O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them. You crushed Rahab like one of the slain; with your strong arm you scattered your enemies. The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it. You created the north and the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name. Your arm is en-
dued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn. Indeed, our shield belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel. NIV

II. It is difficult to understand in what way the psalmist feels that God has broken covenant or been unfaithful to the king of Israel.

A. He may feel that the untoward circumstances of the present indicate that the dynasty is about to end.

B. If Jehoiachin is the king who is the subject of the psalm, the kingdom ended as a political entity ten years later.

III. God's promise to continue David's house “forever” was apparently misunderstood to mean that the political kingdom would endure for all time to come.

Doxology

Ps. 89:52, Praise be to the LORD forever! Amen and Amen. NIV

I. This is a doxology closing Book III of the Psalter.

II. God has now raised up the booth of David (Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:16-17), and all nations are blessed by the Branch Of David, the Messiah, Christ (Isa. 11:1-3,10; Acts 13:23; Rom. 15:12).
A. Amos 9:11, 12, "In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name," declares the LORD, who will do these things. NIV

B. Acts 15:16, 17, "'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things' NIV

C. Isaiah 11:1-3, 10, A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD - and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. NIV

D. Acts 13:23, "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. NIV

E. Romans 15:12, And again, Isaiah says, "The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." NIV

F. The fulfillment of the Davidic promise has far exceeded Israel's fondest hopes.
Application:

I. The unsettling thing about Psalm 89 is that the author seems to think that God has failed to keep his covenant promise to David and his dynasty.

A. If that were true, it would be a serious matter.

1. Men may sometimes fail to keep their promises, but we do not expect that of God.

B. The psalmist exalts God for his faithfulness, yet complains against him at the same time.

1. This is inconsistent.
   a. God does not fail; man fails to understand.

2. God is infinite in wisdom and in love.
   a. In His own good time and way, He will answer our petitions.
   b. We must pray and not faint (Lk. 18:1 ; Eph. 3:13).

   i. Luke 18:1, Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. NIV

   ii. Ephesians 3:13, ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory. NIV
C. God did extend the Davidic dynasty long after David’s death.

1. The kingdom of Judah endured for over four hundred years.

2. When the cup of iniquity was full, God let the Babylonians conquer and exile the nation.

3. Furthermore, his spiritual line continues to be fulfilled in Christ, a Davidic descendent (Mt. 1:1; 9:27; Acts 2:29-35, et. al.).

a. Matthew 1:1, A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: NIV

b. Matthew 9:27, As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" NIV

c. Acts 2:29-35, "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven,
and yet he said, 'The Lord said to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand until I make your ene-
mies a footstool for your feet."' NIV

4. This fulfilled promise will continue as long as time re-
mains (Mt. 28:18-20).

a. Matthew 28:18-20, Then Jesus came to them
and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth
has been given to me. Therefore go and make dis-
ciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of
the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them to obey everything I have com-
manded you. And surely I am with you al-
ways, to the very end of the age." NIV
Questions

Psalm 89:1-52

(Questions based on NIV text.)

1. Define *maskil* and identify *Ethan* the Ezrahite.

2. “I will ___________________ of the __________________’s __________________________; with my ____________________________, I will make your ________________________________ through __________________________. I will _______________ that your ____________________________, that you _______________ your________________________ in________________________ itself.’’

3. “You said, ‘I have made a __________________ with my ________________, I have _______________ to ________________, I will _______________ your ________________ and make your ________________ through __________________________.’”

4. “The ____________________ your ________________, O ________________, your ________________ too, in the ________________ of the ______________________ ________________. For who in the ______________________ ________________ above can _________________ with the ________________? Who is ________________ the ________________ among the ________________ ________________? In the ________________ of the ________________ ________________ ________________ is
________________________; he is more ________________ than ________________ who ________________ ________________.
O ________________ ________________ ________________, who is ________________ you? You are ________________ O ________________, and your ________________ ________________ you.”

5. “You ________________ over the ________________ ________________; when its ________________ ________________ up, you ________________ them. You ________________ ________________ like one of the ________________; with your ________________ ________________ you ________________ your _________________. The ________________ are ________________, and ________________ also the ________________; you ________________ the ________________ and all that is in it. You ________________ the ________________ and the ________________; ________________ and ________________ for ________________ at your ________________.
Your ________________ is ________________ with ________________; your ________________ is ________________, your ________________ ________________ ________________.”

6. “________________________ and ________________ are the ________________ of your ________________; ________________ and ________________ go ________________ ________________ you. ________________ are those who have ________________ to ________________ you, who ________________ in the ________________ of your ________________, O ________________.
They ________________ in your ________________ ________________; they ________________ in your _________________. For you are their ________________ and ________________, and by your ________________ you ________________ our ________________. Indeed, our ________________ belongs to the ________________, our ________________ to the ________________ ________________ of ________________.”

7. “Once you ________________ in a ________________, to your ________________ ________________ you said: ‘I have ________________ ________________ on a ________________; I have ________________
a _______________ _______________ from _______________ the _______________. I have _______________ _______________ my _______________; with my _______________ _______________ I have _______________ him. My _______________ will _______________ him; surely my _______________ will _______________ him. NO _______________ will _______________ him to _______________; no _______________ man will _______________ him. I will _______________ his _______________ _______________ before him and _______________ down his _______________. My _______________ _______________ will be with him, and through my _______________ _______________ his _______________ will be _______________. I will _______________ his _______________ over the _______________, his _______________ over the _______________. He will _______________ out to me, ‘You are my _______________, my _______________, the _______________ my _______________.’ I will also _______________ him my _______________, the most _______________ of the _______________ of the _______________. I will _______________ my _______________ to him _______________, and my _______________ with him will _______________ _______________. I will _______________ his _______________ _______________, his _______________ as _______________ as the _______________.

8. “If his _______________ _______________ my _______________ and do not _______________ my _______________, if they _______________ my _______________ and _______________ to _______________ my _______________, I will _______________ their _______________ with the _______________, their _______________ with _______________; but I will not take my _______________ from him, nor will I ever _______________ my _______________. I will _______________ _______________ my _______________ or _______________ what my _______________ have _______________. Once for all, I have _______________ by my _______________ - and I will _______________ _______________ to _______________ - that his _______________ will _______________ _______________.”
and his ______________ ______________ before me ______________
the ______________; it will be ______________ ______________
like the ______________, the ______________ ______________
in the ______________.” Selah

9. “But you have ______________, you have ______________,
you have been very ______________ with your ______________
______________. You have ______________ the ______________
with your ______________ and ______________ his ______________
in the ______________. You have ______________ through ______________
his ______________ and ______________ his ______________
to ______________. ______________ who ______________ by
have ______________ him; he has ______________ the ______________
of his ______________. You have ______________ the ______________
______________ of his ______________; you have made all his
______________ ______________. You have ______________
______________ the ______________ of his ______________
and have not ______________ him in ________________. You have
put an ______________ to his ______________ and his ______________
to the ______________. You have ______________ ______________
the ______________ of his ______________; you have ______________
him with a ______________ of ______________.” Selah.

10. “______________ ______________, O ______________?
Will you ______________ ______________ ______________?
______________ ______________ will your ______________
______________ ______________ ______________ ______________?
how ______________ is my ______________. For what ______________
you have ______________ all ______________! What ______________
can ______________ and ______________ ______________ ______________,
or ______________ ______________ ______________ from the
______________ of the ______________?” Selah.

11. “O ______________, where is your ______________ ______________
______________, which in your ______________ you ______________

to ______________? ______________, ______________, how your ______________ has been ______________, how I bear in my ______________ the ______________ of all the ______________, the ______________ with which your ______________ have ______________, O ______________, with which they have ______________ every ______________ of your ______________ ______________.

12. “_____________ be to the ______________ ______________! ______________ and ______________.”

13. What is a royal psalm? List as many royal psalms as possible. __________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

14. What six important points do royal psalms emphasize? __________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

15. In what respects can it be said that royal psalms have messianic overtones? ____________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

16. In view of historical facts, how can it be said that “the kingdom would endure forever”? _______________________________
17. What was the historical setting for the writing of Psalm 89? 

18. To what are God’s “great love” and “faithfulness” frequently applied in Psalm 89? 

19. What promise did God make to David in 2 Samuel 7:1-17 which is elaborated in Psalm 89:19-37? 

20. Define *forever* as used repeatedly in Psalm 89.
21. Describe “the majesty of God” as presented in Psalm 89:5-8. Who are the *holy ones*? What is the possible origin of this expression? ____

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

22. Define Rahab and Leviathan as used in Scripture. Specify how they relate to the mystery of God and his control of the world he created. ____________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

23. To what do “the north and the south” refer? How do Mount Saphon, Mount Tabor and Mount Herman relate to the subject being considered? ______________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

24. How does the psalmist describe the moral nature of God? ______
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
25. In what ways can it be said that the king was God’s representative? What if anything does this have to do with the historic idea relating to the divine rights of kings? __________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

26. List and define synonymous expressions used in Psalm 89. _____
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

27. Explain the meaning and application of the word *firstborn* in Psalm 89, et. al. __________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

28. A _____________ was made between the _________________
_______________ of the _________________ of the _________________
___________ and the _________________ that would be _______________
upon a _________________ ________________.

29. Show from Israel’s history that God’s promises are often conditional. _________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
30. For what did the psalmist criticize God? Was the psalmist within his rights to complain?

31. Define the “booth of David” and the “Branch of David.”

32. Write here the Doxologies to each of the five books of the Psalter. See Psalm 41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48; 150:6.

33. What is an *unsettling* thing about Psalm 89?
34. Does the Davidic dynasty exist today? Explain your answer. ____

35. What have you learned from your study of Psalm 89 which will impact your life? ________________________________
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________